
**Argyll and Bute Community Planning
Partnership**

Management Committee
Date: Wednesday, 20th January 2010



Title: Young People in the Highlands and Islands

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** Population growth, economic success and sustainable communities are closely linked. This was recognised by HIE, and by other partners some years ago, leading to the aspiration of growing the region's population from less than 440,000 in 2005 to 500,000 by 2025.
- 1.2** The demographic profile of the Highlands and Islands, compared to the rest of Scotland, is older. Of particular significance is the under-representation of young people aged 15-30. If the Highlands and Islands had the same demographic profile as the rest of Scotland there would be an additional 18,500 young people (25% more) in the 15 and 30 age range within the region. (4118 or 40% more for Argyll and the Islands) see Appendix 1.
- 1.3** Across the Highlands and Islands over recent years there has been net immigration in most age groups with the exception of substantial outmigration in the 16-20 age range, where around a quarter (c1560) will have left the Highlands and Islands by the age of 20. Note that for the region as a whole, the net outmigration of 16-20 year olds is counter-balanced by in-migration of those in their 20s, 30s and early 40s. (see appendix 2). Appendix 3 shows projections for the numbers of 15 to 30 year olds in the region and sub-regions up to 2031.
- 1.4** It should be noted that data presented related to the HIE area of Argyll and the Islands rather than Argyll and Bute Council area.

2. RESEARCH BRIEF AND FINDINGS

- 2.1** In 2009 HIE published research designed to provide a better understanding of the migration choices of young people in the Highlands and Islands and to identify appropriate interventions which in their opinion would support population growth.

The study used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research and obtained the views of almost 3,500 young people in the 15-30 age range including those not currently in the region. (367 responses from Argyll and the Islands).

- 2.2** Some of the **key research findings** are outlined below. See appendix 4 for more details. The comments focus on the regional picture with some significant variations for Argyll and the Islands noted.

- 72% of young people in the Highlands and Islands are very proud to be associated with the region, regardless of whether or not they still live there (A&I – 64%)
- Young people are very positive about the social and cultural aspects of life in the Highlands and Islands, 82% think that the region is a good place to bring up a family and 80% say the region is somewhere where they feel safe (A&I - 85%).
- More than half (52%) indicated the Highlands and Islands is somewhere that they wanted to live for the rest of their life.
- 72% of young people were concerned about economic opportunities that they perceived to be available (A&I 79%) and 56% about the availability of well paid jobs with 90% of leavers citing lack of career progression opportunities as a barrier to returning to the area.
- Almost half (48% felt there were insufficient opportunities to access further and higher education in their local areas (A&I – 55%).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Recommendations for action suggested targeting those most easily influenced;

Reluctant Leavers - currently residing in the Highlands and Islands and would prefer to stay but due to a mix of personal, training or employment circumstances feel they must leave

Potential Returners - left the area, but are now interested in returning.

Potential New Residents - never lived in the region, but who are attracted by the opportunities available in the Highlands and Islands

3.2 **Policy Areas;**

Employment - Improving the perception of the employment opportunities, including self employment which are available in the region and increasing the number of well-paid jobs with career prospects, particularly at graduate level.

Education - enhancing the educational offering by UHI and associated colleges through a wider curriculum.

Environment – promoting and maximising the benefits of the social and cultural aspects such as the natural environment and strong community spirit. Other actions relate to addressing the challenge of ensuring adequate provision of affordable and appropriate housing, to enhancing the region's transport and ensuring high speed connectivity.

Engagement – ensuring effective communication between key stakeholders, public, private and third sectors and with young people within and outwith the region. However, the key to effective engagement with young people is to identify the messages and communication channels to enable successful delivery of these actions.

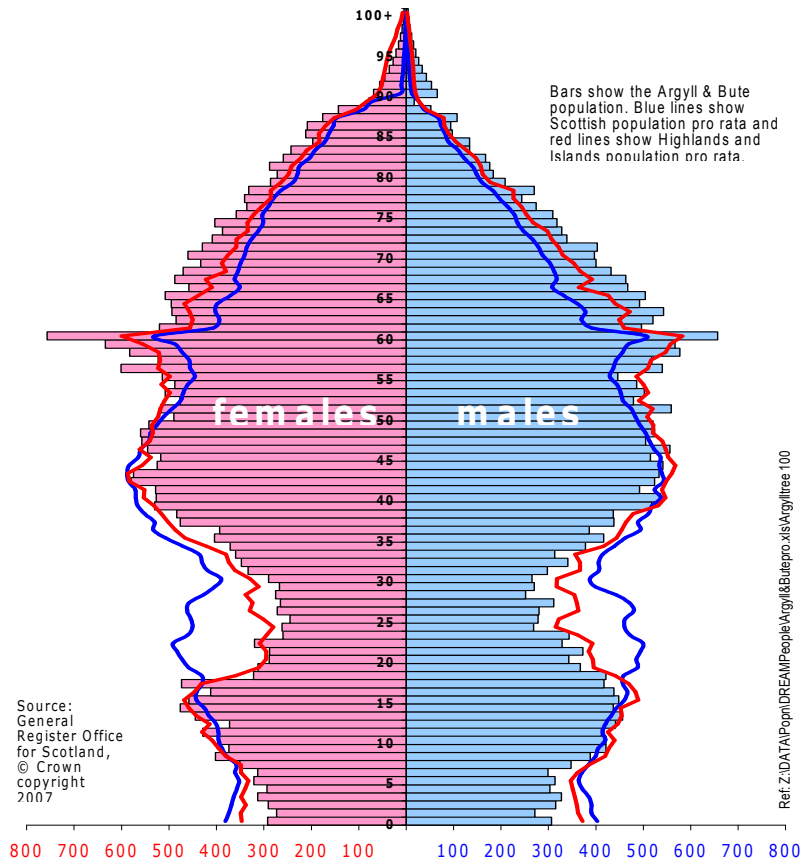
4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The report provides a unique insight into perceptions of the Highlands and Islands by young people and highlights potential policy responses. Furthermore, the importance of addressing demographic imbalance must be recognised by all public agencies. Alignment and collaborative effort amongst public, private and third sectors is essential to ensure these challenges are addressed.

For further information contact:
Report details
Telephone

Ruth.sime@hient.co.uk
<http://www.hie.co.uk/youth-migration.htm>
01397 708 260

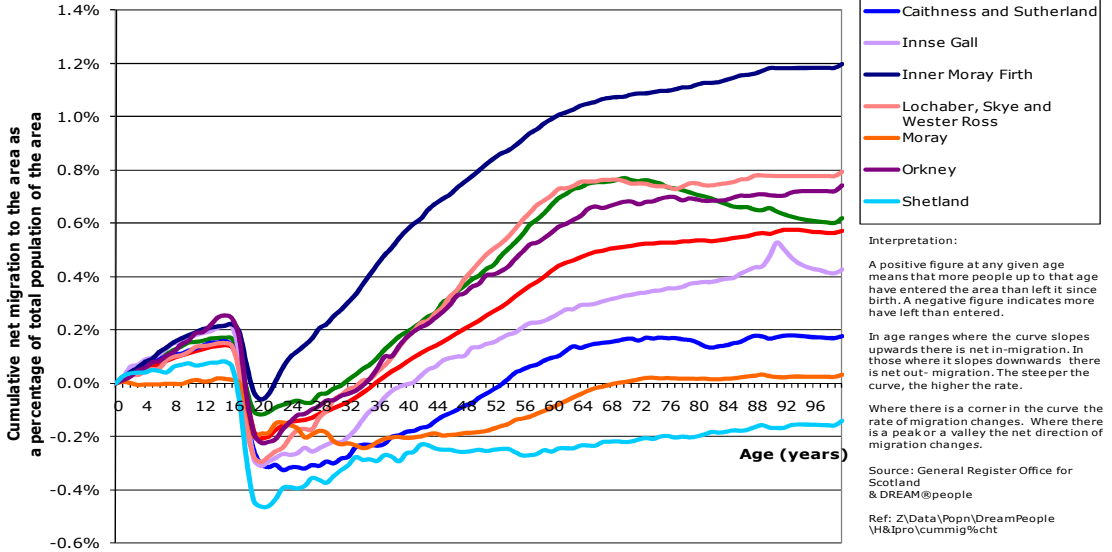
Appendix 1 Gender and Age Distribution in Argyll and the Islands 2007



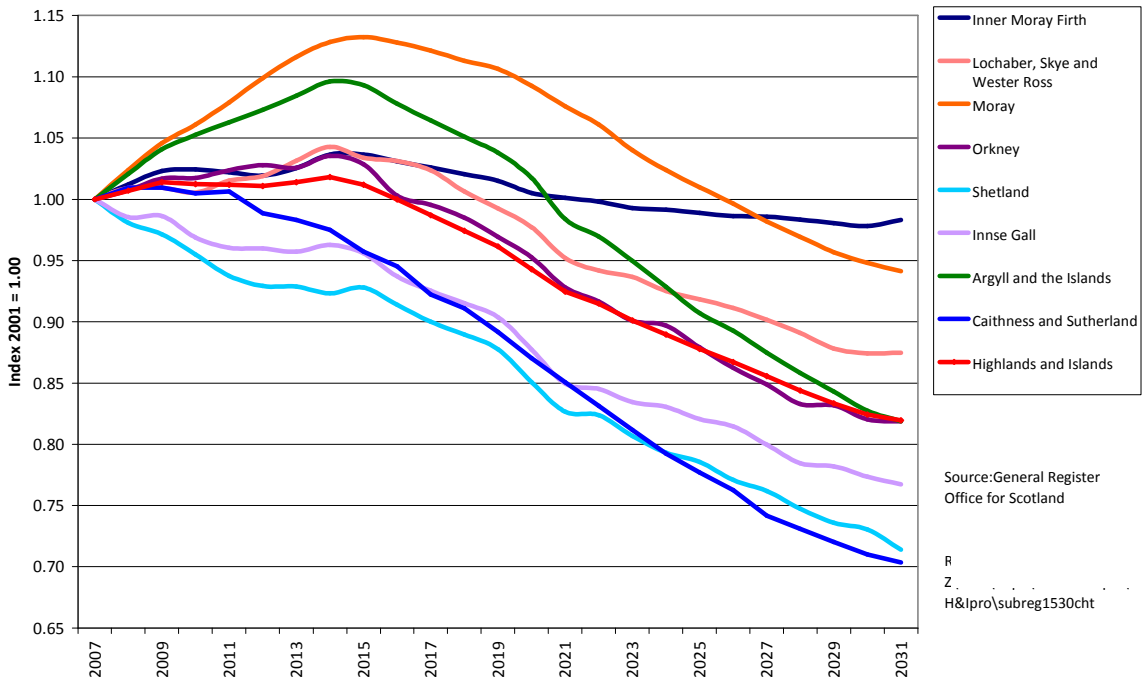
Appendix 2 Cumulative net migration by age in Highlands and Islands sub regions

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Cumulative net migration by age:
 regions of the Highlands and Islands



Appendix 3 15 to 30 year-old population projections: sub regions



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Appendix 4 Describing home communities by administrative and socio-economic region

% agreeing statement is applicable to their home community

	Highlands and Islands Enterprise local areas									Other distinct socio-economic areas		
	Highlands and Islands	Argyll and the Islands	Caitness & Sutherland	Innse Gall	Inner Moray Firth	Lochaber, Skye & Wester Ross	Moray	Orkney	Shetland	Inverness City	Fragile Areas	Areas of employment deficit
A good place to live as a teenager	50%	42%	50%	69%	55%	38%	44%	61%	62%	54%	51%	47%
Few opportunities to access university and college courses	48%	55%	65%	52%	46%	42%	43%	49%	58%	44%	50%	55%
A place I am proud to be associated with	72%	64%	76%	89%	72%	68%	61%	85%	86%	71%	78%	65%
Plenty of job opportunities	28%	21%	9%	17%	33%	26%	29%	35%	44%	38%	25%	21%
A good place to bring up a family	82%	84%	89%	94%	79%	78%	73%	93%	95%	78%	87%	81%
A place only suited to retired people	20%	28%	32%	12%	13%	25%	18%	14%	21%	10%	23%	26%
A place where I feel safe	80%	85%	88%	93%	72%	86%	66%	92%	94%	69%	93%	78%
A place where I want to live for the rest of my life	53%	50%	49%	58%	49%	61%	43%	60%	50%	47%	65%	44%
A place where everyone knows my business	56%	72%	89%	70%	36%	64%	42%	78%	69%	26%	74%	65%
There are few jobs which pay well	56%	57%	75%	68%	51%	57%	55%	61%	50%	46%	61%	60%
A place where it's OK to be different	35%	30%	29%	18%	39%	44%	38%	27%	33%	39%	36%	30%
A place which values its young people	31%	28%	27%	42%	29%	31%	26%	42%	47%	26%	41%	24%
A boring place in which to live	40%	53%	42%	23%	36%	48%	44%	23%	37%	36%	38%	47%

P219/SNAPanalysis2/areas/area table.xls