



# News Update

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## Privacy Impact Assessment on 2011 Census published

The Office for National Statistics has carried out a Privacy Impact Assessment on the 2011 Census, which is published today.

The PIA has been carried out by ONS to document the new arrangements for the 2011 Census in comparison to the 2001 Census and to highlight any changes that might raise new privacy concerns.

The proposals for the 2011 Census include 6 new questions and this self assessment conducted by ONS describes how user demand for new questions has been balanced against how acceptable they are to the public through extensive testing.

The assessment describes the steps taken to protect the privacy of all 2011 Census respondents in England and Wales. It also includes a review of the Data Protection Principles to confirm that the 2011 Census proposals comply fully with these principles and also with Human Rights legislation.

The Privacy Impact Assessment is available on the ONS website using the following link:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-project/commitment-to-confidentiality/privacy-impact-assessment--pia--on-2011-census.pdf>

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. A census is a survey of all people and households in the country. It provides essential information from national to neighbourhood level for government, business, and the community.
2. The 2011 Census will take place on 27 March 2011. The census occurs every 10 years and involves everyone in England and Wales filling in a questionnaire about themselves and where they live.
3. ONS is responsible for carrying out the census in England and Wales.
4. The ONS is responsible for gathering and interpreting all the data from the census and turning it into helpful information, as well as using it to estimate the number of people and households in each area across England and Wales.
5. The census is confidential and safeguarded by law.
6. Privacy is an area for consideration in all projects that involve collecting personal information. A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is a self-assessment process that has been developed by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to help organisations to foresee the likely privacy impacts to individuals, to weigh these against the benefits to society in the collection of information and bring forward solutions.
7. A PIA helps to identify privacy risks, foresee problems and bring forward solutions. It is a process for evaluating a proposal to identify its potential effects upon individual privacy and data protection compliance; to examine how any detrimental effects might be overcome; and to ensure that new projects comply with the data protection principles.
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