

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 NOVEMBER 2021

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. 21/227)

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 2019.

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 and Kinross:-
 - Aberfeldy
 - Auchterarder
 - Blairgowrie
 - Crieff
 - Kinross
 - Perth
 - Pitlochry
- 1.3 Perth & Kinross Council is one of a small number of local authorities which also retains a home-based registrar in Kinloch Rannoch providing a 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 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. The information on the annual inspection undertaken in the calendar year 2019 is attached at Appendix 1.

1.6 In Registration there are two types of errors: prescribed errors – wrong information provided by the informant and clerical errors – any error made by the Registrar. It is the latter category that the District Examiner bases their accuracy percentage on. A clerical error is any error made in a register, for example in the transcription of the information provided by the informant or a spelling error, a transposition of letters or figures or an obvious omission.

1.7 The 2019 register books were examined by the National Records of Scotland's examiner in July 2020, however due to COVID pressures the full examination of all 32 local authority register books was not completed until later causing a delay in the publication of the performance indicator document shown at Appendix 1.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

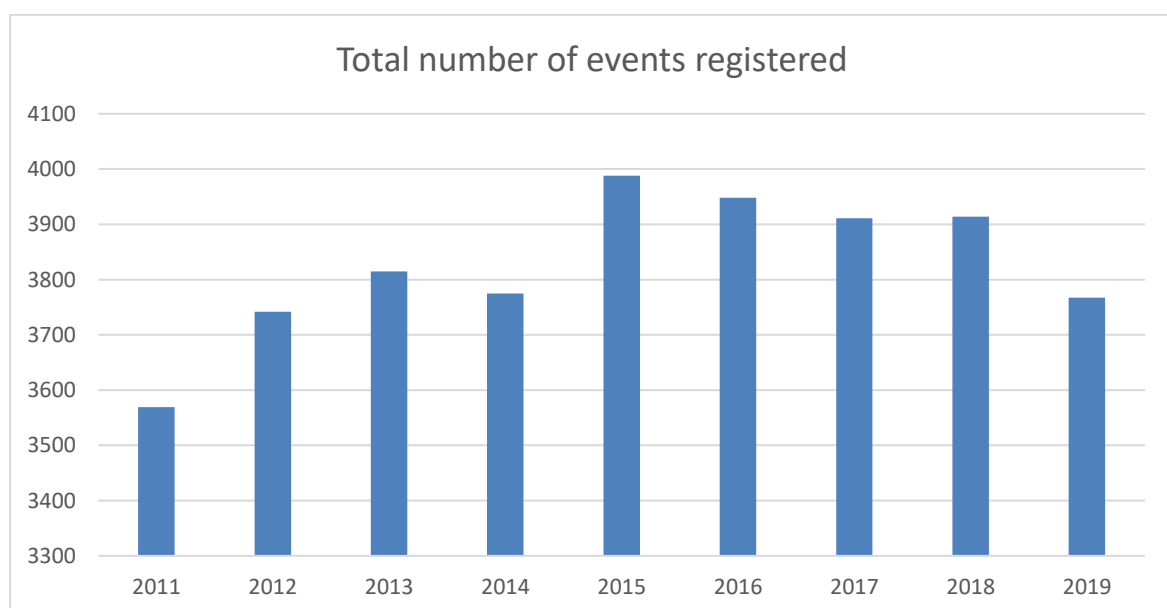
2.1 The number of registration entries for Perth and Kinross in the calendar year 2019 was 3767 with accuracy levels being 99.26% matching the level achieved in 2018.

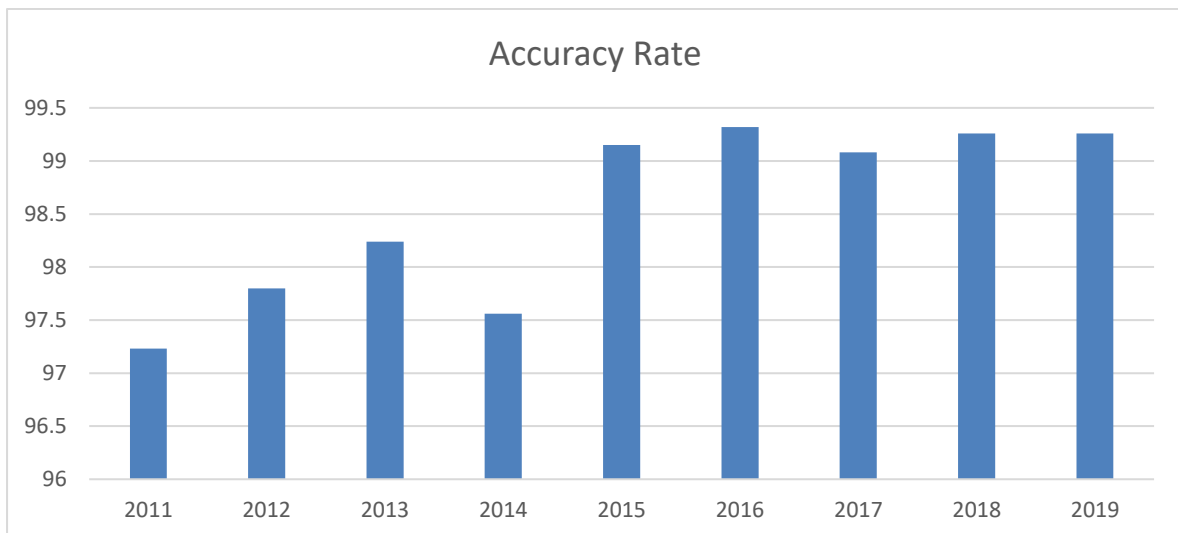
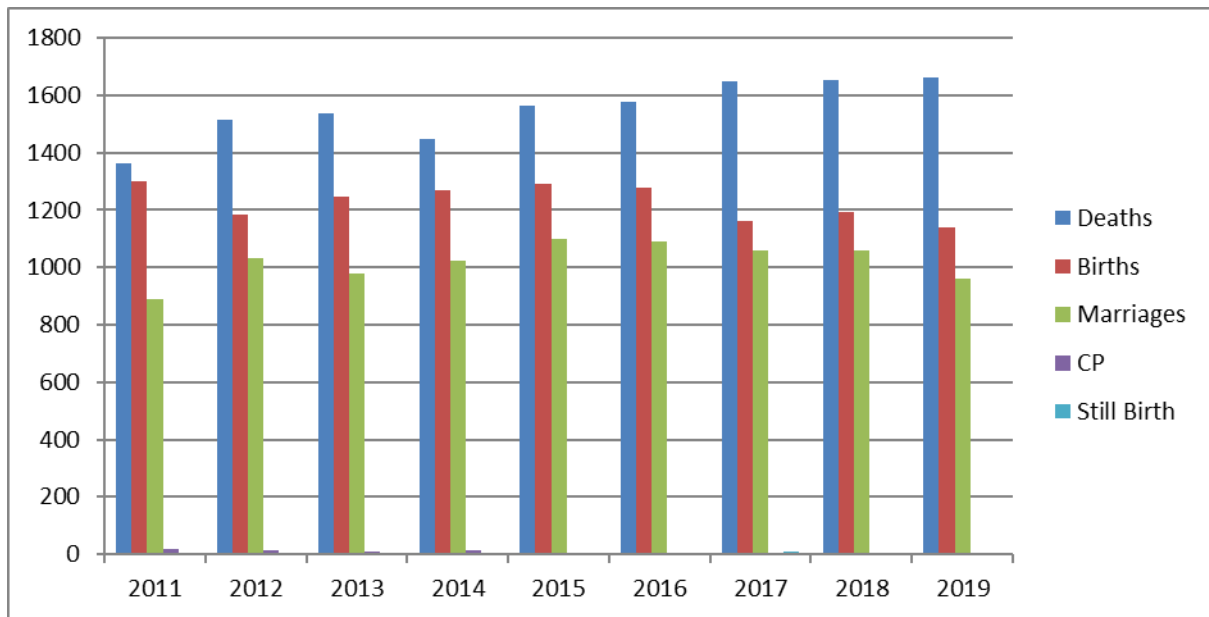
2.2 The accuracy level of the registration entries showed a slight drop for Aberfeldy (98.39%) Auchterarder (99.18%) Crieff (99.44%) and Perth (99.27%). These percentages reflect the effect of 22 errors from 2922 entries.

2.3 The accuracy levels for Blairgowrie (99.78%) Kinross (99.47%) and Pitlochry (97.98%) all showed improvement.

2.4 The 2019 annual inspection of the Registration Service shows Perth and Kinross listed as having an overall accuracy level of 99.26%, the fourth highest percentage of entries with no errors by local authority in Scotland.

2.5 A breakdown of registration and % accuracy data for 2019 and previous years are illustrated below. Detailed information by area is attached at Appendix 2.





2.6 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.

2.7 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 who are directly involved in delivering the registration service. There are seven 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 discusses any changes to legislation, practice or challenging issues at their monthly Team Time.
- 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 (DWP). 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, badges 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 2018/19;
- the uptake for the bereavement TUO service in Perth and Kinross was 87.4%
 - the uptake for the birth TUO service in Perth & Kinross was 20.4%
 - total TUO notifications 4514, 117 less than 2017/2018.
- 3.6 The uptake 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 2019.
- 4.4 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
- (i) notes the content of this report
 - (ii) provides appropriate comment and scrutiny

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Karen Donaldson	Chief Operating Officer (Corporate & Democratic Services)	19 October 2021

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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 performance indicators by council area for 2019 as reported by the Registrar General
- Appendix 2 – details the outcomes of the inspections for each of the Registration offices in Perth and Kinross for the period 2013 - 2019.