
Jil Matheson National Statistician | Ystadegydd Gwladol

26 October 2009

Dear Sir or Madam

In response to recent coverage in the media, I write to clarify the reasons for the inclusion of specific questions in the proposals for the 2011 Census.

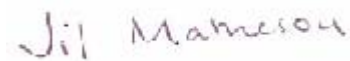
The primary purpose of the census is to produce accurate population estimates. These will underpin a myriad of important funding and planning decisions during the next decade, at national and local level.

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.

The personal information that people provide on a census questionnaire is completely confidential and is protected by law. Personal census data is kept confidential for 100 years. No personal census information is shared with other government departments or local authorities. On release after 100 years, census information can then provide a fascinating insight for family historians and social researchers.

Yours faithfully



Jil Matheson
National Statistician