

Data Management and Analysis Group

SASPAC Workplan 2009/10



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Introduction

The SASPAC project sits within the Census Team and is part of the Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG) within the Communities and Intelligence Directorate. As a result of OfD it will become part of the Intelligence Unit reporting to the Assistant Director of Intelligence.

The project currently has one full-time permanent post:

- SASPAC Project Officer (Senior Research and Statistical Analyst) - **Alan Lewis** – responsible for the management and development of the SASPAC project.

Following the publication of 2011 Census data – currently expected in September 2012 – an additional full-time member of staff is expected to be recruited to deal with the increase in service demand. This post will be funded directly by monies raised by the SASPAC project.

SASPAC (Small Area Statistical PACKage) is a piece of software designed to facilitate the storage, interrogation, and analysis of large datasets produced by the UK Census Offices. These datasets are derived from responses to the decennial Census questionnaires and hold aggregated data relating to a variety of geographic areas.

SASPAC is essential for efficient storage of, and access to, large quantities of Census data held by the GLA. These electronic data holdings include 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses and will incorporate the 2011 Census results once published.

SASPAC is a 'not for profit' initiative that is owned by the Local Government Association (LGA) and managed by the GLA. Prior to the GLA, the project was managed by the London Research Centre (LRC), who were successful bidders in a competitive tender exercise for SASPAC in 1989. In July 2000 the formation of the GLA saw the LRC, along with SASPAC, absorbed into this new organisation. The software continues to be supported by its users' annual subscriptions (currently £600 per annum). The income generated allows for the enhancement of the software, producing updated datasets as released by the Census Offices – or other sources – and provides a helpdesk support service. Currently, there are approximately 240 organisational members of the SASPAC Support Scheme, these include: local, central and regional government, health sector, academia and the Census Offices. However, following the release of the 2001 Census results, the number of members peaked at over 380 organisations.

Clients and stakeholders

Services provided by the SASPAC project are used by a wide range of organisations:

- Greater London Authority and Functional Bodies
- Local government in England, Wales and Scotland
- Regional Government in England

- Central Government
- Health sector in England, Wales and Scotland
- Academic institutions across the UK
- UK Census Offices

The project's development is overseen by the SASPAC Advisory Panel (SAP) whose membership comprises of a number of experienced SASPAC and Census users. The panel is chaired by Peter Norris who is the head of Data and Analysis at the LGA. This group oversees and steers the projects development and exists to ensure that the initiative continues to develop in line with user expectations.

Although managed and directed by the project officer, there are a number of contractors that provide services to develop and support the project:

- Pecan Tree Ltd – primarily responsible for the software's Graphical User Interface (GUI)
- Katalysis Ltd – provide strategic development services
- Pebbleshore Ltd – provide and support SASPAC's integrated Geographical Information System (GIS)
- Geowise Ltd – provide and support SASPAC's integrated Web Publishing tool

These services were secured through Directorate Decision Form DD167 and are currently secured until 31st March 2010. The project officer works closely with these contractors to support the daily use of the software as well as developing and delivering the longer-term project goals.

What we do

The SASPAC project can be broadly split into the following areas of work:

- Helpdesk support – a phone, email and website service that provides Census/SASPAC advice, guidance and support to members of the Support Scheme.
- Promote and develop wider use of the software through demonstrations, presentations and training events.
- Identify, process, manage and make available a variety of datasets to SASPAC users.
- Following guidance and consultation with users, establish and deliver the short and long-term development goals of the project.
- Represent and promote our users and stakeholders' interests in Census consultations and planning processes undertaken by the UK Census Offices.
- Manage and maximise the SASPAC budget, which includes undertaking negotiations and tendering for contractors.

Representation and networking

The nature of the SASPAC project means the Project Officer is often required to deliver presentations and demonstrations at conferences, meetings and workshops. These vary in nature but are often aimed at promoting the software to potential users or updating existing users on recent developments.

The Project Officer is a member of the following groups:

- Census Strategy Group – discusses the strategic development of SASPAC and any Census related issues.
- SASPAC Advisory Panel – user group that oversees and informs SASPAC's development.
- ESRC Data feed network – working group investigating the format of 2011 Census data delivery.
- ONS' 2011 Census Output Working Group – expert data users group providing views on 2011 outputs
- ONS' 2011 Census Web Services Working Group – provides advice and guidance on web delivery of the Census outputs
- OAC User Group – promotes the use of ONS' Output Area Classification - available in SASPAC - and other area classification.

Meetings between the Project Officer and the various software contractors are undertaken as necessary.

SASPAC also regularly presents at the London Census Users' Group (CUG), which meets on a quarterly basis.

2009/10 Priorities

There are a number of priorities that SASPAC wishes to address during 2009/10:

- Continue to provide software and Census advice, guidance and training to all users. This will be delivered through phone and email support, www.saspac.org, technical documentation, e-bulletins and training courses.
- Raise all 2009/10 Support Scheme invoices and establish new consortium arrangements where necessary.
- Develop further the web-based technologies introduced with SASPAC v9.0 released in October 2008.
- Explore joint 2011 development opportunities with the academic community
- Continue to identify, process and make available Census and other datasets of interest to users.
- Deliver at least one new software release to all users.
- Convene and hold a SASPAC Advisory Panel meeting.
- Continue to progress a SASPAC 2011 project plan in preparation for the release of the next Census results.
- Carry out a user consultation exercise to ascertain their requirements for SASPAC in 2011.

Dissemination of work and outputs

Any new software releases are generally distributed to users on CD, whilst large datasets are typically sent out on DVD media. Increasingly the SASPAC website is used to allow users to download data and software updates as required.

All software documentation and training materials are available through the SASPAC website. The site is updated periodically and email alerts are sent to users. A regular e-bulletin is also distributed to all users. These contain general SASPAC/Census information items as well as notices relating to forthcoming meetings and events.

Meeting notes and other relevant documentation from the SASPAC Advisory Panel are made available to software users via www.saspac.org.

When required, presentations, demonstrations and training sessions are delivered at appropriate meetings and conferences to further promote and market the software service.

Data supply

Data is mainly supplied by the UK Census Offices (ONS, GROS and NISRA) but additional boundary datasets are provided by Ordnance Survey and Pebbleshire Ltd. The project is always keen to investigate datasets from other sources that users may find beneficial.

Development Programme

There are a number of existing and new areas of work related to the SASPAC project in 2009/10. These include:

- Update and incorporate SASPAC v9.0 developments in the training documentation and programme.
- Investigate opportunities presented by ONS' Neighbourhood Data Exchange (NDE) project and other Web Services technologies.
- Undertake an OJEU tender exercise for SASPAC development contracts commencing from 1st April 2010.
- Integrate further datasets into the software (e.g. population projections and local government performance indicators), to widen SASPAC's use during the mid-point in the Census cycle.
- Develop a "SASPAC in 2011" project plan - including funding opportunities.
- Organise a SASPAC Advisory Panel.
- Undertake a user consultation exercise to establish user requirements for 2011.

Regular Briefings from the GLA Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG)

Recent DMAG Briefings 2009:

2009-01	Claimant Count Model: 2009 Technical Note	Rachel Leeson
2009-02	GLA 2008 Round Demographic Projections	John Hollis and Jessica Chamberlain
2009-03	Greater London Demographic Review 2007	John Hollis
2009-04	Census Information Note 2009-1	Eileen Howes
2009-05	Census Information Note 2009-2	Eileen Howes
2009-06	2001 Census Consortium and Information Scheme	Eileen Howes
2009-07	2009 European election results for London	Gareth Piggott
2009-08	2008 Round Ethnic Group Projections	Ed Klodawski
2009-09	Demography Team Workplan 2009/10	Demography Team
2009-10	Education Team Workplan 2009/10	Education Team
2009-11	Social Exclusion Team Workplan 2009/10	Social Exclusion Team
2009-12	Urban Audit III: London and Other Large European Cities	Richard Walker
2009-13	Census Information Note CIN 2009-3	Eileen Howes
2009-14	Census Team Workplan 2009/10	Eileen Howes

Recent DMAG Briefings 2008:

2008-01	Census Information Note 2008-1	Eileen Howes
2008-02	PayCheck 2007	Lovedeep Vaid
2008-03	GLA 2007 Round Ethnic Group Projections	Baljit Bains
2008-04	Council Tax Analysis	Elizabeth Williams
2008-05	A Profile of Londoners by Country of Birth	Lorna Spence
2008-06	Claimant Count Model 2008: Technical Note	Lorna Spence
2008-07	GLA 2007 Round Demographic Projections	John Hollis
2008-08	Greater London Authority Constituency Profiles	Elizabeth Williams & Caroline Hall
2008-09	Family Resources Survey 2005/06: Results for London	Lovedeep Vaid
2008-10	London Borough Migration 2001-06	John Hollis
2008-11	Social Exclusion Data Team Workplan 2008/09	Social Exclusion Data Team
2008-12	Demography Team Workplan 2008/09	John Hollis
2008-13	Education Team Workplan 2008/09	David Ewens
2008-14	Census Team Workplan 2008/09	Eileen Howes
2008-16	GIS Team Workplan 2008/09	Gareth Baker
2008-17	Lone Parents on Income Support by Ethnic Group	Lovedeep Vaid

A full list of DMAG Briefings is available to internal customers through the GLA Intranet; otherwise please contact dmag.info@london.gov.uk A CD containing PDF versions of the Briefings, or hard copies, can be provided.

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