



Preparations for the 2011 Census

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Censuses are held every 10 years, to count the population and find out a range of information about people living in the UK.

The next Census is proposed for 27 March 2011 throughout the UK. The Census will be carried out by the Office for National Statistics in England and Wales, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. This note describes preparations and plans for the 2011 Census, focussing mainly on the Census in England and Wales.

A range of consultations, tests and rehearsals have been held in preparation for the Census. In December 2008 a White Paper, *Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales*, was presented to Parliament.

On 21 October 2009, the draft Census (England and Wales) Order 2009 – which sets out the proposed topics to be covered in the Census – was laid before each House of Parliament. It was made on 9 December 2009 after the necessary approval by both Houses. Similar Orders are being laid before the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

On 4 March 2010, the Census (England) Regulations 2010 were laid before Parliament, under the negative procedure. The Census Regulations focus on the mechanics of the Census and include specimens of the questionnaires to be used. Separate Regulations will be put to the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

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1 Introduction

Censuses are held every 10 years, to count the population and find out a range of information about people living in the UK.¹ They are carried out under the Census Act 1920 and the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969.²

The next Census is due to be carried out on 27 March 2011 throughout the UK. The Census will be carried out by the Office for National Statistics in England and Wales, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

A range of consultations, tests and rehearsals have been held in preparation for the Census. In December 2008 a White Paper, *Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales*, was presented to Parliament.

The Census (England and Wales) Order 2009 sets out:

- the date for the Census;
- the people covered by the Census; and
- the topics to be covered by the Census

New questions for 2011 are proposed on: national identity; citizenship; second residences; language; civil partnership status; date of entry into the UK and length of intended stay (for non-UK born); type of central heating; number of bedrooms and visitors. Similar Orders are being laid before the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

On 4 March 2010, the *Census (England) Regulations 2010* were laid before Parliament, under the negative procedure. The Census Regulations set out the mechanics of the Census, and include specimens of the questionnaires to be used. Separate Regulations will be put to the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.1 Why hold a Census

The Census is the most extensive source of demographic and social statistics available in the UK today. Government, Parliament, local authorities, the health service, the education and academic community, business and the public use the Census to give them reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households.

The Census is unique in the level of detail and consistency it provides, as it aims to cover every person usually resident in the UK on one night. Other surveys and sources typically cover only a part of the population or a proportion of the topics included in the Census.

Uses for Census data include:

- funding formulae used to allocate central government resources to other organisations such as the devolved administrations (via the Barnett formula), local authorities and health bodies.

¹ Regular censuses have taken place, with few exceptions, every ten years since 1801.

² The Census Act 1920 was amended by the Census (Amendment) Act 2000 and by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. The Statistics and Registration Service Act transfers the authority to take the Census from the Registrar General to the UK Statistics Authority (Statistics Board), and the Ministerial responsibility for the secondary legislation on the Census from HM Treasury to the Cabinet Office.

- policy development and planning by central, local and regional government, in areas including housing, transport, employment and health.
- Census data continues to underlie much social research, both within and outside government, and businesses use it to target their marketing and location policies. Government researchers use Census data to assess the representativeness of other social surveys.
- Census benchmarks underpin democratic engagement. The Boundary Commission takes account of population change to reshape constituency boundaries. MEP representation is calculated using population figures based on the Census.

1.2 Inquiries into the Census

There have been a number of reviews of the 2001 Census and inquiries relevant to the next Census. These include:

- House of Commons Treasury Committee [Counting the population](#) HC 183-I 2007-08, May 2008
- Statistics Commission [Counting on Success: the 2011 Census – Managing the Risks](#), Report No. 36, November 2007
- Office for National Statistics [Census 2001 General report for England and Wales](#), November 2005
- Statistics Commission [Census and population estimates and The 2001 Census in Westminster: Final Report](#), Report No. 22, January 2005
- Local Government Association [The 2001 One Number Census and its quality assurance: a review](#), September 2003
- House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts [The Office for National Statistics: Outsourcing the 2001 Census](#) HC 543 2002-03, March 2003
- National Audit Office [Office for National Statistics: Outsourcing the 2001 Census](#), October 2002
- House of Commons Treasury Committee [The 2001 Census in England and Wales](#) HC 310 2001-02, March 2002

Issues raised in the reviews of the 2001 Census covered the need to: develop robust field management and form-tracking systems to enable better central control of field processes and activities; agree earlier those contractual arrangements with external suppliers for aspects of the Census operation that are to be outsourced, and ensure that all such suppliers are selected through rigorous procurement procedures and early enough so that systems are able to be fully tested before the Census; and develop a high quality and up-to-date address list to increase the efficiency of the delivery of Census forms.

The UK Statistics Authority is planning to conduct a special assessment of the extent to which the Census complies with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The first phase – which is expected to be published in an initial assessment report in early 2010 – will assess compliance with the statutory Code of Practice for Official Statistics for those areas where the planning for 2011 is essentially complete, for example, confidentiality protection. The second phase – likely to be published in early 2011 – will cover compliance with the remaining practices, to include, for example, provisional assessment of plans for publication of the various Census outputs. This may involve a review of the 2001 outputs to assess the changes which are planned for the 2011 outputs, and the extent to which the issues from the

previous Census have been or are being addressed. This phase will enable the designation of Census outputs as National Statistics. The final phase – expected to be published in 2013 – will be carried out after the Census outputs are published, and will involve an assessment of the outputs in light of users' views.³

The [London Regional Select Committee](#) is currently carrying out an inquiry into London's Population and the 2011 Census.⁴

2 The Census in England and Wales

2.1 Consultations, tests and rehearsals

Consultations on the Census have so far covered the content of the questionnaire and the geographical areas to be used for output. ONS has received considerable interest in the Census – around 2,000 views from almost 500 users.

On 13 May 2007, the ONS conducted their first major field test for the Census. The 2007 Test included approximately 100,000 households from within the five local authority areas of Bath and North East Somerset, Camden, Carmarthenshire, Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent.

Rehearsals of the Census with around 135,000 selected households were run in Lancaster, the London Borough of Newham and Ynys Môn (Isle of Anglesey) on 11 October 2009. A smaller scale test also took place in Birmingham at the same time.

2.2 The Census date

Although the Census does not have to take place on a specific day of the week, a Sunday has traditionally been chosen as the most likely time that people will be at home. The date must be chosen to maximise the number of households present and to ensure minimum interruptions to the delivery and collection of the questionnaires. In selecting the date a number of factors have had to be taken into consideration:

- maximising number of people present at their usual residence (by, for example, avoiding holiday periods)
- maximising the number of students present at their term-time address
- avoiding local elections (when the publicity messages may get confused)
- allowing sufficient hours of daylight for field work
- avoiding holiday periods in order to maximise recruitment/retention of field staff
- harmonisation across the UK

2.3 The Census questions

The questionnaire for the 2011 Census is expected to include four pages of questions for each person and to be 32 pages long. The questionnaire for the 2001 Census included three pages of questions per person and was 20 pages long. According to ONS, evidence from tests suggests that this increase in the number of pages is not expected to affect response unduly, as the form has been redesigned to make it easier to complete.⁵

³ [Announcement: Special Assessment of Census 2011](#)

⁴ London Regional Select Committee [press notice](#), 17 December 2009

⁵ [Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#)

Significant changes from 2001 in the questions proposed are:

- questions on national identity and citizenship
- additional response categories in the ethnicity question
- questions on second residences
- questions on language
- question on number of bedrooms
- the inclusion of civil partnership in the marital status question
- questions on date of entry into the UK and of intended length of stay for in-migrants
- questions on visitors

Table 1 and Table 2 compare the topics covered in the 2001 Census with those proposed for the 2011 Census.⁶

Table 1: Proposed content for individual pages in England and Wales

Topic	2001	2011
Name	Yes	Yes
Sex	Yes	Yes
Date of birth	Yes	Yes
Marital or civil partnership (new) status	Yes	Yes
Students in full-time education and term-time address	Yes	Yes
Country of birth	Yes	Yes
Address one year ago	Yes	Yes
Ethnic Group	Yes	Yes
Religion	Yes	Yes
Knowledge of Welsh (Wales only)	Yes	Yes
Health status	Yes	Yes
Long-term illness or disability	Yes	Yes
Carer information	Yes	Yes
Qualifications	Yes	Yes
Economic activity status	Yes	Yes
National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (self-employed, occupation, supervisor status, ever worked)	Yes	Yes
Industry/name of employer	Yes	Yes
Workplace address	Yes	Yes
Transport to place of work	Yes	Yes
Hours worked	Yes	Yes
Second residence (new)	No	Yes
Main Language and English Language Proficiency (new)	No	Yes
Month/year of entry into UK (new)	No	Yes
Intended length of stay in UK (new)	No	Yes
Citizenship (passports held) (new)	No	Yes
National identity (new)	No	Yes
Number of employees at the workplace	Yes	No

⁶ [The 2011 Census: Final questionnaire content for England and Wales](#)

Table 2: Proposed content for household pages in England and Wales

Topic	2001	2011
Usual residence	Yes	Yes
Household and family relationships	Yes	Yes
Accommodation type	Yes	Yes
Dwellings and self-contained accommodation	Yes	Yes
Number of rooms	Yes	Yes
Household tenure	Yes	Yes
Type of landlord	Yes	Yes
Number of vehicles	Yes	Yes
Visitor information (new)	No	Yes
Number of bedrooms (new)	No	Yes
Type of central heating (new) ⁷	No	Yes
Central heating	Yes	No
Bath/shower and toilet access	Yes	No
Lowest floor level	Yes	No

Choice of questions

According to the Census White Paper, the topics proposed for the Census are those that have been shown to be most needed by the major users of Census information and for which questions have been devised that can be expected to produce reliable and accurate data. In each case, no other comparable and accessible source of the information is available in combination with other items in the Census.

An initial view on the content of the 2011 Census was published in May 2005 with the aim of promoting discussion and to encourage the development of strong cases for topics to be included in the 2011 Census. The consultation resulted in a much larger demand for questions than would be possible to accommodate on a Census form that households could reasonably be expected to complete.

A number of criteria formed the basis of the evaluation of the strength of the case made by users for each topic – these included:

- why the information was needed
- the need for detailed information on small geographic areas and/or small population sub-groups
- whether questions and answers would be of sufficient quality to meet users' requirements for information
- whether questions would have a significantly adverse effect on the Census as a whole, particularly the level of public response
- burden on respondents
- availability of data from other sources
- comparability with previous Censuses
- international guidelines on census content and the European Union's recently adopted Regulation on Censuses of Population and Housing

⁷ The question on whether or not a household has central heating is replaced by the question on what type of central heating the household has.

New questions

- Questions to improve population and migration statistics

There has been considerable controversy about the quality of migration and population statistics over the past few years. The Treasury Select Committee held an inquiry and produced a report *Counting the population* in May 2008.⁸ A migration statistics improvement programme has been set up to improve the quality of these figures.⁹ It is thought that improving the information from the Census has a role to play in improving statistics on migration and population, and a number of new questions have been included with this aim.¹⁰

Questions on visitors

In 2011 there are proposals to ask questions in the Census about visitors staying with each household.

In 1991, everyone staying at an address on Census night, including visitors, was counted in the Census. However, in 2001 the Census counted persons at their place of residence whether or not they were actually present there on Census night, and did not count visitors. According to ONS, there is some evidence that this failure to attempt to capture visitors and confusion as to where visitors should be recorded, were factors that led to under-coverage in the 2001 Census.

To minimise under-reporting, ONS proposes to collect information on visitors present in households on Census night in 2011, as well as counting people where they are usually resident. The number of visitors present at the address on Census night will be recorded, along with their age, sex and usual address, so that each person can be linked to their usual residence.

Second residence

To improve coverage in the Census and to better understand the reasons for under-coverage, ONS is introducing further questions on residence arrangements, particularly multiple residence. Important to the understanding of how well the Census counts the population will be a better measure of societal changes that affect the concept of usual residence, particularly the increasing tendency towards weekly commuting; children of divorced or separated parents having more than one home; second homes; and global living patterns. They are therefore proposing that the 2011 Census should include new questions asking about second residence and the reasons for staying at such an address. Together with the information on usual address, responses to these new questions should enable ONS to better allocate the population to the most appropriate area of usual residence determined by the living patterns of households, and will help reconcile the Census counts with the mid-year population estimates.

The information may also be useful for housing and transport planning, and to local authorities who want to know the numbers of people who stay within their area and use local services during the week but who have a usual residence elsewhere.

⁸ House of Commons Treasury Committee *Counting the population* Eleventh Report of Session 2007–08

⁹ See the ONS webpage on the programme for further details <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/imps/index.html>

¹⁰ For further information on these questions see *Final recommended questions 2011 – Migration*

Month and year of entry into the UK, and intended length of stay

There are new questions on month and year of entry into the UK, and intended length of stay, for all those persons born outside UK. These questions are intended to provide a means of better establishing whether people are short or long term migrants, and a better understanding of how long migrants stay in the UK. This should feed into better estimates of how many people are long-term and short-term residents in an area.

The question on intended length of stay is unusual for a Census question in that it asks people about their future intentions, rather than asking them to describe current aspects of their life.

Citizenship (passports)

A new question to identify citizenship (as measured by what passports a person holds), along with the traditional question on country of birth, will provide estimates of the numbers and circumstances of immigrant communities from various countries, in order to support resource allocation and policy development. It will provide information on peoples' rights of movement, eligibility to vote and rights to employment and welfare benefits, and allow the populations of citizens of other EU countries (who are not subject to immigration control) to be measured at local level, in particular citizens of recent accession countries.

- Other new questions

National identity

In order to make provision for those people, regardless of their broad ethnic group, to indicate their identity as being British, English or Welsh (or Scottish or Northern Irish, etc), a new additional and separate component to the ethnicity question will ask about national identity.¹¹

Language

While a question on Welsh language has been asked in Wales for many years, ONS proposes to introduce new questions in the 2011 Census on language. This will mean that people will be asked the main language they use and their ability in speaking English. The question on main language will allow respondents to record their main language (including sign languages) if this is not English (or Welsh in Wales). Responses will provide an indication of areas and communities where foreign language service provision is necessary, and to better understand the diversity of the population and in particular the impact of English (or Welsh) language ability on employment and other social inclusion indicators.¹²

Bedrooms

A new question on the number of bedrooms is proposed, to form part of a measure of overcrowding.¹³

¹¹ More information about this question can be found in [Final recommended questions for the 2011 Census in England and Wales - National identity](#)

¹² More information about this question can be found in [Final recommended questions 2011 - Language](#)

¹³ [Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#)

Type of central heating

A question on the type of central heating replaces the previous question on whether households had central heating or not. It is intended to provide an indicator of basic housing standards, and is expected to be used by central government, local authorities and other users to facilitate work on fuel poverty and deprivation.¹⁴

Changed questions

Ethnic group

The format of the question on ethnic group in England and Wales is more detailed than the question asked in 2001 to reflect changing needs and the dynamic profile of the ethnic minority population. New response categories for 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Arab' have been introduced.¹⁵

See below for a discussion of some of ethnic group categorisations not included in the Census.

Civil partnerships

Following the civil partnership legislation in 2004, the traditional question on marital status has been expanded to include response categories for civil partnership status.

Topics not included in the Census

A range of topics has not been included in the Census despite requests. The main topics not included are shown in Box 1.

Income and sexual identity are discussed below. According to ONS, other topics considered were not proposed for inclusion because:

- the case for them was not considered strong enough to displace one or more of the proposed topics,
- tests had showed that the quality of the information obtained from a Census question would not be fit for purpose, or
- the questions would place too great a burden on the public.¹⁶

Income

ONS has said that the user requirements for an income question were less than those expressed for other topics successfully competing for space on the 2011 Census questionnaire.

In addition, when ONS tested a question on income in the 2007 Census Test, they found that including the question led to a 2.7 percentage point reduction in the response rate. This is a significant drop in the number of people filling in forms, and ONS has judged that the disadvantages of including this question outweigh the benefits.

¹⁴ [Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#)

¹⁵ [Final recommended questions 2011 - Ethnic group](#)

¹⁶ [Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#)

Box 1: Topics considered but not included in the proposals for the 2011 Census

- access to a garden or yard
- access to bank account
- access to bath/shower
- accommodation on more than one floor level
- address five years before the Census
- age of dwelling
- asylum or immigration status
- commuting address
- Cornish language and identity
- country of previous usual residence
- duration of residence at current address
- duration of residence in UK
- educational attainment
- email address
- fertility
- frequency of use of Welsh language in Wales
- furnished accommodation
- income
- Internet access
- lifestyle
- means of travel to, and location of, place of education
- National Insurance number
- nature of long-term illness or disability
- number of current jobs
- number of miles travelled per year
- occupation group and industry using a closed (tick box) question approach
- parents' country of birth
- pet ownership
- place of birth
- presence of smoke alarms
- proficiency in foreign languages
- qualification or training required for occupation
- receipt of unpaid personal care
- sexual identity
- Sikh and Kashmiri ethnicity
- size of workplace
- taught languages
- term-time address of former students one year before Census
- type of disability
- type of tenancy agreement
- use of childcare facilities
- use of renewable energy resources
- use of wheelchair
- value of the home
- voluntary work
- state of repair of accommodation

Sexual identity

Consultation with users, particularly during the 2005 programme, indicated a strong requirement for the Census to seek to collect information on sexual identity in order to provide a benchmark against which equality monitoring policies could be better assessed.

There are however concerns about the accuracy of the results of a question on sexual identity in the Census. In a small-scale postal survey carried out by the General Register Office (GROS) in Scotland in 2006, considerably more people did not provide useful data on sexual orientation than declared a non-heterosexual orientation, and GROS concluded from this that the results would call into question the accuracy of any data gathered by such a question in the Census. Furthermore, the terminology and concepts used to attempt to distinguish different sexual behaviour tended to confuse many respondents leading to additional inaccuracies in the responses.

ONS has decided not to propose the inclusion of a question on sexual identity in the Census. However in recognition of the particular importance of collecting information on this topic for equality monitoring purposes, it has started a project to develop a question on sexual identity which will be both acceptable and ensure that high quality data is collected, and which can be used in national surveys.

Other areas of controversy

Question on religion

Consultation with users has suggested that the form of the 2001 question on religion would not meet all their requirements.¹⁷ In particular the case was argued that:

- the Christian and Muslim categories were too broad
- there was a need for information on additional religions and specific nonreligious beliefs
- the concept of 'religious practice' should be distinguished from 'affiliation/ identity'

ONS argues that space constraints mean that it is unable to provide additional tick boxes for other religions or to further break down existing categories. It acknowledges that the proposed question does not measure religious practice, but states that it does not believe that a single religion question can be developed in such a way that would capture this information suitably and in a way that would justify losing comparability with 2001.

It has also been argued that the proposed question on religion 'What is your religion?' is potentially leading as some respondents may feel that they are expected to identify with a religion. To reduce the potential bias, ONS placed 'none' as the first response option in order that respondents would realise they did not have to answer the question by identifying with a religion.

Note that the religion question in the Census is voluntary – the Census (Amendment) Act 2000 amended the Census Act 1920 to permit the inclusion of a question on religion but lifted the penalty for not responding to this question.

“Bedroom snooping”

There have been a number of recent media reports mentioning “intrusive” questions in the Census. In particular, concerns have been raised about the questions – discussed above –

¹⁷ [Final recommended questions 2011 - Religion](#)

on the number of bedrooms in people's homes, and asking for the details of overnight visitors.

In response to these reports, the National Statistician has explained why the ONS plans to collect this information: ¹⁸

Proposed questions about the number of bedrooms and the number of people who live in a household will allow local councils to establish whether accommodation in their area is overcrowded. Plans to meet any additional housing needs can then be better defined for that area.

Quite separately, the proposed questions also include details of visitors on Census night to ensure that people away from home are included in the Census, even if they are not recorded on their home questionnaire. This will enable more accurate estimates of the whole population to facilitate effective planning and funding decisions.

Calls for further ethnicity tick boxes (including Sikh, Kashmiri)

User consultations identified many more requests for additional ethnic group response categories than could fit on the Census questionnaire. In England and Wales, ONS has said that there was only room for an additional two tick-boxes. ¹⁹

The additional tick-boxes which were requested fell broadly in two categories:

- a) Those groups which had nowhere obvious to tick in 2001, and so selected 'other' and wrote in (for example Arab, eastern European, Gypsy and Irish Traveller, Iranian, Kurdish, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese)
- b) Those who had a relevant tick-box in 2001, but were aggregated with other groups (for example Cornish, east African Asian, Kashmiri, Sikh, specific African groups).

Following a prioritisation exercise, new response categories for 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Arab' were introduced. Other new categories were not included, although where a person filling in a Census form does not feel that their ethnicity is appropriately described by a tick box, they can write their ethnicity into a space provided on the form.

Among the categories not included, requests for Kashmiri and Sikh identity to be recognised are particularly prominent.

In the proposed Census questions, Sikh is included as an option in the religion question. It is not however included as an option in the ethnicity question. The UK Sikh Federation have announced that they will take legal action against ONS as a part of their campaign to have Sikh included as an ethnic group in the Census. ²⁰

Following consultation, ONS carried out research into the inclusion of a Kashmiri tick box. Their focus groups and interviews suggested that most Kashmiris did not have strong feelings about the need for a tick-box. Participants of Kashmiri, Pakistani and Indian ethnicity raised concerns about the potential confusion arising from the inclusion of a Kashmiri tick-

¹⁸ See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/newsroom/letters-to-the-press/2011-census-proposed-questions--the-independent--the-daily-mail-and-the-daily-express--26-and-29-october-2009.html>

¹⁹ [Final recommended questions 2011 - Ethnic group](#)

²⁰ [UK Sikh Federation news](#)

box. After consideration of the available evidence, ONS recommended against the addition of a specific Kashmiri tick-box in the ethnic group question for the 2011 Census.²¹

During the process for the Parliamentary approval of key elements of the Census Order, there was a division on a proposal that people be able to tick a box to record themselves as Cornish. This proposal was rejected by 261 votes to 49.

2.4 How the Census will work

The 2011 Census will cover everyone usually resident in England and Wales on Census night, with limited information also collected from visitors present on Census night. Information will also be collected from residents in communal establishments and individuals or households with no usual or physical address.

ONS will, in close co-operation with the Census Offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland and supported by a dedicated Contact Centre, arrange nationwide and local publicity to explain the purpose and value of the Census, to encourage householders to return completed forms and to ensure that they know when and how to do so, and to give assurances about confidentiality and data security. Publicity for, and the enumeration of, the Census in Wales will be conducted bilingually.

To encourage completion of the form, the 2011 Census team will seek to build relationships with relevant groups and agencies. The programme involves close co-operation with local authorities and regional, community and neighbourhood groups.

Key aspects of the practical arrangements for the Census are covered by the Census (England) Regulations 2010, which were laid before Parliament on 4 March 2010. These include appointment of certain staff and the delivery and return of Census questionnaires.

Distribution, completion and return of forms

Forms will primarily be delivered by post (to as many as 95 per cent of households). Delivery by post costs less than delivery by hand, and this should allow more resources to be focussed in areas where response is expected to be low.

Whether a Census form is posted or hand-delivered by field staff will be determined by a number of factors that were assessed from evidence gathered during the 2007 Test, for example confidence in the accuracy of the address list in a given area.

A central address register is being developed with the aim of improving form delivery and field management.²²

The public will be able to return completed forms either by post or online. Householders unable to make a return in these ways may instead request a doorstep collection.

Field staff will try to collect Census forms from people's homes at addresses from which a form has not been returned.

²¹ [Kashmiri research project 2011 - Final report](#)

²² There are questions as to whether this address register will be maintained after the Census takes place. Tony Wright MP of the Public Administration Select Committee has [written](#) to John Healey MP, the Minister of State for Housing, at the department for Communities and Local Government to encourage the Government to maintain a single definitive regularly updated national address register.

Special assistance will be available to anyone who has difficulty in completing the Census questionnaire, particularly through language or infirmity. Field staff speaking both English and other languages and/or signers will be employed where possible. A general information leaflet in 26 or more of the most prevalent foreign languages will be available via a dedicated Census Help website. An accessibility area on the website will provide video and audio assistance, in English and Welsh, for people who are visually impaired or deaf. A multi-lingual telephone helpline will also be available.

The ONS intend to implement closer monitoring of the delivery of forms and receipt of returns than for the previous Census through a questionnaire tracking system. They expect that this will lead to tighter control of the field operation and better targeting of people who have not responded than in previous Censuses.

Persons refusing to comply with the statutory requirement to make a Census return will be liable to prosecution and a fine, the maximum level of which is currently £1,000.

After the Census

Census coverage and quality surveys will be carried out to measure the number of people not counted by the Census and the quality of the responses given.

The 2011 Census questionnaires are designed to be electronically scanned to capture all the ticked responses and hold written answers in digital form. Once information from the questionnaires has been electronically captured in a database, the paper documents will be pulped and recycled. The digital images will be held electronically to be made available as public records after 100 years.

Data processing systems will monitor the quality of the data and calculate adjustments in case of error or omission. They will also adjust for any shortfall in the number of people detected by the Census follow-up survey. It is anticipated that the data from 2011 Census will be processed much quicker than it was for the previous Census. This will allow more time for quality assurance procedures.

Publication of statistics

The statistical outputs will be published according to a pre-arranged timetable. ONS intends that outputs should be in such a form, and at varying levels of statistical and geographical detail, to meet the changing requirements of users, subject to the overriding requirement to protect statistical confidentiality. The geographies for such outputs will be created from essentially the same building bricks as in the 2001 Census – the Output Areas.

2.5 Confidentiality of personal information

Various confidentiality and security procedures will protect personal information collected in the Census. In addition a number of legal barriers will protect information. Assurances will be given to the public that all the information provided will be treated in strictest confidence by the Census Office.

Legal protection

When held by the ONS, personal information – information that identifies someone – is protected under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, and cannot in general be shared or disclosed. Possible penalties for unauthorised disclosure of personal information

on conviction include imprisonment or a fine. The Data Protection Act also protects personal data.

Practical steps for the protection of data

Any adult member of a household who does not wish other people in the household to see his or her answers to the Census questions may ask for a separate (Individual) questionnaire and an envelope in which to seal it for return by mail.

ONS have stated that all members of the Census organisation and outside agents providing services to the UK Statistics Authority will be given strict instructions, and will be required to sign undertakings in the form of declarations, to ensure their awareness of their statutory confidentiality obligations. All sites processing Census data will have continuous security arrangements in place including access control, CCTV, security guards, intruder alarms and ONS staff to monitor suppliers. Independent checks, by an accredited UK security organisation, of both physical and electronic security will be carried out.

All relevant UK Government Security requirements applicable to a Restricted-rated project/system will be followed to ensure the overall security of the IT systems and the associated processes and procedures. Such measures taken will conform to mandatory requirements in the procedures for the handling of personal data within Government. The computer systems handling Census data will have strict safeguards to prevent unauthorised access.

The security and confidentiality arrangements covering the collection and processing of Census forms will be subject to an independent review.

Lockheed Martin

There has been some controversy around the involvement of Lockheed Martin in the Census. Lockheed Martin UK have been contracted to provide a customer contact centre, questionnaire printing and data capture and processing.

The controversy relates partly to Lockheed Martin's position as a major defence company, and partly to fears that Lockheed Martin may use or disclose personal Census information, possibly to US authorities under the US Patriot Act. This latter aspect was considered by the Treasury Committee in their 2008 inquiry on population statistics.²³

In response, ONS have stated that neither Lockheed Martin UK nor any Lockheed Martin employee will have access to personal Census data. They have said that all Census data is owned by ONS and will be processed in the UK. Lockheed Martin UK will be acting as the prime contractor and will develop the systems to be used to handle and process the Census data, but access to the data itself will be restricted only to a consortium of subcontractors who are based in the UK and either UK or EU owned and personal data will be protected to the standards required by the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.6 Costs

The total cost of the 2011 Census in England and Wales over the period from 2004/05 to 2015/16 is estimated to be £482 million.

²³ House of Commons Treasury Committee *Counting the population* Eleventh Report of Session 2007–08, May 2008

**Estimated cost of 2011 Census,
broken down by year**

Year	Estimated cost (£ millions)
2004/05	1.9
2005/06	3.7
2006/07	6.5
2007/08	10.4
2008/09	45.4
2009/10	44.7
2010/11	158.6
2011/12	179.3
2012/13	16.7
2013/14	8.2
2014/15	4.8
2015/16	1.7
Total	482.0

Source: HC Deb, 12 November 2009, c738W

According to the White Paper, provision of £450 million for the cost of the Census has been made up to the period 2011/12. Provision for later years will be subject to future spending reviews and will cover the final stages of data and output processing, dissemination and a number of subsequent output services and releases.

The largest elements of the total cost are the field operation – the delivery and collection of the questionnaires – and the processing of the data. In a drive to improve the cost effectiveness of the operation, the Census Offices are taking forward the outsourcing of these and some other aspects of the 2011 Census. Altogether around 55 per cent of the planned costs of the Census have been identified for possible private sector involvement.

Controversy around costs

Nick Hurd MP, shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, has written to Sir Michael Scholar, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, expressing concerns about the cost of the Census. He wrote:

Given the ruinous state of the public finances, we do not believe that the 2011 Census can have the size and scope that has been proposed, particularly since we believe that many of the proposed questions are unsuitable. So we will not be able to support the proposed Census in its current form, and would urge you to make plans to scale back its cost and scope in order to save money and reduce its intrusive impact on citizens.²⁴

3 Devolution and the Census

The Census is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Registrar Generals for Scotland and for Northern Ireland are responsible for making arrangements for taking the Census there. The Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly are responsible for approving or rejecting the secondary legislation for the Census (the Census Order and Regulations).

²⁴ [Letter from Nick Hurd MP to Sir Michael Scholar](#). The questions mentioned as being unsuitable appear to be those relating to the number of bedrooms and the details of visitors, discussed earlier in this note.

In Wales the Census Regulations (but not the Census Order, which is for the UK Parliament, after consultation with the Welsh Ministers) are a matter for the Welsh Assembly. ONS leads on the Census for Wales, and is making arrangements to ensure that Census materials are available in Welsh and field staff are bilingual, especially in areas with higher than average proportions of Welsh speakers.

The statistical offices of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have agreed to conduct Censuses simultaneously throughout the UK in 2011 (subject to approval by the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly).²⁵ They aim to promote UK harmonisation and to produce consistent and coherent outputs for the UK and for each component country.

3.1 Tests and rehearsals in Scotland and Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, a Census test took place on 13 May 2007 in Belfast, Coleraine, Craigavon, Fermanagh and Magherafelt. A Census rehearsal took place on 11 October 2009 in Derriaghy and Moy & Benburb.

In Scotland a Census test took place on Sunday 23rd April in parts of Glasgow City, West Dunbartonshire, Highland, Stirling, Perth & Kinross and Argyll & Bute Council areas. A Census rehearsal took place on 29 March 2009 in west Edinburgh and Lewis and Harris.

3.2 Census questions in Scotland and Northern Ireland

The draft Census (Scotland) Order was laid in February 2010, and includes the topics to be covered by the Census in Scotland.²⁶

The final proposals for the questions to be asked in Northern Ireland have not yet been published. The Northern Ireland Census Order and Census Regulations are expected to be laid in the Assembly in 2010.²⁷

Expected differences in questions between countries

There are expected to be some differences in questions between the different countries. For example, the Scottish Census will include questions not asked in England and Wales on household income and the nature of long-term health conditions (blindness, deafness etc), and omit other questions, for example on number of bedrooms and citizenship (passports held). There will also be some differences in the details of the questions asked, for example the Scottish census will ask about Polish and Indian national identity.

Certain differences from previous Censuses are expected to be maintained – for example more detailed questions on religion in Scotland, which make a distinction between different types of Christianity (Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland and other Christian).

Any changes to the questions prompted by the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly or the Northern Ireland Assembly may reduce comparability of the results between the countries. This may reduce the ability to produce figures for the UK as a whole.

²⁵ [Harmonisation documents](#) can be found on the website of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

²⁶ [The Census \(Scotland\) Order 2010](#)

²⁷ [AQO 1903/09](#)

3.3 How the Census will work in Scotland and Northern Ireland

Unlike in England and Wales, in Scotland it is proposed that enumerators will personally deliver most questionnaires, although households outside the main populated areas will receive their questionnaires through the post.

The option of completing the Census form online will be provided in Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as in England and Wales.

4 Further information

Key documents are:

- [The Census \(England and Wales\) Order 2009](#)
- The Census White Paper: *Helping to shape tomorrow: The 2011 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales*
- ONS's [detailed studies](#) into various aspects of the proposed questions for 2011

2011 Census Websites for each of the home countries contain further information:

- [England & Wales](#) – Office for National Statistics
- [Wales](#) – National Assembly for Wales
- [Scotland](#) – General Register Office for Scotland
- [Northern Ireland](#) – General Register Office for Northern Ireland