



# News Release

Help tomorrow take shape

20 October 2009



Office for National Statistics  
Segensworth Road  
Titchfield  
PO15 5RR

**Contact**  
Media Office  
01329 44 7654

**Email**  
[2011censusmedia@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:2011censusmedia@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

**Visit**  
[www.census.gov.uk/Media](http://www.census.gov.uk/Media)

## It's still not too late to take part in Birmingham's census test

2009 Census test day may have passed in Birmingham, but it's still not too late for residents to complete and return their test questionnaires and help shape the next census in 2011.

17,000 households in Birmingham have been invited to take part in the test which will help to evaluate the systems and procedures in place for the 2011 Census including the new online questionnaire and the postal delivery of paper questionnaires.

Census area manager for Birmingham Cathy Burnett will be managing a team of official census collectors who will be going door to door later this week. "Starting this Wednesday we'll be visiting households in Birmingham who haven't returned their questionnaires. We will be answering any questions people may have about the test and also helping people to complete the questionnaire.

"Hopefully even though participation is not compulsory we'll be able to encourage as many people as possible to take part as this is something really important to the future of the community."

All Census collectors will carry official identification.

The census is an estimate of the population of England and Wales carried out every ten years by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The information given is confidential and is protected by law.

Commenting Stephen Hughes, Chief Executive Birmingham City Council and regional champion for the census said: "The census plays an important role in planning future services for Birmingham residents. The results are used by central government to help allocate the money we and other local organisations have to spend on areas like transport, housing, health and schools.

"The Birmingham test is a valuable opportunity to make sure the correct processes are in place for the 2011 Census; we strongly encourage people receiving questionnaires to complete and return these to help shape census preparations".

ONS Census Director Glen Watson said: "We're relying on the public's co-operation to make the test a success, so you may have been sent a reminder to encourage you to take part. You may also be visited by a member of the census team.

"This follow up is important because it gives members of the community help and information they need to take part. It's not too late to complete the questionnaire and send it back to us or to complete it online. A successful test will help us to ensure a high quality census in 2011."

Facts about the 2009 Census test programme:

- The small scale test in Birmingham will include 17,000 addresses and will utilise some of the procedures and processes being delivered within the rehearsal
- In parallel to the test, a rehearsal is taking place in three other areas - Lancaster, the London Borough of Newham and Ynys Môn – Isle of Anglesey
- In total, around 140,000 households in these three areas have been asked to take part in the census rehearsal day.
- These areas represent a cross-section of the population and include a broad range of housing types
- Everyone is asked to answer the same questions in order to take a snapshot of the population at one moment
- The census questionnaire is easy to fill in, confidential and can be filled in online for the first time
- The results of the rehearsal and test will not be published but used to improve procedures for 2011
- There are 56 questions in total, 14 are about the household and its accommodation and 42 questions are for each individual member of the household to complete
- Most questions can be answered by a simple tick
- Taking part in the 2009 Census Rehearsal and test in Birmingham is voluntary. Everyone will be obliged to take part in the 2011 Census

For more information on the test or to request a copy of the census questions in Braille or alternative languages, please visit

[www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 0200 901.

British Sign Language video clips and audio recordings are also available on the site.