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The British Society for Population Studies Newsletter

Message about BSPS Conference, University of Cardiff, 9-11 Sep 2019, from Piers Elias, BSPS President

We now have all the papers and details for this year's conference. Our Conference theme is "An Ageing Population: Opportunities and Challenges", a topic relevant to all demographic disciplines. We have two interesting plenary speakers in Prof Carol Jagger (Newcastle University) and Dr Brian Beach (ILCUK) as well as a third plenary, a new idea offered as a prize for the best Early Career Researcher nominated.

I had hoped, in my terms on Council and as (Vice) President to orchestrate a resurgence in Local Government interest and participation but I concede defeat...Government cuts and lack of understanding of the value of demography along with experienced demographers not being replaced on retirement has created a bit of a vacuum outside the major cities of London and Manchester. We have very few Scottish and Welsh Local Government members and none from Northern Ireland so I would ask our existing members and those of you who have contact with Local Government (ONS/NRS/NISRA/Academia) to mention BSPS and encourage new members to join this very interesting, equitable, knowledgeable and "learned" society.

So, let's hope you can come this year (bring a colleague from a nearby Authority!). We have two sessions (8 talks) on Local Authority based topics such as Population and Household Projections, Local Plans and Health Care planning and in addition, several interesting presentations from ONS & NRS on visualisation of data and progress with the 2021 Census along

with the move an administrative based demographic information system. I am conscious that it is not always possible for some of you to be away from the office for three days, so we have packed all the Local Demography papers into super Tuesday 10th September and hope that you can at least make that day.

Registration forms are now available on-line and there is an early bid discount up until 31st July. The provisional programme and training session bookings are also available on this link.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/social-policy/research/Research-clusters/british-society-for-population-studies/annual-conference>

Next year's conference will be in Leicester and Local Authority members who have presentations accepted will still be eligible to apply for a bursary to attend the annual conference.

Looking forward to seeing you in September (and maybe July, and next year!)

PS Long Distance Train Tickets will become available on 16/6/19 for 9th September. Book early!

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Postgrad Student Rep: Alyce Raybould

Since the last newsletter, the main student activity has been the annual PopFest conference, this year co-organised by myself and others at LSHTM, in partnership with students at

LSE. PopFest is the annual postgraduate conference for students of population studies, which this year took place from 28-30th May at the London School of Economics and Political Science. To open the conference there was a keynote and workshop led by Hans Rosling's organisation 'Gapminder', where they taught us how to 'hunt for ignorance'. During a packed programme of presentations and poster sessions, there was also a panel discussion on rights-based approaches in sexual and reproductive health, an organiser-led interdisciplinary workshop, and a closing keynote by Karen Glaser from KCL on grandparent's health and wellbeing. You can read more about the conference in the report for this newsletter.

I would like to say a particular thank you to **Michaela**

Šedovič who led most of the PopFest organisation at LSE. Aside from conference organising, Michaela is currently doing a PhD focusing on attitudes towards immigrants and their wellbeing, which you can read more about in this edition's 'student spotlight'

In our Postgrad 'glory corner', we have three viva survivors: **Peninah Agaba** (University of Hull), **Maria Herica La Valle** (University of Southampton) and **Anna Rybińska** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). Many congratulations to you all!

We also have publications from **Alexandra-Andreea Cirtel** (University of Southampton), **Maria Herica La Valle** (University of Southampton), **Anna Rybińska** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), **Laura Sochas** (LSE), **Joe Strong** (LSE), and **Giacomo Vagni** (University of Oxford).

Please do not hesitate to contact me at alyce.raybould@lshtm.ac.uk if you have any questions or concerns, or follow me on twitter @AlyceRaybould. See you in Cardiff!

Postgrad Glory Corner

Viva Survivors

Peninah Agaba (University of Hull) The Predictors of and Experiences in the Use of Maternal Healthcare Services by Unmarried Youth in Uganda. External examiner: Professor Sabu Padmadas, University of Southampton

Maria Herica La Valle (University of Southampton) Life events and changes in health-related behaviours: An investigation using the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. External examiner: Professor Maria Castiglioni (University of Padova)

Anna Rybińska (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) Intentions to Remain Childless: An Old Response to New Exigencies or A New Response to Old Exigencies? Next step: Research Scientist, Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University

Publications

Alexandra-Andreea Cirtel, Alessandra De Rose and Maria Felice Arezzo (2019) Childbearing intentions in a low fertility context: the case of Romania. *Genus* 75(4)

Maria Herica La Valle and Elena Ambrosetti (2019) "Le vieillissement actif en Italie : une analyse par genre et par territoire" [in:] Thierry Blöss and Isabelle Blöss-Widmer (ed.), *Penser le vieillissement en Méditerranée Données, processus et liens sociaux*, Karthala, 219-244

Rosalind Willis, Amos Channon, Joe Viana, **Maria Herica La Valle** and Aisha Hutchinson (2019) Resurrecting the Interval of Need concept to improve dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and social care practitioners. *Health and Social Care in the Community*

S. Philip Morgan and **Anna Rybińska** (2019) "12. Fertility" [in:] Poston, D.L. (ed.), *Handbook of Population*. Springer, 319-342.

Laura Sochas (2019) Women who break the rules: Social exclusion and inequities in pregnancy and childbirth experiences in Zambia. *Social Science and Medicine* 232, 278-288. Blog post: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2019/06/05/health-clinic-rules-in-zambia-drive-inequities-in-maternal-well-being/>

Ernestina Coast, Samantha R. Lattof and **Joe Strong** (2019) Puberty and menstruation knowledge among young adolescents in low- and middle-income countries: a scoping review. *International Journal of Public Health* 64(2), 293-304. Blog post: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2019/02/26/looking-beyond-padman-a-need-to-empower-girls-during-menstruation-and-puberty/>

Giacomo Vagni (2019) Alone Together: Gender Inequalities in Couple Time. *Social Indicators Research*, 1-23

PopFest Conference Report

Report by Alyce Raybould

PopFest is the annual population postgraduate student conference, organised every year in conjunction with the BSPS. This year, myself (Alyce Raybould, LSHTM) and Michaela Šedovič (LSE) organised the conference at the London School of Economics and Political Science from 28-30th May.

To get the event rolling, we started the conference with a keynote speech from Helena Nordenstedt from Gapminder. Helena's talk focused on factual ignorance, a passion of the late Hans Rosling. He found that due to ingrained biases people tend to answer factual questions wrong at a higher percentage than chimpanzees answering at random. Even as a group of population studies students we were not very good at getting the answers right (for example, most of us out of 3 possible answers, thought 17% of the world's population live outside their country of birth... the answer was 3%). However, we were comforted that apparently bankers, business experts and academics don't do much better!

Following on from this, Helena and her colleague Maike Winters led us in a workshop 'Mind the Gap!', where they taught us how Gapminder finds these facts that suffer

particularly from ignorance. By the end of the session each group had generated a couple of 'ignorance hunting' questions, which we tested on each other. The winning question that generated the most ignorance was 'What % of UK nationals live outside the UK?'. The correct answer is 10%, but 80% of us thought it was either 2 or 5%. Gapminder kindly gave the winning group each a signed copy of 'Factfulness' by Hans Rosling as a prize.



Helena and Maike leading the 'Mind the Gap!' Workshop



Helena presenting the Gapminder infographic as part of her Keynote

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We then started our programme of presentations, including sessions on inequality, wellbeing, labour market and employment, health, fertility, sexual and reproductive health, migration, family and households, ageing and education. Thank you to all of those that presented and chaired these sessions. We also held a poster session on the second day with a diverse range of topics including migration, social media, health, fertility and education. Overall, there were 60 registered participants attending from around the UK, Europe, America, Nigeria and Mexico.

On the second day, we also held a panel discussion on "Rights-based approaches in sexual and reproductive health: the role of demographers" chaired by Joe Strong from LSE. Tiziana Leone (LSE), Joanna Busza (LSHTM), Katy Footman (Marie Stopes International) and Carina Hirsch (Population and Sustainability Network) discussed the importance of language when speaking to policy makers, whether needs-based approaches were more effective for promoting policy change and winning grants, and the im-



The PopFest 2019 Poster Session

PopFest Conference Report Cont...

portance of rights-based approaches as an ethos for guiding research and policy.



The rights-based approaches to sexual and reproductive health

On the final day, we started with a workshop led by ourselves on how to promote interdisciplinary discussion in population studies. To everyone's amusement we found that not one person in the room identified as a student of 'population studies' at a population studies conference! The majority of the participants identified with the discipline of their supervisors, their previous degrees, theories that appealed to them, or specific research topics. As an exercise in collaboration, we then gave each group a broad research question where each member of the team had to contribute to the project in some way. The students were therefore able to hear a little more about the diverse range of expertise and experience of the other participants.



Karen Glaser presenting her closing keynote

Finally, after a rather filling pub lunch, Karen Glaser from King's College London gave a closing keynote on 'The Health and Wellbeing of Grandparents Caring for their Grandchildren'. It was a wonderful way to end PopFest and to get us excited for the theme of this year's BSPS conference!

We also had time for a couple of social events, including an evening reception on the LSE rooftop common room, and a guided tour of the Barbican estate (the weather just about held) followed by drinks. As the first modern social housing development, it was great to hear a little more about the urban planning and socio-economic considerations of the estate as students interested in population issues.



PopFest participants on a guided tour of the Barbican estate

We would like to say a big thank you to all our sponsors of this year event, without whom the conference would not have been possible. With their support, we were able to waive the registration fee for all participants and financially support 12 students to attend the conference. Further, we would particularly like to thank the BSPS secretariat, Anne Shepherd, for all her help throughout the organisation of the conference, and our fellow LSE and LSHTM students (particularly Anushé Hassan, Judy Lieber and Joe Strong) for their amazing support throughout.

Next year PopFest will take place in Florence organised by Giammarco Alderotti (University of Florence) and Chiara Puglisi (EUI). Not to be missed!

Spotlight on Research:

Michaela Šedovič,

Department of Social Policy, LSE

I am a first year PhD student at the Department of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science, supervised by Lucinda Platt and Berkay Ozcan. My Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project investigates the impact of environment and majority members' attitudes on the well-being of immigrants in European countries. The project is part of my wider interest in the processes of minority integration and the effects of social and integration policies on the daily life of individuals from minority backgrounds.

Before commencing my PhD, I attended the European Doctoral School of Demography (EDSD) as an associate of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research. It was during this time that I started to specialise in the topic of attitudes towards immigrants (ATI). With my supervisor Angela Papanusso (Sapienza University of Rome), we used the European Social Survey (ESS) to investigate how attitudes towards immigrants and immigration among majority members varied across 18 European countries, as well as across time in 2002 and 2014. Specifically, we wanted to see whether increased contact between majority members and individuals of immigrant background led to changing attitudes towards immigrants. Using multilevel regression analysis, we found that intergroup contact is a mediator of anti-immigrant attitudes in both years.

Following the EDSD, I obtained an MSc in Social Research Methods from LSE, completed as part of my ESRC 1+3 Studentship in Demography. My thesis focused on the measurement of ATI, which is typi-

cally measured as a linear scale ranging from pro- to anti-immigrant. Instead, I used latent class modelling to examine the existence of attitudinal types outside of this scale using the ESS waves from 2014 and 2016. My findings showed that a significant share of individuals diverge from this linear scale, with individuals holding positive attitudes in some areas but not others. Furthermore, whilst attitudinal types were constant over time, even during turbulent events, the share of individuals in particular attitudinal types differs between the two years (the proportion of the type with generally negative attitudes tending to rise in 2016) and across countries.

Now for my PhD, I aim to understand which geographic and individual characteristics influence the wellbeing of immigrants, distinguishing between different immigrant groups and host countries. I am particularly interested in neighbourhood effects in urban areas. My first paper explores regional differences in EU countries using ESS, the second focuses on the

UK using Understanding Society, and the third on Germany using the German Socio-Economic Panel. So far, my first paper findings indicate that there is a significant association between ATI measured on a regional level in Europe and immigrants' subjective life satisfaction.

Outside of my PhD, I co-organised this year's PopFest conference at LSE and I have worked as a data and policy analyst for various governmental analytical institutes in Slovakia.

For more information about my research, my email address is m.sedovicova@lse.ac.uk or you can follow me on twitter @SedovicMicha.



Grandmothers and public health: unlocking the potential of older women in improving child, adolescent and maternal health

BSPS-funded workshop held at LSHTM on 14 May

Report by Rebecca Sear

Dr [Judi Aabel](#) used the following exercise during her morning masterclass on ‘Grandmothers and public health’: she divided the room into two, and told half of us we were grandmothers, and the other half they were mothers of young children. She then turned her back on us grandmothers, and spoke only to the mothers, in the guise of a health worker providing advice on best practices for feeding children. ‘What message does that send to grandmothers?’ she asked us; ‘What message does that send to the mothers of young children?’

Judi Aabel is the Executive Director of [The Grandmother Project: Change Through Culture](#), an NGO whose mission is to promote the health, well-being and rights of women and children in lower income contexts, through grandmother inclusive and intergenerational programmes. She gave the keynote lecture at the BSPS-funded workshop ‘Grandmothers and public health: unlocking the potential of older women in improving child, adolescent and maternal health’. Judi talked about her many years of experience working with projects aimed at bringing grandmothers into public health interventions. She talked about how important grandmothers are in providing advice and support to younger individuals about maternal health and pregnancy, child and adolescent health and wellbeing. Older women typically have considerable authority when it comes to such matters. Yet most public health interventions focusing on maternal and child health ignore grandmothers, and concentrate on the mothers and children themselves. Judi’s exercise above illustrated how this can hamper efforts to improve maternal and child health: it alienates important members of the community, and suggests to mothers that the wisdom and support of grandmothers isn’t necessary.

Judi also talked about how this situation may partly stem from negative views of older women from some public health professionals, who believe grandmothers give advice to mothers which isn’t always in the best interests of mother and child. But Judi clearly made the point that – whether you think grandmothers are a force for good or bad – they are undoubtedly very important in advising their families throughout the life cycle, occupying leadership roles in the community, and therefore should not be ignored. Judi’s keynote was a call to use a ‘family systems’ approach to improving maternal, child and adolescent health, incorporating the whole family rather than focusing on individuals.

Judi’s keynote ended the workshop; earlier in the afternoon the audience had heard about the importance of grandmothers

from several disciplinary viewpoints. My co-organiser, [Anushé Hassan](#), and I, opened the workshop by talking about work from one of the few research areas which has shown a great interest in grandmothers – the evolutionary social sciences. This interest initially stemmed from an evolutionary puzzle: menopause. Our species is almost unique in that women become unable to have any more children around half-way through their potential lifespan. A solution proposed to explain this puzzle is that menopause creates helpful grandmothers, who care for their existing children and grandchildren rather than risk further births. This hypothesis resulted in several studies showing that the presence of grandmothers does increase the survival chances of their grandchildren, as predicted. More recently, evolutionary social scientists have moved away from an interest in menopause – leaving a space for some fascinating, and similarly supportive, research on the handful of [whale species](#) who also go through menopause – to become more concerned with the influence of the extended family on health, wellbeing and fertility.



Judi Aabel, Executive Director of The Grandmother Project

Photo credit: Sarah Myers

Grandmothers and public health: unlocking the potential of older women in improving child, adolescent and maternal health

This research has been concerned with testing the hypothesis that reproduction is cooperative in our species – mothers need a lot of help to raise children with long dependency periods, and this help comes from the extended family, including grandmothers. Substantial evidence has now been produced that grandmothers, and other family members, do have significant impacts on grandchild health and on women's fertility, though these influences do vary by context, and are occasionally even negative, rather than positive. Most research has been correlational, demonstrating associations between the presence of grandmothers and demographic and health outcomes. But Anushé presented some survey data she's collected in Tanzania, asking questions about who provides care for children, showing clear evidence that grandmothers are important carers for children. Though in her sample, this care differed in interesting ways between town and village, suggesting modernisation may result in changes in caregiving practices, from paternal grandmothers to maternal, and perhaps to more care from non-kin.

Later in the afternoon, anthropologist Dr [Abbey Page](#), an MRC Research Fellow at LSHTM, spoke about her meticulous research on the Agta, a hunter-gatherer population in the Philippines, which also collected observational data on who cares for children. Her data showed that, though the majority of children did not receive grandmaternal care in this population (apparently due to unusually high female mortality rates and mobility), when care was received from grandmothers it was particularly intensive care, quite similar to that provided by mothers, such as washing and feeding children. Grandmothers were therefore able to reduce workload in Agta mothers, unlike fathers, who contributed in different ways to the family (in productive labour, and low intensity childcare, such as watching over them).

Dr [Emily Emmott](#), also an evolutionary anthropologist, from UCL, shifted the focus to higher income contexts. She showed that grandmothering is still very prevalent even in the UK, where social norms tend to emphasise a nuclear family, intensive parenting model, with mother as the primary caregiver for children. For example, she showed results from a study which showed that grandmothers are an important source of advice around

breastfeeding for UK women. Emily also pointed out that the consequences of grandmaternal input around pregnancy and childcare are not well studied in high income contexts, because policymakers tend to focus on the nuclear family. Basic research is clearly still needed in allowing us to understand better what roles grandmothers have in family life and how this impacts the health of other family members.

The message of all of the evolutionary researchers was that we really need to look 'beyond the family' when understanding the process which leads to good health and wellbeing for both children and adults, in all contexts, as the isolated nuclear family is not the 'traditional' family form policymakers often assume it to be.

Returning to the workshop's focus on public health interventions, Dr [Dixon Chibanda](#), at LSHTM, gave a fascinating presentation on a rare, but phenomenally successful, example of including grandmothers in public health interventions. Dixon is a psychiatrist, working on interventions to improve mental health, and has developed 'the Friendship Bench': an intervention which involves older women providing support and advice to younger people in the community. Randomised controlled trials of this intervention have shown clear benefits on mental health. Dixon is based in Zimbabwe, where he developed the Friendship Bench, but this intervention is now being scaled up across sub-Saharan Africa: over 50,000 people have access such support in over 70 communities in the last year. The Friendship Bench has even just been rolled out in New York.

Anushé and I are very grateful to the British Society for Population Studies for funding this workshop, to our four speakers for such thought-provoking talks, to Frankie Liew, Alyce Raybauld, Judy Lieber and Sarah Myers for helping us with workshop arrangements, and to everyone who came along to the workshop and made the day such a success. The 'Grandmothers and public health' initiative will continue, as many attendees enthusiastically signed up to a [Grandmother Network](#) (links to workshop powerpoint slides and recordings of the presentations are available here), which will promote and share research on grandmothers in public health, including on Twitter using the hashtag #GrandmotherNetwork.

The following article is from a Green Belt Lobby Group in Coventry who are trying to understand ONS estimates and projections in the context of Local Authority requirements to supply land for development. It challenge the figures produced by ONS and uses a wide range of administrative data to compare growth. The offer is open to ONS to respond to the issues in this article in the next newsletter, as well as at our Annual Conference in Cardiff, where this paper will be presented.

Piers Elias, BSPS President

Ghosts, Vampires, and population projections for Coventry

Article by Merle Gering from Keep Our Green Belt Green (Coventry & Warwickshire) Ltd

In the Sub National Population Projections (of 2012,14, &16), the Office for National Statistics predicted extraordinary population growth in Coventry, for the period 2011-2031, far in excess of any of its West Midlands neighbours (twice the growth of Birmingham, three times Solihull, and four times Stratford on Avon). It beggars belief. The jobs growth has all been in Solihull, Warwick and Stratford. Now that we are 8 years into this period, we have looked at a broad range of administrative data, to see if this is actually happening.

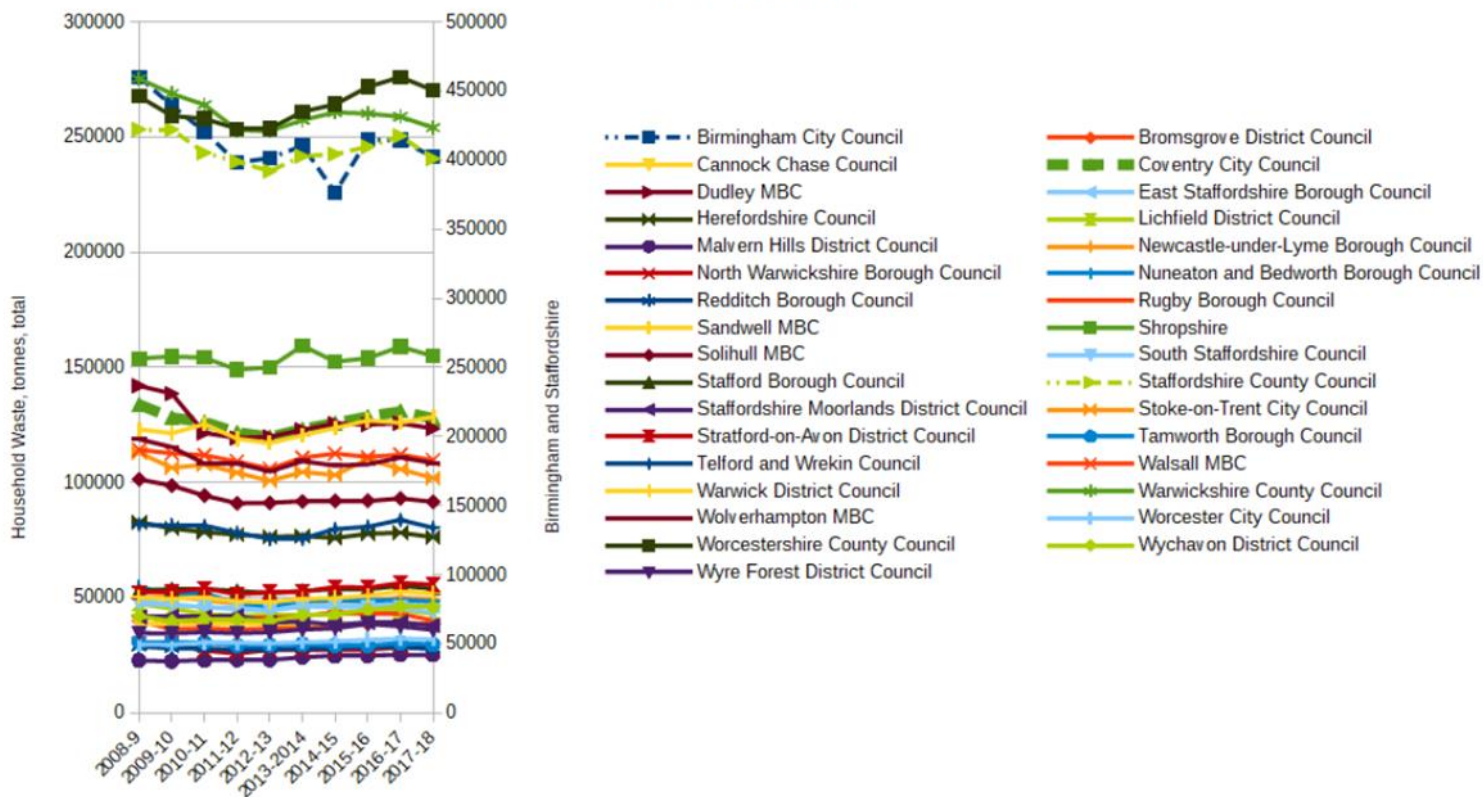
In a previous presentation, to the BSPS conference in 2018, we showed that there were no reasons to think that Coventry was growing rapidly: job creation has been mediocre, house prices were low, house building was less than half what would be needed to accommodate 5000 new residents/year – the prediction of the SNPP. Historically, there was no sign of exceptional growth in the preceding census decade – from 2001-2011, Coventry grew at the average rate for the region, even during the height of Eastern European migration. From HESA destinations data and exit checks data, we demonstrated that ONS was hugely underestimating the numbers of foreign students leaving Coventry on graduating – which has the effect of vastly inflating predicted growth. .

What we found from Admin Data – We compared the vital signs of the city to its neighbours in the West Midlands Government Region. We assumed that use of public services and life events would rise more rapidly, compared to neighbour local authorities, (the gradients would be steeper) if there was exceptional population growth in the city.

1. Schools populations. school populations have grown slower than forecast by the ONS projections and the current forecast school places by the local education authority shows considerable slowing in school population growth
2. A&E attendance – there was no sign of an uptick in the A&E attendance at the main Coventry Hospital. Other hospitals in the region had steeper increases over last decade.
3. births – same story. Nothing unusual happening
4. school admissions – same pattern as neighbours
5. car registrations: no excess
6. electoral role: no anomalous increase

7. state pensions: no extra claimants
8. ESA benefits claimed: no unusual increases in numbers.
9. gas and electricity use – no uplift, running parallel to neighbours
10. trash bins - domestic waste produced was not elevated. It followed the regional pattern.
11. National Insurance Registrations: there is a great excess of NINO registrations for Coventry. However, there is a ready explanation. Very large numbers of foreign students attend the 2 Coventry universities and require a NI number to work part time. Recent ONS research, published 30 Jan 19 confirms that 40-60% of them work. When the foreign students are discounted, there is nothing unusual about NINO registrations for Coventry.

Full graphs, data sources, and argument can be found on our website: www.coventrygreenbelt.org



Total Household Waste

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables>

Conclusion: if there has been hyper population growth in Coventry, they are ghosts or vampires. They don't go to school, don't attend A&E, don't have babies, don't own cars, don't claim state pensions or ESA benefit, don't use gas or electricity, and don't put waste into their bins.

All of this latest material has been submitted to ONS (on 11/2/19 and 11/4/19 and through our MP). They have not replied nor have they supplied their data and modelling, despite requests. The net result? The death of the green belt. On the back of absurd population projections, Coventry, Warwick, and Nuneaton Councils plan a huge new town on the Warwickshire Forest of Arden landscape. A cherished piece of our green and pleasant land is about to vanish, because no one will admit that the numbers do not stack up, and the emperor has no clothes. Bad decisions have been made on the back of bad data. We wonder if ONS actually believes in administrative data or not.