

# All about the Census

## What is a Census?

A Census is a count of all people and households in an area. In the UK, a Census has been held every ten years since 1801. All the counting is done on one day and the last one was held on Sunday 29 April 2001. The next full UK Census will be in 2011.

The Census is important because it is the only survey to ask every person and every household in every area the same questions. This provides a detailed picture of the whole population and makes it easy to compare different parts of the country.

In England and Wales, the Census is planned and carried out by the Office for National Statistics. Elsewhere in the UK, responsibility lies with the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

## Why do we have a Census?

Central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations use the facts the census provides to target their resources more effectively. Funding and planning for housing, education, health and transport services rely on this accurate information on people's needs for years to come.

Every ten years the Census provides a critical snapshot of the nation. It counts the numbers of people living in each city, town and rural area. It tells us about each district and its population, including the balance of young and old, what jobs people do, and the type of housing they live in.

## The Census gives us invaluable facts about:

### Population

This accurate count of the population in each local area helps Government calculate the size of grants it makes to each local authority and health authority. The authorities then use Census information to plan services within their areas.

### Health and disability

Information collected on health and disability allows government to better plan health services and monitor policies to ensure disabled people are treated equally.

### Housing

Information on housing allows government to assess the quality of housing as well as plan services and housing for the future.

### Employment

The Census shows how many people work in different occupations and industries throughout the country. Government and businesses can then plan jobs and training policies and highlight areas that need attention.

### Transport

Information collected on travel to and from work, and the number of cars per household, contributes to the understanding of pressures on transport systems. From this, planning for roads and public transport can improve.

### Ethnic Groups

Data on ethnic groups helps government allocate resources and monitor policies to ensure that all groups are treated equally.



Telephone  
**0845 603 2011**



Textphone (for hearing impaired people)  
**0845 604 2011**



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

## Why is there a Test?

Counting everyone in the UK is a big project. To make the most of this opportunity to learn about changes in society and the needs of the population, we must be sure that we will ask the right questions. In 2005, ONS began developing new questions and revising some of the questions asked in the 2001 Census. These take on board the views of people, government departments, local authorities and other users of Census data.

The 2007 Census Test, will enable us to check on which questions gave us the most useful information. This is why your answers are crucial to shaping the final 2011 Census questionnaire and why your participation is so important.

## What happens next?

In 2009 there will be a Census Rehearsal using the questions likely to be included in the 2011 Census. The government's proposals for the Census, including the questions to be asked, will have been published in a White Paper in autumn 2008. Parliament needs to approve the final set of questions early in 2010.

## Who will see my information?

Information collected in the Census is confidential under the terms of the Census Act and will not be shared with any other Government Departments. It will only be used for statistical purposes. No information that identifies individuals or households will be disclosed to anyone outside the Census organisation.

For privacy reasons anyone aged 16 years and over may complete their questions on a separate questionnaire. Please telephone the Census Helpline to request an individual questionnaire.

If you have any questions or comments about the Census Test 2007, please contact the Census Helpline on **0845 603 2011**

A Textphone is available for people with hearing impairment: **0845 604 2011**

Large Print and Braille booklets are available to help people with a visual impairment to complete the questionnaire.



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