

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Scrutiny Committee – 23 September 2015****REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND
CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS - INSPECTION REPORTS BY NATIONAL
RECORDS OF SCOTLAND****Report by Head of Democratic Services****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 local government area in 2014.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Head of Democratic Services has responsibility for the delivery of Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships throughout the Perth and Kinross local government area, in partnership with the National Records of Scotland (NRS).
- 1.2 Since August 2013, the registration service has been delivered from various locations - a central office in Perth; from Aberfeldy, Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Crieff, Kinross and Pitlochry; and also from a home-based registrar for Kinloch Rannoch which is delivered from the local medical practice.
- 1.3 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. The inspections referred to in this report are for the year 2014.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Included at Appendix 1 to this report is a table detailing the outcomes of the inspections for each of the registration offices in Perth and Kinross for the period 2010 – 2014. This shows an improvement in accuracy rate from 97.16% in 2010 to 97.56% in 2014, although the accuracy level has dropped from the 2013 level of 98.24%. Appendix 2 to this report details the Examiner's remarks for each office.
- 2.2 Perth and Kinross Council is one of a small number of local authorities which retains a home-based registrar. Due to the mix of registration offices within Perth and Kinross, it should be noted that an error in an office with large numbers of transactions will not affect the overall accuracy rate to the same extent as an error in an office where very small numbers of transactions are carried out annually. The effect can appear disproportionate in terms of the number of errors against the number of events registered.

- 2.3 Overall, there are 11 members of staff 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 - 2 members of staff qualifying in 2015, with 2 studying towards gaining the qualification in 2016.
- 2.4 The overall accuracy level of the registration entries has dropped over the last year as have the number of events. As detailed in Appendix 1, only Auchterarder, Blairgowrie and the home based registrar in Kinloch Rannoch show increases in the accuracy rate. The reason for the drop in accuracy levels is due partly to the bedding in of the new service delivery working arrangements from August 2013, which have not yet resulted in the positive impact anticipated. During 2014, the Registration Services Officer retired and there was a long term sickness absence which impacted on the performance of the team. Appendix 3, extract from the recently published Registrar General's Annual report 2015, shows the Scottish average accuracy rate as 98.31%.
- 2.5 The process for checking accuracy involves the Registrar recording information in relation to births, deaths etc. on the NRS computer system during an interview with the customer. Once the information is recorded the customer and the Registrar view the entry for accuracy, any corrections required can be changed at this point. A paper copy of the entry is then printed off and a second Registrar is asked to check the entry whilst the customer is still in the interview room. Once this has been checked any amendments required will be made before the entry is submitted to NRS. For registrations taking place out with Perth, the entry is faxed to the Perth office and a second Registrar will check the entry before faxing back any changes prior to the customer leaving the interview.
- 2.6 In order to address the drop in accuracy levels a bench marking exercise will be undertaken with other local authorities to identify best practice for checking Registration entries prior to submission to NRS and any lessons learned will be taken forward. A new rota has been introduced to allow Registrars who were predominately based in local offices to spend more time in the Perth office. This means that there are more opportunities for the Senior Registrar to undertake robust checking to reduce the number of errors; to allow staff to be involved in registering events that may not occur very often in local offices e.g. reporting of possible sham marriages to the Home Office, and also to address busy periods in the Perth office. Twice-yearly assessments on various sections of the Registrar's Handbook are undertaken and these help to identify individual training needs, whilst also keeping staff up-to-date with the changes in legislation and procedures.
- 2.7 The cross-government programme, Tell Us Once (TUO) service, led by the Department of Work and Pensions, has been in place in Perth and Kinross since November 2011. This service allows the public the opportunity to inform local authorities and public sector organisations about a change in circumstances due to a birth or bereavement. Perth and Kinross Council services, such as Council Tax, Housing & Council tax benefits, Blue Badge,

Adult Social Services and Libraries, received a total of 3364, notifications during the 2014/15 financial year, an increase of 305 notifications on the previous year. The notifications from the TUO system allow services to act on the information obtained to update their systems and to cancel services, payments or memberships. The take up for the bereavement service during 2014/15 was 87% - up from 80% last year. The take up for the birth service is lower at 17%, although up from 11.5% last year, as customers perceive there are fewer benefits for them in using the TUO birth service. TUO is very well received by customers and they are very appreciative and satisfied with the service and support offered at a difficult time.

- 2.8 The National Records of Scotland's chart of entries and accuracy rates for all local authorities in Scotland for 2014 is detailed in Appendix 3.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 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. 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. 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 2014.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report with regard to the annual inspection reports by the National Records of Scotland on the provision of registration services in the Perth and Kinross local government area.

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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 the Chief Executive's Service 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 the Chief Executive's Service supports all of the Corporate Plan objectives this report does not directly support a particular objective.

2. Resource Implications

2.1 Financial

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

2.2 Workforce

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

2.3 Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3.1 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.

This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

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

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

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix I to this report details the outcomes of the inspections for each of the Registration offices in Perth and Kinross for the period 2010 - 2014.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 to this report details the Examiner's remarks for each office.
- 3.3 Appendix 3 to this report NRS - Registration Service - Performance Indicators 2014 by Council.

District	Accuracy Rates %					Number of Registrations						Errors
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014	
Aberfeldy	98.47	94.59	95.87	95.61	94.69	131	111	121	114	113	6	
Auchterarder	97.97	95.74	96.00	99.10	100.00	148	141	150	111	110	0	
Blairgowrie	98.27	99.01	99.50	98.50	98.85	405	404	398	468	434	5	
Coupar Angus	77.53	80.49	83.33	-	-	89	82	78	-	-	-	
Crieff	97.65	95.39	95.56	97.43	96.91	298	282	293	311	291	9	
Kinross	97.44	97.92	98.70	99.23	98.27	195	144	231	259	231	4	
Milnathort	88.37	95.05	100.00	-	-	86	101	15	-	-	-	
Perth	98.06	98.27	98.22	98.29	97.48	2219	2311	2363	2342	2382	60	
Pitlochry	95.35	96.72	99.49	97.99	96.06	215	183	197	199	203	8	
Rannoch and Foss	95.45	76.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	22	25	21	11	11	0	
Total Perth & Kinross	97.16	97.23	97.80	98.24	97.56	3808	3784	3867	3815	3775	92	

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

EXAMINER'S REMARKS 2014

OFFICE	REMARKS
Aberfeldy	The accuracy has decreased in the latter part of the year, and for events included in the final examination was 94.12. Most corrections are for spelling errors rather than any issues with the law and practice of registration.
Auchterarder	Congratulations on achieving 100% accuracy - very well done.
Blairstown	The accuracy maintains the usual good standard of recent years.
Crieff	After a small increase in accuracy in the first examination to 97.86 - the final figure is a little lower than the 97.43 achieved in 2013, but still better than the 2 preceding years.
Kinross	After an excellent start to the year, the final accuracy is a little lower than the 99.23 recorded in 2013
Perth	The accuracy is a little lower than the 97.92 achieved in the first examination, and down on the usual level in recent years, typically 98.29 and 98.22 in 2013 and 2012 respectively. As you will see from the error sheets, errors were mainly spelling mistakes with a number of corrections to marital status in the middle examination.
Pitlochry	The accuracy is lower than the 97.62 achieved at the interim examination and the 97.99 recorded in 2013. If it had been possible to check and correct the marriages before the final examination, accuracy would have exceeded 98.5.
Rannoch & Foss	Congratulations on maintaining 100% for a third consecutive year - very well done!

Annual Review 2014 - Chapter 9 Registration										2015 Council Area Data 3				APPENDIX 3	
Council Area	2014 Events 2									Dedicated Registration Offices		Integrated Customer Service Offices		No of Certificate Holders	
	Births	Deaths	Religious Marriages	Civil Marriages	Total Marriages	Civil Partnerships	Stillbirths	All Events	% of Entries Without Corrections	No of Entries with Errors	Dedicated Registration Offices	Integrated Customer Service Offices	No of Certificate Holders		
Aberdeen City	2,907	2,295	428	467	895	15	17	6,129	98.34%	102	1	0	4		
Aberdeenshire	2,510	2,127	811	472	1,283	4	11	5,935	98.45%	92	9	0	11		
Angus	1,079	1,271	212	250	462	3	5	2,820	99.01%	28	3	0	8		
Argyll & Bute	717	1,004	596	442	1,038	11	1	2,771	98.20%	50	1	10	2		
Clackmannanshire	555	490	64	113	177	6	3	1,231	99.51%	6	1	0	5		
Eilean Siar	219	344	85	58	143	0	0	706	98.02%	14	1	3	2		
Dumfries & Galloway	1,314	1,886	1,513	2,872	4,385	53	3	7,641	96.35%	279	8	11	14		
Dundee City	2,109	1,900	173	369	542	9	3	4,563	97.94%	94	1	0	3		
East Ayrshire	1,300	1,380	231	258	489	8	8	3,185	97.86%	68	0	4	12		
East Dunbartonshire	1,407	1,774	125	113	238	3	3	3,425	99.62%	13	0	3	1		
East Lothian	1,054	1,172	342	214	556	8	6	2,796	97.17%	79	3	0	8		
East Renfrewshire	1,155	1,373	135	143	278	1	0	2,807	97.68%	65	0	2	4		
Edinburgh, City of	5,788	4,119	1,186	1,724	2,910	103	21	12,941	97.87%	275	2	2	21		
Falkirk	1,742	1,598	337	377	714	8	3	4,065	99.19%	33	1	2	9		
Fife	3,822	3,408	803	811	1,614	23	17	8,884	98.10%	169	0	8	9		
Glasgow City	6,905	4,326	1,371	1,213	2,584	75	24	13,914	99.02%	137	1	0	21		
Highland	2,365	2,356	834	681	1,515	12	8	6,256	98.83%	73	1	24	17		
Inverclyde	735	915	145	58	203	1	0	1,854	98.98%	19	1	0	5		
Midlothian	780	692	181	185	366	6	4	1,848	96.65%	62	1	0	1		
Moray	920	896	202	174	376	4	4	2,200	99.27%	16	1	0	4		
North Ayrshire	1,278	1,509	344	392	736	8	7	3,538	98.22%	63	1	4	14		
North Lanarkshire	3,936	3,479	565	450	1,015	10	24	8,464	99.59%	35	1	7	18		
Orkney Islands	183	202	69	33	102	0	1	488	96.93%	15	1	1	1		
Perth & Kinross	1,290	1,449	549	472	1,021	13	2	3,775	97.56%	92	7	0	7		
Renfrewshire	1,842	2,045	413	295	708	13	9	4,617	99.00%	46	1	2	4		
Scottish Borders	1,163	1,325	241	425	666	1	7	3,162	98.01%	63	10	0	7		
Shetland Islands	253	218	43	62	105	0	1	577	96.71%	19	1	0	2		
South Ayrshire	1,029	1,456	516	346	862	5	6	3,358	99.61%	13	0	2	10		
South Lanarkshire	3,446	3,711	566	553	1,119	11	14	8,301	97.10%	241	1	4	22		
Stirling	895	875	335	351	686	9	4	2,469	98.95%	26	2	4	5		
West Dunbartonshire	1,022	1,122	228	130	358	5	3	2,510	99.40%	15	2	0	8		
West Lothian	2,110	1,540	583	342	925	10	8	4,593	98.08%	88	2	4	3		
Scotland	57,830	54,257	14,226	14,845	29,071	438	227	141,823	98.31%	2,390	65	97	262		

