

# SASPAC Newsletter

Issued August 2002

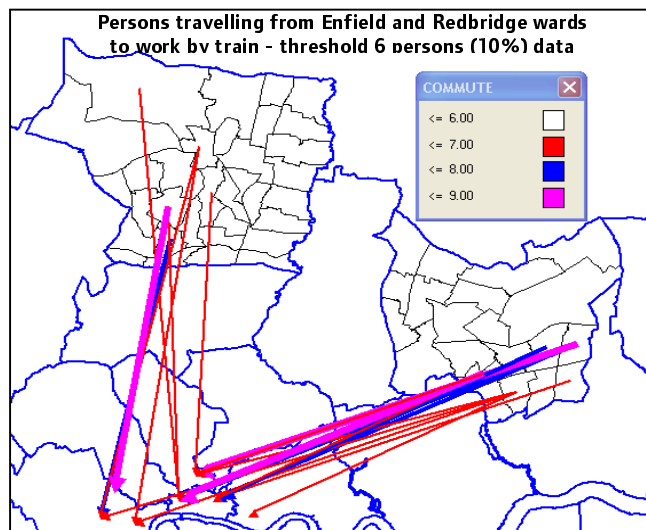


**SASPAC Version 6 distributed**  
**Origin/Destination dataset analysis now available through SASPAC**  
**Use of Neighbourhood Statistics within SASPAC**  
**Latest news on Census Disclosure rules**  
**Information on 2001 Census datasets**

## **New Release of SASPAC – Evolution not Revolution.**

Version 6 of SASPAC, now released, continues the evolution of the software towards the release of the 2001 data, when it will contain all the functionality necessary to access all of the data to be released by the Census offices in the form of aggregated datasets. The current release introduces functionality to address the **Special Workplace and Special Migration Statistics (SWS and SMS)** – also known as the Origin/Destination or ‘Double Geography’ datasets – from the 1991 Census. This additional functionality has been built into the current software without compromising the existing operation of the software. Users will find that access to these new datasets is provided within the existing framework of the software, and there is no need for them to learn how to use a new piece of software.

In addition to enhancing SASPAC to allow access to these datasets, the integral mapping element (Mapshore) has also been amended so that output from the Origin/Destination datasets may be mapped as shown in this diagram. Production of a map such as this relies on digital boundaries being available for both the origin and destination areas. For 1991, this may not always be the case. However, when the 2001 data is released, the boundary files for all areas should be available under the Census Access project. An additional point to note is that whereas the 1991 data is based on a 10% sample, and its value is therefore somewhat reduced, the 2001 data will be a full 100% count.



Also supplied with version 6 of SASPAC are data from the Neighbourhood Statistics Service (NeSS). SASPAC has always been capable of marrying census and non-census statistics such as unemployment data or health indicators. The Neighbourhood Statistics provide an ideal example of a dataset that can be merged with the census data within SASPAC.

This release is a further step in the evolution of SASPAC, a primary aim of which is to ensure that when the 2001 Census data are released, users will have a tried and tested tool with which they are already familiar, available to them to access those datasets immediately.

## **SASPAC - accessing Census and non-Census Statistics**

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service (NeSS) is a rich source of small area data. As all the data are geographically referenced, SASPAC is an ideal tool to use for its interrogation and manipulation. The NeSS data can be merged with Census data for further analysis and can also be mapped using the Mapshore mapping package within SASPAC.

The current NeSS dataset contains 23 tables, of which 16 are available at local authority level (LA), 18 at ward level, (12 of which are available at both LA and ward level) and 1 at health authority (HA) level. The single table that is only available at HA level (table F3: Drug mis-users presenting for treatment) has not been converted to a SASPAC compatible file. It is possible that some of the tables may eventually become available on the NeSS site at Census Output Area level.

Within the NeSS datasets, many counts have been adjusted, using a fixed or random rounding method to avoid the disclosure of any personal information. Therefore, totals may not always equal the sum of the breakdowns, and any counts that are shown as zero may not be zero. Other data protection methodologies are being investigated that may lead to more accurate counts being made available in the future.

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**[www.statistics.gov.uk/nsbase/copyright.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/nsbase/copyright.asp)**

The data that are supplied as SASPAC files with version 6 were available on the Web as at September 2001. However, the data in all tables apply to the boundary of all wards and LAs as they were in 1998. The Neighbourhood Statistics are continually updated on the Web but will only be released in SASPAC form on an annual basis and only then if there is sufficient demand. Updated data can be downloaded as necessary from the NeSS web site as CSV files from which SASPAC System Files can be created.

The Web address of the Neighbourhood Statistics is:

**[www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood)**

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## **The next steps for SASPAC**

ONS have produced a series of guides which detail their proposals for output from the 2001 Census. These may be found on-line at:

**<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/outputproposals.asp>**

In these initial proposals, there are seven datasets to which SASPAC will be able to provide access. These are:

- Key Statistics
- Census Area Statistics Univariate Tables
- Census Area Statistics Theme Tables
- Census Area Statistics Tables
- Standard Tables
- Armed Forces Tables
- Standard Tables Theme Tables

At the moment, there is insufficient information available as to the final content of these datasets. When all necessary information is made available by the Census Offices, the necessary framework and search-enabling files will be built into SASPAC to allow full access to these datasets. This will necessitate a further release of at the end of 2002, with possible updates of the files being made available in early 2003.

Primary means of data supply from ONS will be via Supertab, which whilst satisfying part of the user need with regard to basic access to the census statistics, is unlikely to be sufficient for a large number of such users. In order to satisfy these additional needs, the SASPAC Support team at the Greater London Authority will act as intermediaries, whereby we will receive the data from ONS as CSV files prior to onward supply to users as SASPAC System files.

As with the standard Supertab outputs, the CSV files will be for single tables and all areas within a country. In creating the SASPAC System Files, several tables (probably the total content of a single dataset as listed above) will be put into a single SASPAC System File. It needs to be emphasised that the CSV files to be supplied by ONS will contain only the area identifier and the data from a single table (and possibly the area name). It will not contain any of the other items associated with the 1991 data files, such as Easting and Northing of centroid (for Eds), Hectarage (for wards), Population Usually Resident, Households Usually Resident, and encompassing area names (county name, district name, ward name). These items of information will arrive with the metadata, and will be built into the SASPAC System Files. These metadata files will contain information for all areas in the United Kingdom.

In addition to developing the files necessary to assist interrogation of the datasets already announced by the Census Offices, SASPAC will also be enhanced to allow access to the 2001 Origin/Destination datasets.

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### **2001 Census Disclosure Control: ONS Decision**

ONS received over 80 responses to its consultation with census users on the preferred rounding/adjustment method to be adopted for disclosure control. The majority of responses expressed a preference, in principle, for neither of the two options to be used, but if there had to be additional measures to protect confidentiality then Option 2 was preferred. This option involves small cell adjustment only.

Supporters of Option 2 preferred it because it will affect fewer cells and it ensured that tables would be internally additive. They felt that the main disadvantage of Option 1 (wholesale rounding to base 3) was that all cells would be rounded and that tables would not be internally additive. The benefit that Option 1 had in providing greater flexibility of outputs was considered not great enough to offset the disadvantages.

There were a small number of users who preferred Option 1, as they expressed a desire for greater flexibility in the output and were concerned that the impact on a particular count could be large in a small number of cases.

ONS recognised the concern that rounded data may appear to be more difficult to analyse and manipulate than unadjusted data and in particular the impact that adjusting small cells will have on origin destination statistics. However, relationships between variables will not be affected. Strong relationships will still show up in the data and no new relationships will be created. ONS is prepared to work with users to ensure that census data is used to its full potential, that users understand the quality of census data and that it is interpreted correctly.

**ONS have now made the decision to adopt Option 2 as its disclosure control mechanism.** In making its decision, ONS listened to the concerns of a wide range of users. It has recognised the needs expressed by the majority of users to adjust small counts only and to ensure that individual tables are internally additive. ONS recognised the concerns raised by supporters of Option 1 but felt that option 2 met the needs of the vast majority of users and that the impact on data quality would be minimal.

ONS will only provide very limited information about the methodology for Option 2. The suppressing of the precise method is part of the confidentiality protection process. There will also be an impact on the level of flexibility that ONS may be able to offer in the future.

ONS are very much aware of the problem that their decision on small cell adjustment will have for O/D datasets. The decision will apply equally to these datasets. They have already indicated a willingness to produce tables relating to the geography that individual users require. However, they must be assured that such geographic accumulation before adjustment will not lead to disclosure by differencing with the base data set. They aim to work with users over the coming months to develop ways of overcoming difficulties.

During the autumn ONS will hold a series of seminars and workshops to prepare users for the release of (adjusted) census data and provide advice on how it should be analysed and interpreted to its full potential. It is likely that the seminars will form the basis for further documentation that will be released to all census users before the main results are published. Details of the seminars will be published on the National Statistics website. (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp>)

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## Technical Issues

The technology of computing is constantly changing. SASPAC has been able to keep pace with these changes through the SASPAC Support Scheme. Funding from this source allowed the development of the Windows implementation of SASPAC, and then the transfer from a 16-bit environment to a 32-bit environment, i.e. from Windows 3.1 to Windows NT etc. Now, with the introduction of Windows 2000 and Windows XP, a further change, seemingly implemented by Microsoft, has repercussions for SASPAC. This is the 'recommendation' that the Windows system directory be 'locked-down' so that users do not have write access to it. Instead of writing initialization and preference files to this directory, developers are now urged to direct these files to a 'Documents and Settings' directory. SASPAC is being amended to take account of this, and any users who encounter this problem, should contact the SASPAC Help Desk .

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## SASPAC Prices

The price of SASPAC and the annual Support Scheme fees have been held at a constant level of £1,000 and £500 respectively since 1996/97. We have now, unfortunately, come to the point at which prices have got to rise, so that as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002, the purchase price of SASPAC will be £1,350, and from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, there will be a rise in the annual Support Scheme fee to £600. There is no change in the licensing arrangements which remain site-oriented, so that the software may be installed on as many machines as necessary within a single organisation.

To help us achieve our aim of producing at least two issues of this Newsletter each year, we are looking for some input from users on:

- any other enhancements you would like to see;
- tips for users of SASPAC;
- letters to the Editor;
- any other matters relating to the Census or other local area statistics.

If you have anything that you would wish to see published in the Newsletter, please let Hywel Davies have it as soon as possible - preferably as an e-mail attachment.

SASPAC is software specifically written for the analysis and interrogation of datasets derived from the Census of Population. The development is managed by the Greater London Authority on behalf of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) (formerly Local Government Management Board). It is supported by its developers, CitiLabs (formerly MVA) and Northern Software Technology Limited. Mapshore - the mapping element of SASPAC - is developed and supported by Pebbleshore. Strategic support for the development and advancement of the SASPAC initiative is provided by Katalysis Ltd.

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The development of the software is overseen by the SASPAC Advisory Panel. The members of this Panel are: Ray Brewer (Essex County Council); Malcolm Brown (Cornwall County Council); Paul Graveling (Gateshead and South Tyneside Health); Sherman Griffith (Joint Data Team); Justin Hayes (Manchester Computing Centre); Karen Hodder (Oxford Health); Jan Howard (Milton Keynes Council); Eileen Howes (GLA); Owen Jenkins (Cardiff Research Centre); Allan Lambie (South Lanarkshire Council); Rob Lewis (GLA); Ian Robertson (IDeA); Ian Robertson (Leicester City Council); Peter Shilson (Leeds City Council).

Further information on SASPAC and the SASPAC Support Scheme is available from Hywel Davies, SASPAC Project Officer at the Greater London Authority, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, LONDON, SE1 1AA.

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