

# SCOTLAND'S CENSUS 2001

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## Gaelic Report



General Register Office  
*for*  
**SCOTLAND**  
*information about Scotland's people*

# **SCOTLAND'S CENSUS 2001**

## **Gaelic Report**

**REGISTRAR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This report contains a full analysis of the answers to the questions about Gaelic in the 2001 Census. Questions on Gaelic have been included in Censuses going back to the 19th century. In Censuses up to and including 1961, questions were asked about whether people spoke Gaelic only or spoke both Gaelic and English. The 1971 Census expanded on this by asking, for the first time, whether people could read Gaelic and also whether they could write it. In 1981 and 1991, the reference to speaking “Gaelic and English” was removed, with respondents only being asked to indicate whether they spoke, read or wrote Gaelic (or any combination of these).
2. In the 2001 Census, people were asked four questions about the Gaelic language - whether they could:
  - Understand spoken Gaelic,
  - Speak Gaelic,
  - Read Gaelic,
  - Write Gaelic.

2001 was the first Census to include a question about a person’s ability to understand spoken Gaelic. As this question was not asked in 1991, the main effect of the change to the 2001 Census form was that many more people reported some Gaelic language ability in 2001 compared with 1991.
3. Disregarding the new question about understanding spoken Gaelic, the Census revealed a continued decline in the percentage of the Scottish population who can speak, read or write Gaelic. For people aged 3 and over, this fell from 1.45 per cent of the population in 1991 to 1.34 per cent in 2001. Despite this overall decrease, the analyses in this report show some improvement in Gaelic language skills among people aged less than 16.
4. The 2001 Census sought details about the Gaelic language for **all** people whereas, in 1991, the questions on Gaelic were only for people aged 3 and over. Many of the 2001 analyses in this report focus only on the population aged 3 and over, because few children younger than 3 have language skills and also because it allows greater comparability between 1991 and 2001.
5. The term ‘some Gaelic language ability’ refers, in 1991, to people able to speak, read **or** write Gaelic and, in 2001, to people able to speak, read, write or understand spoken Gaelic. Terms such as ‘able to speak Gaelic’ and ‘speaks Gaelic’ are used interchangeably in this report.

6. In this report, Scotland has been divided into six “Gaelic areas”:

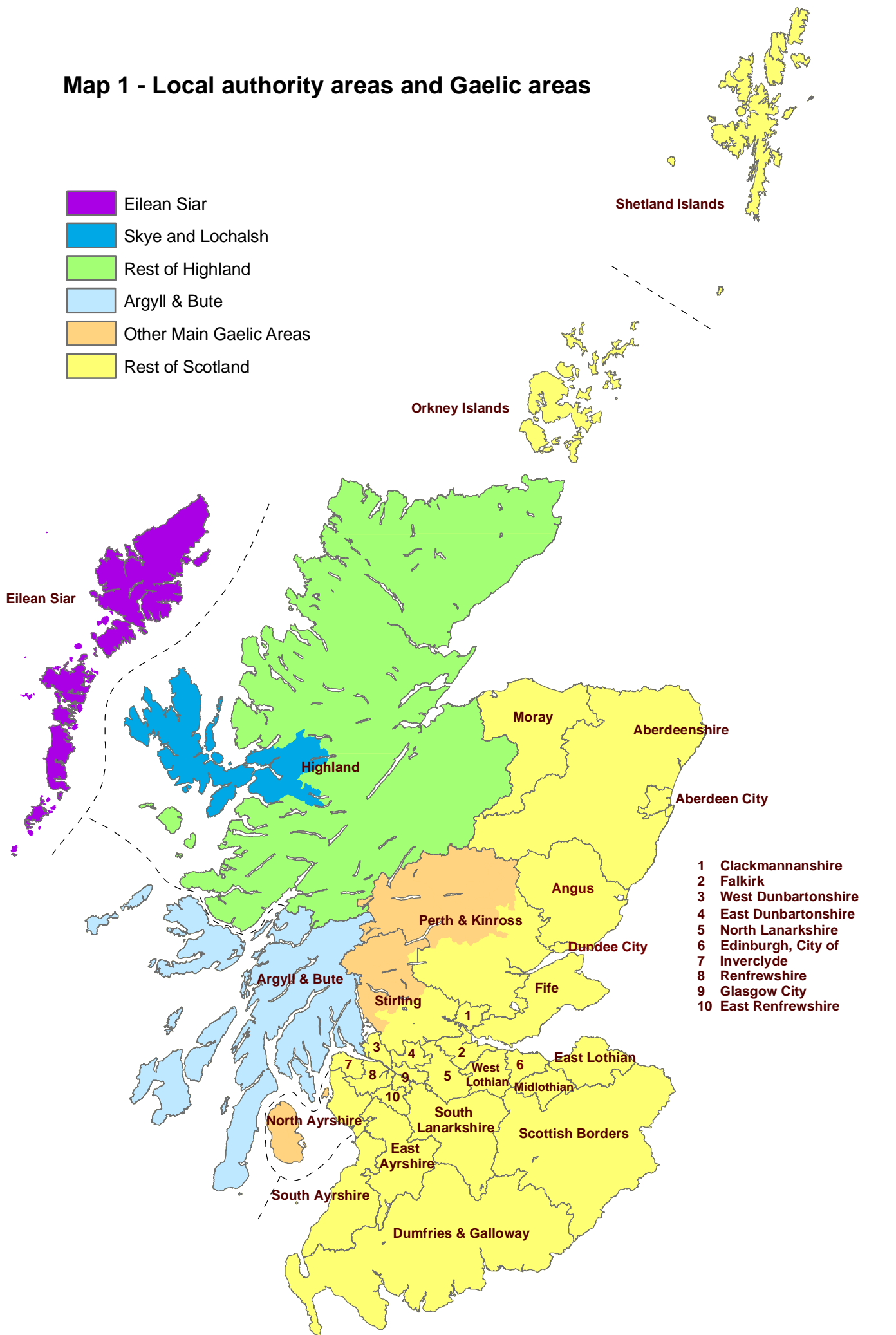
- The Main Gaelic Areas of -
  - Eilean Siar (the Western Isles),
  - Skye & Lochalsh,
  - Rest of Highland (excluding Skye & Lochalsh),
  - Argyll & Bute,
  - Other Main Gaelic Areas (the islands of North Ayrshire, the north of Perth & Kinross and the north of Stirling council areas).
- Rest of Scotland.

These areas are shown in **Map 1** of this report and full details are given in the **Appendix**.



# Map 1 - Local authority areas and Gaelic areas

- Eilean Siar
- Skye and Lochalsh
- Rest of Highland
- Argyll & Bute
- Other Main Gaelic Areas
- Rest of Scotland



- 1 Clackmannanshire
- 2 Falkirk
- 3 West Dunbartonshire
- 4 East Dunbartonshire
- 5 North Lanarkshire
- 6 Edinburgh, City of
- 7 Inverclyde
- 8 Renfrewshire
- 9 Glasgow City
- 10 East Renfrewshire



## SUMMARY

### 7. In Scotland :-

- 92,400 people aged 3 and over (1.9 per cent of the population) had some Gaelic language ability in 2001.
- The number of people aged 3 and over able to speak Gaelic declined by 11 per cent between 1991 and 2001. The number who could read Gaelic increased by 7½ per cent and the number able to write Gaelic increased by 10 per cent over the same period.
- The number of people who could speak, read **or** write Gaelic fell by 6 per cent between 1991 and 2001. However, within this group, the number with more extensive Gaelic ability, who could speak, read **and** write the language, rose by 6 per cent over the same period.
- In 2001, 26,700 people reported that they were able to understand spoken Gaelic but could not speak, read **or** write it.
- 63 per cent of people with some Gaelic language ability were Gaelic speakers in 2001.
- There was a slight increase in the proportion of people aged 3-24 speaking Gaelic between 1991 and 2001. This was helped by the fact that, for each of the ages 5 to 9, both the number and proportion speaking Gaelic increased.
- In 2001, for those aged 3 & over, a Gaelic speaker was approximately 5 years and 8 months older than an average member of the population.
- 1.8 per cent of people with Gaelic language ability gave their ethnicity as non-white in 2001, compared with 2.0 per cent for the population as a whole in that year.
- Children aged 3-15 in 2001 were more likely to speak Gaelic when the head of the family was employed in personal service occupations and was also a Gaelic speaker.
- Among people aged under 55 in 2001, those with a limiting long-term illness were more likely to have Gaelic language than those without a limiting long-term illness.
- In 2001, carers were more likely to have Gaelic language ability than non- carers.
- People with some Gaelic knowledge had better levels of qualifications in 2001 than people without Gaelic knowledge.
- While there were more 12-15 year olds in the Gaelic speaking population than amongst non-Gaelic speakers in 2001, 3 & 4 year olds were less prevalent.

8. **In Eilean Siar :-**

- In 2001, 72 per cent of people aged 3 and over had some Gaelic language ability - more than in any other local authority area or Gaelic area.
- The number of Gaelic speakers fell by a fifth between 1991 and 2001. Numbers who could read Gaelic also fell substantially over the same period, as did the numbers able to write Gaelic.
- In 2001, only 13 per cent (the lowest among council areas) of people with some Gaelic language ability were able to understand spoken Gaelic but were unable to speak, read **or** write it.
- 49 per cent of those with some knowledge of Gaelic could speak, read **and** write it in 2001 – the highest of any of the Gaelic areas.
- The number and percentage of people speaking Gaelic fell between 1991 and 2001 for all age groups. There was a dramatic drop of 53 per cent in the number of 15-24 year old speakers.
- In 2001, 78 per cent of children in married couple families where both the husband and the wife spoke Gaelic also spoke the language.
- The Barvas parish, in the north-west of Eilean Siar, had the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers in all of Scotland (75 per cent in 2001 and 87 per cent in 1991).
- Migration between Eilean Siar and other areas of Scotland resulted in a loss of 161 Gaelic speakers - more than 1 per cent of Eilean Siar's Gaelic speaking population.

9. **In Skye & Lochalsh :-**

- 43 per cent of people aged 3 and over had some Gaelic language ability in 2001 – more than any other Gaelic area except Eilean Siar.
- The number of Gaelic speakers fell by 15 per cent between 1991 and 2001 and the number who could read Gaelic fell slightly, but the number able to write Gaelic rose by 8 per cent.
- In 2001, 47 per cent of those with some knowledge of Gaelic could speak, read **and** write it, only slightly lower than in Eilean Siar.
- The proportion of 10-14 and 15-24 year olds who spoke Gaelic rose between 1991 and 2001, while, the proportion fell in all other age groups.
- In 2001, 78 per cent (the same proportion as for Eilean Siar) of children in married couple families where both the husband and the wife spoke Gaelic also spoke the language.
- It was the Kilmuir parish which had the largest proportion of speakers in Skye & Lochalsh in both 2001 and 1991 – 57 and 73 per cent, respectively.

10. In **Rest of Highland (excluding Skye & Lochalsh)** :-

- 7 per cent of people aged 3 and over had some Gaelic language ability in 2001.
- The number of Gaelic speakers fell by 13 per cent between 1991 and 2001. However, the number who could read Gaelic and those able to write the language increased by 11 and 17 per cent, respectively.
- The proportion of 3-4, 5-9 and 15-24 year olds who spoke Gaelic rose between 1991 and 2001, while falls took place for all other age groups.
- It was the Applecross parish which had the largest proportion of speakers in the Rest of Highland in both 2001 and 1991, although this fell sharply during that period, from 31 per cent to 19 per cent.

11. In **Argyll & Bute** :-

- 7 per cent of people aged 3 and over had some Gaelic language ability in 2001.
- The number of Gaelic speakers fell by 15 per cent between 1991 and 2001. There were, however, small increases of 3 and 5 per cent, respectively, in the number who could read Gaelic and the number who could write the language.
- For younger people, from 3 to 24, the proportion speaking Gaelic increased. The opposite was true for those aged 25 and over.
- Only 55 per cent of people aged 3 and over with some Gaelic language ability in 2001 were aged 16-64 – the lowest of any council area in Scotland.
- The parish of Tiree had by far the largest proportion of speakers in Argyll & Bute in both 2001 and 1991 - 58 and 49 per cent, respectively. In 2001, no other parish had more than 30 per cent of its population speaking the language.

12. In the **Other Main Gaelic Areas** :-

- 4½ per cent of people aged 3 and over had some Gaelic language ability in 2001.
- This was the only Gaelic area where the number of speakers actually rose (by 1 per cent) between 1991 and 2001. The number of readers and the number of writers also increased – by 6 and 3 per cent, respectively.
- There was a sharp rise in both the proportion and the number of 5-9 year olds who spoke Gaelic between 1991 and 2001. The number of speakers increased fivefold from 29 to 146, while the proportion increased from 2 per cent to 10½ per cent.
- Mainly as a result of this, the number of speakers aged 3-24 increased by 36 per cent between 1991 and 2001.

- Among Gaelic areas in 2001, it was only in the Other Main Gaelic Areas that the average age of a Gaelic speaker (38 years) was less than the average age of the population (45 years). In 1991, there was virtually no difference between these two averages.

13. In the **Rest of Scotland** :-

- Just over 1 per cent of people aged 3 and over had some Gaelic language ability in 2001.
- While the number of Gaelic speakers fell by 3 per cent between 1991 and 2001, the number who could read Gaelic and those able to write the language increased dramatically, by 31 and 27 per cent, respectively.
- The proportion of speakers stayed the same between 1991 and 2001. The number of speakers aged 3-24 increased by 1,000 (22 per cent) between 1991 and 2001, while numbers fell for those aged 25 and over.
- In 2001, 36 per cent of those with some knowledge of Gaelic were able to understand the spoken language but not speak, read **or** write it – the highest of any of the Gaelic areas.
- The Rest of Scotland area was by far the biggest gainer of Gaelic speaking migrants from elsewhere in Scotland, gaining equivalent to more than 1 per cent of its Gaelic speaking population through migration in the year before the Census.
- In 2001, 54 per cent of children in married couple families where both the husband and the wife spoke Gaelic also spoke the language. This proportion was substantially lower than for the main Gaelic areas.

## COMMENTARY

### Section 1 : Speaking, reading, writing and understanding Gaelic

#### *Language abilities in Scotland (Tables 1 & 2A)*

14. In 2001, around 92,400 (1.9 per cent) of the 4.9 million residents of Scotland aged three and over had some Gaelic language ability in that they could speak, read, write or understand spoken Gaelic (**Table 2A**).
15. 58,700 people (1.2 per cent) could speak Gaelic, 45,300 (0.9 per cent) could read Gaelic, 33,800 (0.7 per cent) could write Gaelic and 78,400 (1.6 per cent) could understand spoken Gaelic (**Table 1**).
16. Around 65,700 people aged 3 and over were able to speak, read **or** write Gaelic in 2001 (1.3 per cent of the population). This had decreased from 69,500 (1.4 per cent of the population) in 1991.
17. The number of people who could speak, read **and** write Gaelic rose by 6 per cent between 1991 and 2001, from 29,450 to 31,200 (**Table 2A**).
18. Only a third of those with some knowledge of Gaelic in 2001 could speak, read **and** write it.
19. The number who could read Gaelic but could not speak or write it almost doubled over the same period, from 2,400 to 4,700.
20. The number of people aged 3 and over able to speak Gaelic declined by 11 per cent, from 66,000 in 1991 to 58,700 in 2001 (**Table 1**). This loss in Gaelic speakers was not as great as the loss recorded between the 1981 and 1991 Censuses, when numbers fell by 17 per cent, from 79,300 to 66,000.
21. The number of Gaelic readers in the population increased by 7½ per cent since 1991 and the number able to write Gaelic increased by 10 per cent over the same period.
22. In the other two main combinations of language ability, namely “speaks but neither reads nor writes Gaelic” and “speaks and reads but cannot write Gaelic”, there were falls in the number of people since 1991, of 29 and 16 per cent, respectively (**Table 2A**).
23. In 2001, 26,700 people (0.5 per cent of the population) reported that they were able to understand spoken Gaelic but could not speak, read **or** write it.
24. In short, the number of people with a superficial knowledge of Gaelic (speaking only) declined between 1991 and 2001, but the number with a deeper knowledge (could read or write) increased.

***Language abilities at local authority and Gaelic area levels (Tables 1, 2A & 2B and Chart 1)***

25. A total of 22 council areas showed an increase in the number of people able to speak, read **or** write Gaelic since 1991 (**Table 1**). The largest increase, of around a third, was in Aberdeen City. This may result from the fact that many people from Gaelic areas go to university or college in Aberdeen and, in the 2001 Census, students were enumerated at their term-time address whereas, in 1991, they were enumerated at their home address.
26. Twelve local authority areas showed an increase since 1991 in the number of people able to speak Gaelic, with the largest increase (a quarter) again in Aberdeen City.
27. The local authority area where by far the largest proportion of people (72 per cent) had some Gaelic language ability was Eilean Siar (**Table 2A**). Highland and Argyll & Bute had the next largest proportions, with 9 and 7 per cent, respectively. These three areas in total accounted for 47 per cent of the total number of people in Scotland able to speak, read, write or understand spoken Gaelic.
28. Setting aside people who only understood Gaelic, 52 per cent of all people able to speak, read **or** write Gaelic lived in Eilean Siar, Highland or Argyll & Bute (**Table 1**). This proportion was, however, much higher (58 per cent) in 1991, reflecting the fact that the decline in the numbers speaking, reading or writing in these Gaelic heartland areas was greater than the decline in Scotland generally.
29. Eilean Siar showed the most significant decline in the number and percentage of the population able to speak, read **or** write Gaelic since 1991. Numbers fell from 19,700 to 16,000, or from 69 per cent to 62 per cent of the population.
30. 29 per cent of people with some Gaelic language ability in Scotland were able to understand spoken Gaelic but not speak, read **or** write it (**Table 2A** and **Chart 1**). Among council areas, this figure was lowest by far in Eilean Siar, at 13 per cent, reflecting the fact that many people had better knowledge of Gaelic. Highland was the only other council area where this figure (26 per cent) was below the Scottish average (**Table 2A**).
31. There were six council areas where 40 per cent or more of people with some Gaelic language ability could understand spoken Gaelic but were not able to speak, read or write it. These were Aberdeenshire, East Ayrshire, Falkirk, Fife, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.
32. In Eilean Siar and Skye & Lochalsh, almost half of those with some knowledge of Gaelic could speak, read **and** write it in 2001 (**Chart 1** and **Table 2B**). Among Gaelic areas, this figure was lowest in the Rest of Scotland area (27 per cent).
33. By contrast, in the Rest of Scotland area, 36 per cent of those with some knowledge of Gaelic were able to understand the spoken language but not speak, read **or** write it – the highest of all areas. This proportion was lowest in Eilean Siar and Skye & Lochalsh, at 13 and 18 per cent, respectively.



*Language abilities at civil parish level (Table 3 and Maps 2 & 3)*

34. The Census revealed a decrease in the number of Gaelic speakers aged 3 and over since 1991 in around two thirds of civil parishes in the main Gaelic areas (**Table 3**).
35. Only the main Gaelic area parishes in Stirling council area showed an increase in the number of Gaelic speakers - from 203 in 1991 to 233 in 2001.
36. In Eilean Siar, all civil parishes showed a decrease in the number of Gaelic speakers since 1991. In the South Uist parish, although there was a drop in the numbers speaking Gaelic, the proportion of the population who were speakers rose.
37. The fall in the number of speakers in Eilean Siar between 1991 and 2001 was particularly marked in the Lochs and Barvas parishes, although Barvas remained the Scottish parish with the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers.
38. All civil parishes in the Skye & Lochalsh area experienced a fall in the proportion of the population speaking Gaelic. In the Sleat parish, although the proportion fell, the actual number of Gaelic speakers increased.
39. In the Rest of Highland area, it was the Applecross civil parish area which had the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers in both 1991 and 2001. However, the proportion fell dramatically from 31 per cent in 1991 to 19 per cent in 2001. There were only six parishes in the Rest of Highland which had more than 15 per cent of people aged 3 and over speaking Gaelic in 2001.
40. Within the Argyll & Bute council area, by far the highest proportion of people who were Gaelic speakers was in the Tiree parish, although there was a fall between 1991 and 2001, from 58 per cent to 49 per cent.
41. In the Other Main Gaelic Areas, it was the parishes of Kenmore and Dull which had the highest proportions speaking Gaelic, although both proportions were less than 8 per cent.
42. All of the parishes where at least 60 per cent of people aged 3 & over spoke Gaelic in 2001 were in Eilean Siar (**Map 2**).
43. Almost all parishes with at least 5 per cent of their populations speaking Gaelic in 2001 were in the north-west of Scotland. The only exceptions were small groups of parishes around Inverness and in rural parts of Perth & Kinross and Stirling.
44. While there were no parishes in 2001 where more than three quarters of people aged 3 & over spoke Gaelic, there were six such parishes in 1991 (**Map 3**). All of these six parishes were in Eilean Siar.
45. In 2001, there were 21 Scottish parishes where at least a fifth of the population aged 3 & over spoke Gaelic. In 1991, this number was higher, at 28. Out of these 28 parishes, all but one (South Uist) showed a decrease between 1991 and 2001 in the proportion speaking Gaelic.

## Section 2 : Demography

### *Age and sex (Table 4 and Charts 2 & 3)*

46. In 2001, 63 per cent of people with some Gaelic language ability could speak Gaelic (**Table 4**). This varied greatly, from 85 per cent in Eilean Siar to 53 per cent in the Rest of Scotland area.
47. There was no difference between the percentage of men and women who had some Gaelic language ability, both at 1.8 per cent of the Scottish population.
48. However, in the main Gaelic areas, a higher proportion of women than men had Gaelic ability. This was particularly the case in the Rest of Highland area, where females made up 51 per cent of the population but substantially more (56 per cent) of those with Gaelic ability.
49. While 70 per cent of Scotland's population was aged 25 and over in 2001, 78 per cent of those with some Gaelic ability were in this age category.
50. In the Other Main Gaelic Areas, 75 per cent of the population was aged 25 and over. This compared with only 66 per cent for people in this area with Gaelic ability. This mainly resulted from the fact that, while only 5 per cent of the population was aged 5-9, 16 per cent of those with some Gaelic ability were in this age group.
51. 3-15 year olds accounted for around the same proportion of Scotland's population in 1991 and in 2001, but the proportion of people of that age who could speak, read or write Gaelic rose by almost 2 percentage points (**Chart 2**). Nevertheless, in both years, the proportion of the population in this age group was still higher than the proportion of those speaking, reading or writing Gaelic. This is consistent with the information in **Table 8**, which shows that, while Gaelic speakers are on average younger in 2001 than in 1991, they are still older than the general population.
52. In 2001, 12 per cent of those in Scotland aged 3 and over with some Gaelic language ability were aged 3-15 (**Chart 3**). At local authority level, this was highest in Stirling (24 per cent) and lowest in South Ayrshire (4 per cent).
53. Two thirds of those aged 3 and over with some Gaelic language ability were aged between 16 and 64. This varied from 83 per cent in Aberdeen City to 55 per cent in Argyll & Bute.

### *Change in Gaelic speaking between 1991 and 2001 by age group (Table 5)*

54. The percentage of people aged 3 and over speaking Gaelic fell from 1.4 to 1.2 per cent.
55. The proportion of people aged 5-9 speaking Gaelic increased, but the proportion aged 3-4 and 25 & over fell.
56. In Eilean Siar, both the number and percentage speaking fell for all age groups. There was a dramatic drop of 53 per cent in the number of 15-24 year old speakers – much greater than the reduction in the population of 15-24 year olds (38 per cent).

57. In Skye & Lochalsh, there were increases in the proportion of 10-14 and 15-24 year olds speaking but falls for all other age groups.
58. In all areas other than Eilean Siar and Skye & Lochalsh, the proportion of 3-4 and 5-9 year olds speaking Gaelic increased – especially among 5-9 year olds in the Other Main Gaelic Areas, where it increased from 2 per cent in 1991 to 10½ per cent in 2001.

***People aged under 24 (Table 6 & 7)***

59. The percentage of people aged between 0 and 24 who spoke Gaelic (**Table 6**) was 0.9 per cent - less than the average of 1.2 per cent for the whole population.
60. For 3-24 year olds, the number of people speaking Gaelic fell by 4½ per cent between 1991 and 2001. However, as the total population of 3-24 year olds fell by 6 per cent over this period, there was a slight increase in the **proportion** of 3-24 year olds who speak the language.
61. For ages 5-9, the actual numbers of Gaelic speakers and percentage of the population able to speak Gaelic increased since 1991. Despite this, as shown in **Table 5**, the proportion of 5-9 years olds speaking Gaelic was still considerably lower than the average for the Scottish population.
62. The number of Gaelic speakers aged 3-24 fell by 600 between 1991 and 2001 (**Table 7**). However, numbers rose in all Gaelic areas of Scotland, except the Rest of Highland and Eilean Siar, where there were falls of 12 and 1,855 respectively.
63. The biggest percentage increase in the number of speakers was 36 per cent in the Other Main Gaelic Areas.

***Average ages (Tables 8 & 9 and Chart 4)***

64. In 1991, for those aged 3 & over, a Gaelic speaker in Scotland was approximately 7 years 3 months older than the general population (**Table 8**). By 2001, this age difference had fallen slightly, to around 5 years 8 months.
65. While the average age of the general population aged 3 and over rose by just over a year between 1991 and 2001, the average age of a Gaelic speaker fell by around 4 months.
66. In 2001, the average age of a Gaelic speaker varied from 35.5 in Aberdeen City to 52.2 in Inverclyde. In Aberdeen City, Gaelic speakers were 4 years younger than the general population.
67. Stirling showed the greatest decrease in the average age of a Gaelic speaker between 1991 and 2001 with the figure falling by over 8 years to 37.1 years of age.
68. In the Other Main Gaelic Areas, the average age of a Gaelic speaker was less than the average age of the population in 2001 (**Chart 4**).

69. Among the Gaelic areas, it was Argyll & Bute which had the highest average age for a speaker in 1991 – almost 50 years (**Table 9**). This compared with under 44 years old for the Other Main Gaelic Areas.
70. The age profile for the Other Main Gaelic Areas was particularly striking. The average age of the population was almost 5 years older than the general population of Scotland. However, Gaelic speakers in these areas were on average almost 8 years younger than Gaelic speakers in Scotland.

***Marital status (Table 10)***

71. In the population as a whole, between 1991 and 2001, the proportion of adults who were married, remarried or separated fell from 58 to 53 per cent. Over the same period, there were increases of 4 and 2 percentage points in the proportion single and divorced, respectively and a 1 percentage point drop in the proportion widowed.
72. The proportion of people with Gaelic language ability who were widowed was higher than for the population as a whole. This reflects the fact that Gaelic speakers are, on average, older.
73. Since 1991, there was a small increase, from 29 to 32 per cent, in the proportion of people with Gaelic knowledge who were single. This proportion did, however, decrease in Eilean Siar.
74. The proportion of people with Gaelic knowledge who were married, remarried or separated fell in each Gaelic area, with the exception of Eilean Siar.

### **Section 3 : Cultural attributes**

#### ***Country of birth (Table 11 & Chart 5)***

75. In 2001, a slightly higher percentage of people aged 3 and over with some Gaelic language ability were born in Scotland (89 per cent) than for the Scottish population as a whole (87 per cent) (**Table 11**). For Gaelic speakers, this proportion was 92 per cent.
76. In Eilean Siar, 97 per cent of those who could speak, read or write Gaelic in 2001 were born in Scotland while, in the Other Main Gaelic Areas and the Rest of Scotland area, only 86 and 85 per cent, respectively, were Scots born (**Chart 5**).
77. All areas showed a drop, between 1991 and 2001, in the percentage of those able to speak, read or write Gaelic who were born in Scotland. This fall varied from only 1 percentage point in Eilean Siar to almost 5 percentage points in the Rest of Scotland area.

#### ***Ethnic group (Table 12)***

78. 2.0 per cent of the Scottish population aged 3 & over were from non-white ethnic backgrounds in 2001. A very similar proportion (1.8 per cent) of people with Gaelic language ability were non-white.
79. In Eilean Siar, Highland and Argyll & Bute, non-white people were more prevalent among the general population than they were among those with Gaelic language ability. However, in the Other Main Gaelic Areas and the Rest of Scotland area, the opposite was the case.
80. In 2001, non-white people in Scotland were only slightly less likely to have Gaelic language ability than white people. This resulted from the fact that, although non-white people in Eilean Siar, Highland and Argyll & Bute were substantially less likely to have some Gaelic ability than white people, in the Rest of Scotland area 1.7 per cent of non-white people had Gaelic ability compared with only 1.0 per cent of white people.
81. In the population as a whole, the proportion of people who were non-white increased from 1.2 per cent in 1991 to 2.0 per cent in 2001. There were also increases in each of the Gaelic areas, with the exception of Argyll & Bute. Among those with some Gaelic language ability, the proportion who were non-white more than doubled, from 0.7 per cent in 1991 to 1.8 per cent in 2001. This proportion increased for each of the Gaelic areas, apart from the Rest of Highland.

#### ***Religion (Tables 13 & 14)***

82. A smaller proportion of people with some Gaelic language ability had no religion than for the Scottish population generally - 17 per cent compared with 28 per cent (**Table 13**). This was also the case for each of the Gaelic areas, particularly in the Rest of Highland, where 27 per cent of the population had no current religion but, for those with Gaelic language ability, this proportion was only 16 per cent.
83. At Scotland level, it was people whose current religion was "Other Christian" who were the most likely to have Gaelic language ability.

84. In Argyll & Bute, people who were “Church of Scotland” were the most likely to have some Gaelic ability, while in the Other Main Gaelic Areas and the Rest of Scotland area, it was people of “Other religion” who were the most likely.
85. Similar patterns existed for people with no religion of upbringing (**Table 14**).

#### **Section 4 : Gaelic in families (Tables 15, 16 & 17)**

86. In 2001, there were just over 1.4 million families in Scotland, of which 494 thousand (35 per cent) had at least one child aged 3-15 (**Table 15**).
87. There were 2,696 children in families headed by a couple (either married or cohabiting), where both members of the couple spoke Gaelic.
88. In the married couple families where both parents were Gaelic speakers, 70 per cent of children aged 3-15 also spoke Gaelic. The equivalent figure from 1991 was 78 per cent (Table 6 of 1991 Census report '*1991 Census, Gaelic Language, Scotland*').
89. In cohabiting couple families where both parents were Gaelic speakers, the proportion of children aged 3-15 speaking Gaelic, at 68 per cent, was very similar to the figure for married couple families.
90. There were about 3,600 families where all dependent children aged 3-15 spoke Gaelic and 1,600 families where some of the children spoke Gaelic. This corresponded to 0.7 and 0.3 per cent of the total number of families with at least one child aged 3-15.
91. Children were more likely to speak Gaelic if both parents were Gaelic speakers or if a lone parent was a Gaelic speaker. The percentage was much lower when only one parent was a Gaelic speaker and negligible when neither parent was able to speak Gaelic – but, in Skye & Lochalsh, 26 per cent of children in married couple families where neither parent spoke Gaelic were able to speak Gaelic themselves, and in Eilean Siar, 19 per cent were able to do so (**Table 16**).
92. Married and co-habiting couple families where only the mother was a Gaelic speaker had a higher percentage of Gaelic speaking children than families where only the father was a Gaelic speaker (**Table 15**). On the other hand, in lone parent families where the parent was a Gaelic speaker, a child in a lone father family was slightly more likely to speak Gaelic than a child in a lone mother family.
93. Eilean Siar and Skye & Lochalsh showed the highest percentage of Gaelic transmission between generations (**Table 16**). In both areas, in married couples where both husband and wife spoke Gaelic, 78 per cent of the children also spoke the language. For the Rest of Highland, Argyll & Bute and the Other Main Gaelic Areas, 62 per cent of the children were Gaelic speakers and, for the Rest of Scotland area, it was just over half.
94. The highest percentage of children aged 3-15 spoke Gaelic when the head of the family was a Gaelic speaker employed in personal service occupations (**Table 17**). 48 per cent of children in such families spoke Gaelic - this compared with just 31 per cent where the family head was in a sales and customer service occupation and was a Gaelic speaker.

95. In Eilean Siar, almost two-thirds of children whose head of family was a Gaelic speaker could also speak Gaelic themselves. Among families headed by a person working as a manager or senior official, this figure was three quarters, while for families headed by someone in a sales and customer service occupation, it was less than half.
96. In the Rest of Scotland, only 22 per cent of children with a Gaelic speaking family head could speak the language themselves. This was highest for children of family heads in professional occupations (26 per cent) and lowest for those with family heads in administrative and secretarial occupations (16 per cent).
97. In families where the head did not speak Gaelic, only 0.5 per cent of children spoke Gaelic. This varied from 31 and 25 per cent in Skye & Lochalsh and Eilean Siar to 0.2 per cent for the Rest of Scotland.



## **Section 5 : Illness, health and caring**

### ***Long-term illness (Table 18)***

98. A higher percentage of people with some Gaelic language ability had a limiting long-term illness than in the Scottish population - 24 per cent compared with 20 per cent. This is to be expected, because those with knowledge of Gaelic are, on average, older than the general population.
99. In the Main Gaelic Areas, the position was largely the same, with 19 per cent of the population having a limiting long-term illness, compared with 23 per cent of those with Gaelic knowledge.
100. Although this is not shown in **Table 18**, there was a substantial increase between 1991 and 2001 (of around 7 percentage points, for both the Scottish population and people with some Gaelic ability) in the proportion of people who reported having a long term illness.
101. In both the Rest of Scotland and the Main Gaelic areas, people with a limiting long-term illness were more likely to have Gaelic language than those without a limiting long-term illness. In the Rest of Scotland, this was also true for people aged under 55 and, in the Main Gaelic Areas, it was the case for all age groups except 35-44 and 55-64.

### ***General health (Table 19)***

102. At Scotland level, a lower percentage of people with some Gaelic language ability said they were in good health (64 per cent) compared with the population as a whole (68 per cent). Again, this is probably because people with knowledge of Gaelic are, on average, older than the general population.
103. There was a similar difference in the Main Gaelic Areas, where 70 per cent of the population reported good health, compared with 66 per cent of those with Gaelic knowledge.
104. In both the Rest of Scotland and the Main Gaelic Areas, people with good health were less likely to have Gaelic language than those who reported their health as not good. In the Rest of Scotland, this was also true for people aged under 55 although, in the Main Gaelic Areas, it was only the case for the ages 25-34 and 65 & over.

### ***Carers (Table 20)***

105. A higher percentage of people with some Gaelic language ability were carers (12 per cent) than in the general Scottish population (9½ per cent).
106. Carers were more likely to have Gaelic language ability.
107. In the Main Gaelic Areas, for all age groups apart from those aged 75 and over, carers were more likely to have Gaelic knowledge than non-carers. This difference was greatest for those aged under 45. In the Rest of Scotland, carers of all age groups were more likely to have Gaelic knowledge, with the biggest difference among those aged under 25.

***Households containing carers and people with a limiting long-term illness (Table 21)***

108. 38,862 households in Scotland (1.8 per cent of all households) had at least one Gaelic speaking adult in them.
109. A slightly higher proportion (2.1 per cent) of households with at least one carer contained Gaelic speaking carer(s).
110. 12 per cent of households with one over-75 resident with a limiting long-term illness contained at least one carer. This figure was much higher (21 per cent) in households with at least one adult Gaelic speaker.

## **Section 6 : General**

### ***Economic activity (Table 22)***

111. In 2001, while 45½ per cent of the Scottish population aged 16-64 was in full time employment, only 42 per cent of people with some Gaelic language ability worked full-time.
112. In the main Gaelic areas, the biggest difference was in Argyll & Bute, where 37 per cent of people aged 16-64 with Gaelic language ability were in full time employment, compared with 43 per cent of the whole population of that age.
113. Scotland-wide, a slightly higher percentage of people with Gaelic ability were self-employed (9 per cent) compared with the population generally (7 per cent).
114. However, in Skye & Lochalsh and the Other Main Gaelic Areas, those with Gaelic knowledge were less likely to be self-employed than the population as a whole.

### ***Industry & Occupation (Tables 23 & 24)***

115. In 2001, 2.0 per cent of employed people aged 16-74 with some Gaelic language ability were employed in the fishing industry (**Table 23**). This is much higher than in Scotland generally (0.3 per cent), mainly because fishing is more important in the main Gaelic areas. In the Rest of Scotland, someone with Gaelic ability was no more or less likely to work in the fishing industry.
116. A higher percentage of people with Gaelic knowledge in Scotland were employed in education in 2001 (10 per cent) compared with the general population (7 per cent). In each of the main Gaelic areas, the percentage employed in education was at least as great for those with Gaelic knowledge as it was for all people.
117. There was a smaller proportion of people with Gaelic ability employed in manufacturing and wholesale & retail trades (8 and 11 per cent respectively) than in the Scottish population (13 and 14 per cent). This was also the case in each of the main Gaelic areas.
118. Since 1991, there has been a substantial increase in the percentage of people employed in the real estate industry. For all Gaelic areas except Eilean Siar and Argyll & Bute, this increase was greater for people with some Gaelic language ability than it was for all people.
119. A higher percentage of employed people with Gaelic language ability were teaching and research professionals than the Scottish population generally (**Table 24**). This was particularly the case for females and for the Rest of Scotland area.
120. A lower percentage of employed people with Gaelic ability were in administrative occupations.

121. In the Main Gaelic Areas, men with Gaelic knowledge were more likely to be employed in skilled agricultural trades or as transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives than men generally. Women with Gaelic knowledge were more likely to work in caring personal service occupations than women generally.
122. In the Rest of Scotland, females with Gaelic knowledge were more likely to be employed as health and social welfare associate professionals than females generally.

***Highest level of educational qualification (Table 25)***

123. People with some Gaelic knowledge had on average a higher level of qualification than Scottish people generally. 28 per cent of those with Gaelic knowledge were qualified to degree level or equivalent, compared with 19½ per cent for the Scottish population generally.
124. People unable to speak Gaelic but with higher Gaelic skills such as reading and/or writing, were even more likely to have degree level education (47 per cent).
125. In Eilean Siar, Skye & Lochalsh and Argyll & Bute, those with knowledge of Gaelic were less likely than the population as a whole to be qualified to degree level.
126. Around a third of the Scottish population did not have any educational qualifications. For people with Gaelic knowledge, this proportion was lower – especially for people unable to speak Gaelic but with higher Gaelic skills, only 15 per cent of whom had no educational qualifications.

***Gaelic speaking dependent children (Table 26)***

127. There were 911,000 dependent children aged 3 and over in the 2001 Census. Less than 1 per cent of these children were Gaelic speakers.
128. While 13 per cent of non-Gaelic speaking children were aged 3 or 4, just 7 per cent of Gaelic speaking children were this age. In contrast, 28 per cent of non-Gaelic speaking dependents were 12-15 years old, compared with 34 per cent of Gaelic speaking dependents.
129. The proportion of dependents who were aged 5-11 and 16-18 differed little between Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers.
130. In couple households with one adult Gaelic speaker, a fifth of dependent children spoke Gaelic.
131. In couple households with two adult Gaelic speakers, 68 per cent of dependents were Gaelic speakers. This varied from 57 per cent of 3-4 year olds to 73 per cent of 12-15 year olds.
132. Just over a third of children in lone parent households with one Gaelic speaking adult spoke the language themselves. This was also highest for 12-15 year olds (36 per cent).
133. In households containing more than one family, where all adults in the household spoke Gaelic, 68 per cent of dependents spoke the language. 86 per cent of 16-18 year old dependents in this type of household were Gaelic speakers.

## **Section 7 : Comparison of different age groups between 1991 and 2001 (Table 27)**

134. **Table 27** looks at how the number of people in a 10 year age group in 1991 compared with the “equivalent” age group in 2001 – for example, comparing people who were 30-39 in 1991 with those who were 40-49 in 2001.
135. The number of 30-39 year olds in 2001 was 2 per cent higher than the number of 20-29 year olds in 1991. There was little difference between the number of 40-49 year olds in 2001 and the number of 30-39 year olds in 1991. There were 9 per cent fewer 60-69 year olds in 2001 than 50-59 year olds in 1991 and 27 per cent fewer 70-79 year olds in 2001 than 60-69 year olds in 1991.
136. While the 20-29 year olds in 1991 had increased by 2 per cent by 2001 (when they were 30-39), the proportion of Gaelic speakers had fallen by 6 per cent. By Gaelic area, this varied from the Rest of Highland, where the number of Gaelic speakers was virtually the same, to Eilean Siar and the Other Main Gaelic Areas where the number of speakers fell by 15 per cent.
137. Although there were the same number of 40-49 year olds in 2001 as there had been 30-39 year olds in 1991, the number of Gaelic speakers had fallen by 9 per cent.
138. The fall between 1991 and 2001 in the numbers in the older age groups is to be expected due to the increased likelihood of people dying at these ages. However, for these ages, the fall in the population speaking Gaelic was still greater than the fall for the population as a whole.
139. In the Other Main Gaelic Areas, there were more 40-49 and 50-59 year old speakers in 2001 than 30-39 and 40-49 year old speakers in 1991. In all other Gaelic areas, there were falls in these numbers. However, the increased number of Gaelic speakers in the Other Main Gaelic Areas may be partly attributable to the fact that there were large increases in the general population for these age groups.

## Section 8 : Migration

### *People in Scotland by migration status (Table 28)*

140. In 2001, 88 per cent of people with some Gaelic language ability lived at the same address at Census time as they did one year previously. This was more or less the same as the equivalent figure for the population of Scotland.
141. Within the different language abilities, this varied from 89 per cent for people able to speak Gaelic to 82 per cent for people in the residual “other combinations of skills in Gaelic” category.
142. Overall, 2.0 per cent of migrants in Scotland had some Gaelic language ability, slightly higher than the figure of 1.8 per cent for non-migrants.

### *Migration at Gaelic area level (Tables 29 & 30)*

143. 46 per cent of migrants who moved into Eilean Siar from elsewhere in Scotland in the year before the Census had some Gaelic language ability. For Skye & Lochalsh, this figure was 26 per cent (**Table 29**).
144. A much higher proportion (57 per cent) of people who moved out of Eilean Siar to elsewhere in Scotland had some Gaelic language ability. For Skye & Lochalsh, this figure was 36 per cent.
145. While only 10 per cent of migrants who moved to Scotland from the rest of the UK and overseas moved to the main Gaelic areas, 25 per cent of Gaelic speaking migrants who moved from outwith Scotland moved to the main Gaelic areas.
146. Eilean Siar lost just over 1 per cent of its population through migration to other parts of Scotland in the year before the Census – and a similar proportion of its Gaelic speaking population (**Table 30**). The loss of Gaelic speakers involved an outflow of 325 speakers, counterbalanced by 164 Gaelic speaking in-migrants. Three quarters of the outflow migrated to the Rest of Scotland (243 people), while around two thirds of the inflow from elsewhere in Scotland was as a result of migrants moving from the Rest of Scotland (106 people) (**Table 29**).
147. Skye & Lochalsh and Argyll & Bute both lost more than 1 per cent of their Gaelic speaking population through migration to other parts of Scotland (**Table 30**). In both areas, migrants moving to/from the Rest of Scotland accounted for high proportions (similar to those for Eilean Siar) of both the outflow and inflow to/from elsewhere in Scotland.
148. The Rest of Scotland gained around 1 per cent of their Gaelic speaking population as a result of migration from the main Gaelic areas.

149. Most of the net outflow of Gaelic speakers from the main Gaelic areas was accounted for by people aged 16-44. While there was some counterbalancing net inflow of older people, the numbers were very small e.g. the net inflow of Gaelic speakers aged 65 and over to Eilean Siar was only 11 people. The Other Main Gaelic Areas and Argyll & Bute lost around 6 and 5 per cent, respectively, of their Gaelic speaking population aged 16-44. The Rest of Scotland area was the only gainer of Gaelic speakers of this age, gaining equivalent to 3 per cent of its Gaelic speaking population of that age.
150. Some Gaelic speakers did move within the main Gaelic areas, although the numbers were very small (only 217 people in total) (**Table 29**). For example, 71 Gaelic speakers moved from Eilean Siar to the Rest of Highland, with 38 moving in the opposite direction.

***Migration at local authority area level (Tables 31 & 32)***

151. **Tables 31** and **32** show, for migrants who moved between Scottish addresses and who speak Gaelic, the local authority area where they lived at Census time and the local authority area where they lived one year before the Census.
152. **Table 31** provides, for the migrants who lived in each area at Census time, a breakdown of the area they lived in a year before. So, for example, 6.8 per cent of Gaelic speaking migrants living in Eilean Siar at the time of the Census had lived in Highland one year earlier.
153. **Table 32** provides, for the same Gaelic speaking migrants, the numbers who lived in each area one year before, broken down by which area of Scotland they lived in at Census time. So, for example, 10.0 per cent of Gaelic speaking migrants who lived in Argyll & Bute a year before the Census were living in Glasgow City by the time of the Census.
154. Some of the main points of interest in **Tables 31** and **32** are:
- While there were 5,469 Gaelic speaking migrants who moved between Scottish addresses, 3,655 (67 per cent) remained within the same council area, with the remaining 1,814 (33 per cent) moving to a different council area. These percentages did, however, vary greatly from area to area (see cells in bold type on the diagonal of both tables).
  - Among Gaelic speaking migrants, it was those who lived in the main Gaelic heartlands at the time of the Census who were the least likely to have been resident in a different local authority area one year earlier (**Table 31**). In Argyll & Bute, 79 per cent of speakers who had moved from an address anywhere in Scotland to an address in Argyll & Bute had moved within Argyll & Bute, with the remaining 21 per cent having moved into Argyll & Bute from another part of Scotland. A similar picture was observed in Eilean Siar and Highland where 78 and 76 per cent, respectively, of “within Scotland” Gaelic speaking migrants had lived at a different address in the respective council area a year previously. This illustrates that Gaelic speakers in the main Gaelic heartlands are more likely to move locally than Gaelic speakers elsewhere.

- Gaelic speaking migrants living in East Dunbartonshire at the time of the Census were the most likely to have been resident in a different local authority area one year earlier. Only 27 per cent of Gaelic speaking migrants living in East Dunbartonshire at the time of the Census had moved from elsewhere in East Dunbartonshire, with 44 per cent having moved there from Glasgow City.
- **Table 32** differs from **Table 31** in that, while **Table 31** shows “within Scotland” Gaelic speaking migrants by where they lived at Census time, **Table 32** breaks them down by where they lived one year before. 76 per cent of Gaelic speaking migrants who lived in Dundee City one year before the Census had remained within the city - the **highest** proportion of all local authority areas. At the other end of the scale, only 32 per cent of “within Scotland” Gaelic speaking migrants who lived in East Dunbartonshire one year before, were still there at Census time.
- It is possible to derive, from **Tables 31 & 32**, net gains and losses of Gaelic speakers at local authority level, by subtracting the figures in the first row of **Table 32** from the figures in the first column of **Table 31**.
- Glasgow City showed the greatest gain in the number of Gaelic speakers (163) while the greatest loss was in Eilean Siar (161 people).
- City of Edinburgh was the only other area to gain more than 50 speakers, while Highland and Argyll & Bute each lost over 50 speakers.

155. Tables equivalent to **Tables 31** and **32** but relating to **all** migrants who moved between Scottish addresses can be found in tables 21 and 22 of the published GROS occasional paper entitled “Scotland’s Census 2001, Statistics on Migration” -

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/occpapers/scotlands-census-2001-statistics-on-migration/index.html>.