

Annex 6.4 Administrative and statistical geographical boundaries

Identifying formal area boundaries is, for the most part, straightforward. Most Central and Local government bodies have GIS and can supply digitised boundaries of their administrative areas and sub areas. In addition, GRO produces a number of digitised boundaries such as local authority wards and postcode geography.

Annexes 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 list other possible administrative or formal boundaries of relevance. However thought should be given to the feasibility, time and cost of obtaining these, as many of these boundaries are not available in a digital format or from a single source for all of Scotland.

Name	Description	Coverage	Source/Copyright	Comments
Administrative Geographies				
Local authorities	Local government areas post-April 1996 reorganisation	Scotland: 32 authorities	Local Government Boundary Commission GRO(S) for boundaries Crown Copyright	Single-tier local government
Scottish Parliamentary Areas	Areas for which parliamentary members are elected to the Scottish and Westminster parliaments.	Scotland: 73 Scottish Constituencies 72 Westminster Constituencies.	Boundary Commission for Scotland GRO(S) for boundaries Crown Copyright	The Orkney and Shetland Islands each have a Scottish Parliamentary Constituency, but are combined to form a single Westminster Parliamentary Constituency. GRO 2001 Census parliamentary areas are 'best-fit' aggregations of 2001 local authority wards – and these in turn are 'best-fit' aggregations of census output areas. The GRO(S) defined boundaries are also used on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website.

Name	Description	Coverage	Source/Copyright	Comments
Local Government Wards	Areas for which councillors are elected to the local government authority.	Scotland: 1,222 electoral wards in 1999	Local Government Boundary Commission GRO(S) for boundaries Crown Copyright	<p>The average population of a ward is 4,200, although they vary in size from under 700 in some rural areas to over 10,000 in some urban areas. Wards within a local authority are more equal in size.</p> <p>Local authority ward boundaries set in 1996 during local government re-organisation were revised in 1999 and there have been further minor changes since 1999. But in most cases Scottish ward boundaries listed as '2000' or '2001' are consistent with 1999 boundaries. GRO(S)-defined ward boundaries are 'best-fit' aggregations of postcode units.</p> <p>Some local and national sources still use 1996 wards (in some cases due to confidentiality concerns, e.g. benefits data from DWP). In most areas, inconsistencies between 1996 and 1999 wards mean that this data cannot be directly compared with data at 1999 ward level.</p> <p>Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards are used for 2001 Census outputs, unlike electoral wards are required to meet certain minimum size thresholds in order to prevent disclosure of Census data and are therefore not strictly comparable.</p>
NHS Health Board Areas	Health boards were established in 1974 They are responsible for assessing health needs in an area, for securing health services from providers such as health trusts and for ensuring high quality health services.	Scotland: 15 areas	GRO(S) for boundaries Crown Copyright	The 15 health boards' area geographies have remained unchanged since their inception; 11 of the 15 are coterminous with local authority areas. More information on the relationship between health board and local authority areas can be found in: GROS - 2000 Mid Year Population Estimates, Scotland ¹
Communities Scotland Area Network Geography	Areas covered by Communities Scotland's 7 area offices, which are grouped into 3 regions - North, East and West. Boundaries for Housing Market Context Statements also available	Scotland: 7 areas and 3 regions	Communities Scotland	<p>Development Programme data is often analysed at these spatial levels.</p> <p>Copies of digitised boundaries are available from Neighbourhood Intelligence Unit of Communities Scotland: contact: david.watkins@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk</p>

¹ <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/grosweb/grosweb.nsf/c14d0c034eadb6bf802568fd0051f7a7/dcd91a124333bf6580256d5d00307c3a?OpenDocument>

Name	Description	Coverage	Source/Copyright	Comments
Scottish Enterprise Areas	Areas covered by Local Enterprise Companies, one of the main access points to the Scottish Enterprise Network.	Scotland 12 LEC areas	Scottish Enterprise	
Structure Plan Areas	Areas for which strategic land use plans are prepared by LA or groups of LA	Scotland: 17 SP areas	Scottish Office (Planning Services)/ Local planning authorities	
Local plan areas	Discretionary areas for which unitary planning authorities prepare local land use plans.	Scotland: Discretionary areas within 17 SP areas	Local planning authorities	Local plan areas are typically smaller than structure plan areas, although they may also be sub-divided into local plan policy areas, centring on areas of specific geographic and/or policy interest (e.g. rural villages policy area, town centre policy area, etc).
Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas	Social Inclusion Partnerships set up in 199 to tackle social exclusion	There are 48 SIPs in total, 34 of which are area-based.	Communities Scotland	The 34 geographical SIP areas vary significantly in size. Most are single distinct geographical areas, but some focus on specific but non-contiguous areas ('archipelago' SIPs). SIPs are due to become integrated into Community Planning Process and Partnership Structure in the near future.
Primary School Catchment Areas	Used to identify children with priority access to school due to area in which they live.	Scotland	Local education authorities	<p>Primary school catchment areas were used as the starting point for the development of SNS Data Zones (see 'Other Key Data Geographies' for further details).</p> <p>They have a number of key strengths and weaknesses as a basis for data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged and used by the local population • Defined in part by local geography (ease of access to school) • Inconsistency with other administrative/data boundaries • Subject to change

Name	Description	Coverage	Source/Copyright	Comments
Postal Geographies				
Postcode area (EH)	The first part of the code for the location of the delivery office the mail to which mail is sent.	Scotland: 16 areas	Royal Mail GRO(S) for boundaries	Information on postal geographies, including digitised boundaries and look up tables can be found at: GROS - Geography Products Bulletin ²
Postcode district (EH12)	The second part of the code for the location of the delivery office to which mail is sent.	Scotland	Royal Mail GRO(S) for boundaries	There are approximately 20 postcode districts in a postcode area.
Postcode sector (EH12 5)	This part of the code refers to the delivery point.	Scotland 950 postcode sectors in Scotland).	Royal Mail GRO(S) for boundaries	Each sector contains around 2000 households (c5, 400 people) Postcode sectors tend to be larger than local authority wards. These do not necessarily align with Census Standard Table postcode sectors.
Postcode unit (EH12 5YA)	The second part of the code for the location of the delivery point. .	Scotland: 140,000 units (approx).	Royal Mail GRO(S) for boundaries	Each unit contains on average 15 households (but ranges from 1 to 100). Postcodes units are constantly under revision, especially in areas where housing construction and demolition is occurring.

² <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/grosweb/grosweb.nsf/pages/geobull>

Name	Description	Coverage	Source/Copyright	Comments
Statistical Geographies				
Enumeration district	Areas for which 1981 and 1991 census small area data are available. They contain approximately 100-120 households	Scotland:	GRO(S)	<p>Enumeration district boundaries are largely defined by data collection requirements. This is less ideal for data output and Output Areas are the smallest geography for which 2001 Census data is available.</p> <p>The census data available at this level are the 1981 small area statistics.</p>
Census output Areas (COAs)	Output areas are aggregations of postcode units. They are the smallest area at which Census data is available.	Scotland: 42,604 areas	GRO(S)	<p>2001 Census Output Areas are groups of postcodes that nest as well as possible into (in descending priority) local authority areas, 2001 Census localities, 1991 OAs, postcode sectors and 2001 wards. COAs are designed to have similar population sizes; their minimum size is 20 households and 50 resident persons.</p> <p>COAs may be used to create a range of user-defined geographies - an index linking COAs to higher level geographies is available from GRO(S).</p> <p>COAs were first applied in 1991 in Scotland and are similar to enumeration districts in England. 2001 COAs seek to maximise continuity with 1991 COAs, where possible.</p>
Census Settlements and Localities	<p>Settlements: aggregations of 'high density' postcodes bounded by 'low density' postcodes or water, where the total number of resident persons exceeds 500.</p> <p>Localities: sub-divisions of larger settlements based on boundaries established in the 1991 census.</p>	Scotland: 493 settlements 574 localities		<p>Density is expressed as addresses per hectare, and a postcode is classified as high density if either of the following holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density of residential addresses per hectare exceeds 2.1 • The density of non-residential addresses per hectare exceeds 0.1 <p>These density thresholds were adjusted in Eilean Siar and Shetland to take into account variable settlement patterns.</p> <p>Some settlements defined using this method were very extensive and grouped together very large populations (eg 'Glasgow' was a single settlement with more than 1,000,000 residents. GRO(S) divided these larger settlements into 'localities'.</p> <p>It should be noted that settlements do not provide complete contiguous coverage of Scotland, although localities do provide contiguous coverage of settlement areas.</p>

Name	Description	Coverage	Source/Copyright	Comments
Travel to work areas	Prepared by Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at Newcastle University using 1981 census. (see annex 6.3 for further details)	Scotland: 61 areas	Office for National Statistics (ONS)	These areas were derived in 1984 to provide 'self-contained labour markets' for which unemployment rates could be prepared. The ONS is currently considering whether to review the areas.
Civil parishes	These historical areas were used in local government administration until 1929.	Scotland 871 parishes	GRO(S) for boundaries Crown Copyright	Parishes are typically used for historical data analysis as they have changed very little over 100 years. 2001 census parishes are 'best-fit' aggregations of output areas.
Data Zones	Data Zones are the core geography for reporting Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics. They are aggregations of contiguous Census Output Areas that nest within local authority boundaries.	Scotland: 6,505 zones	Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Scottish Executive	Data Zones were developed as part of the Neighbourhood Definitions Project. The zones were defined using the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approximate equality of population (500-1000 people); • compactness of shape; • approximate homogeneity of social composition; • existence of some community of interest (where possible); • accordance with other locally significant boundaries; and • accordance with prominent features in the physical environment. <p>Policy for the maintenance of Data Zones is still in development; they are intended to be a stable geography to assist longitudinal analysis.</p>