

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 June 2019

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS - INSPECTION REPORTS BY NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND

Report by Head of Legal and Governance Services (Report No. 19/182)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report comments on the annual inspection reports from the National Records of Scotland on the provision of registration services in the Perth and Kinross Council area in 2016 and 2017.

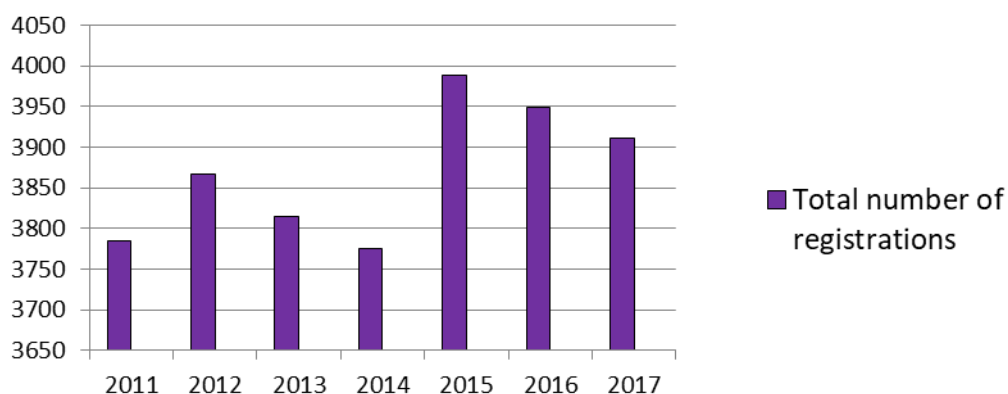
1. BACKGROUND

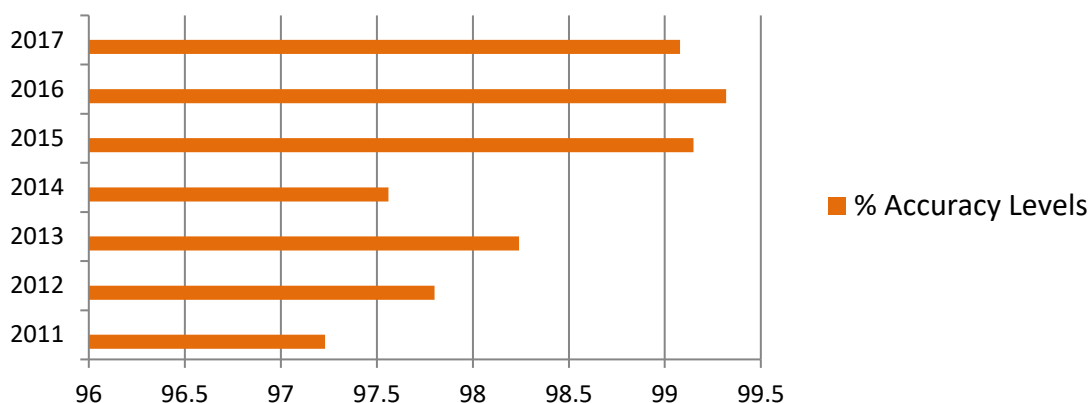
- 1.1 The Head of Legal and Governance Services has responsibility for the delivery of Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships throughout the Perth and Kinross Council area, in partnership with the National Records of Scotland (NRS)
- 1.2 Since August 2013, the registration service has been delivered from various office locations throughout Perth & Kinross:-
 - Aberfeldy
 - Auchterarder,
 - Blairgowrie,
 - Crieff
 - Kinross
 - Perth
 - Pitlochry
- 1.3 Perth and Kinross Council is one of a small number of local authorities which also retains a home-based registrar in Kinloch Rannoch providing a vital service to local residents who would otherwise be faced with a 36 mile round trip to reach their nearest part time office in Aberfeldy
- 1.4 Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships is subject to annual inspection by District Examiners from the National Records of Scotland. Registers of events are recorded in calendar years and inspections are carried out during the following year.
- 1.5 The outcome of inspections for the calendar year 2016 were delayed by NRS due to staffing issues and have not yet been published, however the accuracy level results have been notified to the Council along with the figures for 2017

- 1.6 The Registrar General for Scotland publishes an annual review of demographic trends, which provides detailed information on statutory registration, normally including accuracy information for the 32 Councils. However, the 2016 review has not been published, the information contained in this report for 2016 was sent directly to the Council. There is no comparison information with other Councils available. The information on the annual inspection undertaken in the calendar year 2017 can be viewed by using the undernoted link <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/rgar/2017/rgar-performance-indicators-17.pdf>.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The number of registration entries for Perth & Kinross in the calendar year 2016 was 3949 with accuracy levels being 99.32%
- 2.2 The accuracy level of the registration entries showed a slight drop in the Crieff office from 99.7% to 99.42%
- 2.3 Aberfeldy, Blairgowrie, Perth, Pitlochry and Rannoch and Foss locations all showing improved accuracy levels in 2016 and both Auchterarder and Kinross maintained 100% accuracy rates .
- 2.4 The number of registration entries for Perth & Kinross in 2017 was 3911 with accuracy levels being 99.08%.
- 2.5 The accuracy levels showed a slight drop Blairgowrie (98.23%) Crieff (99.2%) Pitlochry (97.3%) and Rannoch and Foss (94.74%).
- 2.6 The accuracy levels for the Aberfeldy (100%) and Perth (99.25%) show improvement.
- 2.7 The 2017 annual inspection of the Registration Service shows Perth and Kinross listed as having an overall accuracy level of 99.08%, the fourth highest percentage of entries with no errors
- 2.8 A breakdown of registration and % accuracy data for 2017 and previous years are illustrated below. Detailed information by area is attached at Appendix 1





2.9 Due to volume and mix of business within the different registration offices, it should be borne in mind that any error in a small office dealing with a lower number of registrations will be more significant percentage wise than in the larger offices. The effect can appear disproportionate in terms of the number of errors against the number of events registered.

2.10 The Registration team continues to liaise with other local authorities to identify best practice for checking Registration entries prior to submission to NRS. Although no improved or alternative method of checking has been identified, the team continues to look for other ways to improve

3 CONTEXT

3.1 There are 10 members of staff (7.81 FTE including clerical support) throughout Perth and Kinross directly involved in delivering the registration service. There are now six members of staff who hold the Certificate in the Law and Practice of Registration.

3.2 There is a rota in place to allow Registrars who are predominately based in local offices to spend time in the Perth office to enable them to gain more experience in registering events that may not occur very often in local offices e.g. reporting of possible sham marriages to the Home Office. The Registrars team regularly discuss any changes to legislation, practice or challenging issues at their Delayed Office Opening sessions.

3.3 The Registrars also promote the use of the Tell Us Once (TUO) service, a cross-government programme, led by the Department of Work and Pensions. This service provides an easy mechanism for the public to inform local authorities and public sector organisations about a change in circumstances due to a birth or bereavement.

3.4 The notifications from the TUO system allow services such as housing , revenues & benefits, adult social care, badge and libraries etc. to act on the information obtained to update their systems and to cancel services, payments or memberships.

- 3.5 Based on the statistics collated and produced by the DWP for 2016/17;
- the uptake for the bereavement TUO service in Perth and Kinross was 100.1% (increase greater than 100% due to notifications via registration outwith area – e.g. relatives registering a death abroad or in another area)
 - the uptake for the birth TUO service in Perth & Kinross was 33%
 - total TUO notifications 4782
- 3.6 The take up for the birth service is much lower than the bereavement service as customers perceive there are fewer benefits for them in using the TUO birth service.
- 3.7 The TUO service is very well received by customers and they are very appreciative and satisfied with the service and support being offered, often in difficult circumstances.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 4.1 The staff involved in the registration of births, deaths and marriages and civil partnerships provide a high quality level of service to the residents of Perth and Kinross.
- 4.2 Accuracy rates only play a small part in the quality of services provided but the National Records of Scotland use these to measure and monitor the service which makes a permanent record of people's life events.
- 4.3 Action in the form of continued provision of training and reviewing best practice all contribute to maintaining high levels of performance which are reflected in the inspection reports for 2016 and 2017.
- 4.4 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
- (i) notes the content of this report
 - (ii) provides appropriate comment and challenge

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Approved

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Lisa Simpson	Head of Legal and Governance Services	13 May 2019

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	None
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 Whilst Corporate and Democratic Services supports all of the Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement strategic objectives this report does not directly support a particular objective.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Whilst Corporate and Democratic Services supports all of the Corporate Plan objectives this report does not directly support a particular objective.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no direct asset management implications arising from this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- 3.3 Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.4 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.5 However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Annual Inspection Reports by the Registrar General for Scotland were relied on to a material extent in preparing this report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - details the outcomes of the inspections for each of the Registration offices in Perth and Kinross for the period 2011 - 2017.