



ADVISORY GROUP PAPER (99)10

**PROGRESS ON PLANNING FOR THE CENSUS COVERAGE SURVEY
IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

- 1. This paper is issued to Advisory Group members for information**

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Action Requested of the Advisory Group

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform members about how the Rehearsal Census Coverage Survey (CCS) was carried out, and how plans are being developed for the CCS in 2001.
2. Members are asked to note the paper.

Introduction

3. Members may recall that the purpose of the CCS is to intensively re-enumerate a sample of postcodes to record all residents. The survey returns will then be matched against the census returns and the coverage of the census estimated. The results will then be used to produce the 'One Number Census' outputs.
4. Earlier testing, in Brent after the Census Test in 1997 and subsequently in Southampton in 1998, established the basic framework for the Rehearsal CCS:
 - the data would be collected by short 'doorstep' interviews which would re-ask certain census questions, as far as is possible in the same way as in the census;
 - the responses would be recorded on paper forms using 'tick-boxes' wherever possible, and would be captured by scanning and recognition;
 - the field staff would consist of Team Managers and Interviewers, who would be recruited, trained and managed directly by the CCS headquarters team;
 - the sampled postcodes would be made up into workloads which would be assigned to pairs of Interviewers. The Interviewers would be instructed to begin the fieldwork by going round their area together and listing all of the properties. They could then continue to work together on carrying out the interviews, or work individually while maintaining close liaison, as they preferred;
 - during the property listing round the Interviewers would deliver an 'Advance Notification Card' to the sampled addresses telling the public about the survey. They would also carry copies of an 'Official Letter' to give to any respondents who required further assurance about the purpose and legitimacy of the survey;
 - the Interviewers would be instructed to return repeatedly to each address until contact was made with an adult resident, going back on different days of the week and at different times of the day. They would be instructed to go out on at least 2 weekday evenings every week and every weekend during the fieldwork period;
 - the fieldwork would continue for three and a half weeks, including four weekends; and
 - on the final day of the fieldwork the Interviewers would complete a form with proxy information and leave a self-completion questionnaire and post-back envelope at every address where they had not been able to make contact with a resident.
5. The paper describes how these arrangements were implemented and the results achieved.

Recruiting the Field Staff

6. As in the Southampton test, there were two levels of field staff, Team Managers and Interviewers. There were six Team Managers in the Leeds area, five in Lincoln, three in Bournemouth, and one in each of the Welsh areas. Each Team Manager had a team of 14-18 Interviewers.
7. In the Leeds and Lincoln areas one of the Team Managers had the additional duty of co-ordinating the work of the Managers in that area. This involved ensuring applications for Interviewer posts were shared out according to need, local re-distribution of field supplies

as required, convening local Team Manager meetings, and providing the link with CCS headquarters for resolving queries. An additional allowance was paid for this work.

8. To limit costs, recruitment advertising was done jointly with the Census. An advertisement was placed in a local paper in each Rehearsal area for Assistant Census Officers and Enumerators and CCS Team Managers and Interviewers. Some supplementary advertising was subsequently done in the Leeds area to boost applications. Application forms were supplied via local JobCentres, Census Recruitment and Team Managers.
9. The Team Managers were recruited directly by panels of two headquarters staff going out to the Rehearsal areas. One member of each panel was the 'Regional Manager' for the area, and retained a special responsibility for the area throughout the survey.
10. The Team Managers then each recruited their team of Interviewers.
11. A structured recruitment scheme was used for all recruitment. This comprised a scheme for scoring applications to decide whom to invite to interview, and behavioural interviewing to inform the selection of people to be offered the posts.

Provisional Conclusions

12. The combined advertisement with census was not ideal. The timing was a little later than optimum for the Team Managers, and somewhat too early for the Interviewers. There was also some confusion about the nature of the four jobs on offer.
13. We were not over-endowed with applications in most areas and the amount of advertising appears to have been the minimum needed to fill the posts. One of the key issues for 2001 is how to ensure that the jobs are brought to the attention of a large number of potential applicants but at an affordable advertising cost.
14. The formal recruitment procedure worked well and enabled the volume of applications to be handled efficiently. Even those Team Managers with extensive recruitment experience found it helpful, while those with less found it essential.
15. The direct contact between headquarters staff and the field managers gave a good start to team-working throughout the survey. This feature should be retained for 2001, as far as the increased scale of the operation permits.

Training the Field Staff

16. The headquarters staff, trained the Team Managers, with some assistance from Social Survey Division, at an hotel in a central location to all of the Rehearsal areas. The training consisted of two courses, each of two and a half days.
17. The first course covered the background to the census and the CCS and the recruitment scheme. Following this, the Team Managers went to recruit their Interviewers.
18. The second course covered interviewing technique, the Interviewer training scheme and the arrangements for managing and monitoring the fieldwork. This was scheduled a short while before the training days for the Interviewers.
19. The Team Managers were trained in groups according to their Rehearsal area, and the training periods were designed to foster team-working, which was a major benefit throughout the survey.
20. The Team Managers each trained their Interviewers. The training was scheduled for the Monday and Wednesday in the fourth week after Census Rehearsal Day so that people who had been Census Enumerators were free of their census duties and could also work

as CCS Interviewers (in a different workload area, of course). The survey fieldwork began immediately after the training, on the Thursday.

21. Throughout the training scheme emphasis was placed on practical sessions, such as Team Managers sifting the real applications for a job as an Interviewer, doing practice recruitment interviews, and delivering an Interviewer training module. Interviewer training included a number of practice doorstep interviews.
22. A video was made, primarily for the Interviewer training course, to demonstrate interviewing techniques in various different types of household and different situations. Such material would be difficult for Team Managers to explain to their Interviewers, and in addition the video helped ensure a uniform approach to the fieldwork throughout the country.

Provisional Conclusions

23. Both the Team Manager and Interviewer training schemes were effective, and perceived to be so by the recipients. Only polishing should be needed for 2001. The video will need to be updated for the correct date for 'Census Day' and any other significant changes that there may need to be.
24. The personal contact between the headquarters staff during Team manager training was a major contributor to the smooth and effective running of the survey and should be retained for 2001, as far as the increased scale of the operation will permit.

Managing the Survey Fieldwork

25. The survey fieldwork ran from Thursday 20th May to Sunday 13th June inclusive. The Interviewers were instructed to give priority to listing all of the properties in their area during the first few days and to complete this task by the end of Sunday 23rd May at the latest.
26. The Team Managers were instructed to visit each of their pairs of Interviewers in the field during the listing stage, and to observe them doing interviews. They were asked to coach their Interviewers as required, and to continue observing and helping them until they were satisfied that they were fully competent.
27. Teamwork was emphasised throughout the survey. The Team Managers in each area met twice to compare notes and resolve any issues, once before fieldwork began and once mid-way through. Each Team Manager held two team meetings with his/her Interviewers during the field work to keep morale high and enable the Interviewers to share their good experiences.
28. The Regional Managers from headquarters went out to their Rehearsal area to meet field staff at key points, and in between this were kept informed of progress by a set of scheduled progress reports.

Provisional Conclusions

29. The teamwork approach, and active management by the Team Managers were very effective and should be a key feature in 2001.
30. As far as possible, contact between headquarters staff and field managers should be maintained in 2001 as this keeps morale high and keeps field staff focussed on the survey objective.

The Results Achieved in the Rehearsal

31. The only quantitative results currently available are from the progress reports sent in by the Team Managers at the end of the fieldwork. The provisional figures for private household response rates in each of the Rehearsal areas are in the table below.

Provisional results from the 1999 Rehearsal, based on progress reports

Area (England and Wales)	Addresses listed	Vacant + Non-residential	Private households	Interviews achieved	Refusals	% of Maximum possible
Bournemouth	3560	512	3048	2573	345	84
Leeds	6808	913	5895	4794	513	81
Lincoln	6025	500	5525	4734	488	86
Aberystwyth	1230	171	1059	1023	30	97
Caernarfon	1038	169	869	832	38	96
All Areas	18661	2265	16396	13956	1414	85

32. The preliminary figures are most encouraging. They reflect the difference between the various Rehearsal areas. The parts of Leeds chosen for the Rehearsal were mainly inner-city, with substantial populations of students and ethnic minorities. The part of Bournemouth chosen also included students, but also more elderly residents and the commercial centre. Most of the city of Lincoln was included in the Rehearsal and the survey covered a full range of neighbourhood types except inner-city as Lincoln is relatively small. The two Welsh areas, around Aberystwyth and Caernarfon, were predominantly rural and were the easiest areas in which to carry out the survey.

33. As may be seen from these results, the public reaction to the survey was not unfavourable. Respondents were often pleased to find that the interview really was quick, and that it didn't include a question about income. However, a substantial proportion of people did not respond to the Census Rehearsal as it was voluntary and a slightly guilty conscience may have aided their co-operation with the Interviewer. It seems unlikely that the coverage achieved by the survey can be much increased in 2001.

Preparations for the CCS in 2001

34. To cope with the sample of some 20,000 postcodes in 2001 we will need to recruit, train and manage around 250 Team Managers and 3,600 Interviewers. While we need to retain all of the good features that worked so well in the Rehearsal we will need to make some adjustments by reason of the increased scale of the operation.

35. We will be increasing our headquarters staff and already have a senior planning post filled. Consideration is being given to how best to scale up the field management structure. It is expected that we will need a senior level of field manager to help the headquarters team with recruiting and training the Team Managers and to provide on the spot management during the fieldwork period. Such a scheme would enable the headquarters team to handle the greater scale of the operation, and also retain as far as is possible the personal links between headquarters and field staff.

36. The timetable for the run up to 2001 will be more extended than that for the Rehearsal during the earlier stages. We plan to have all aspects of the survey planned in detail, and all instructions and documents finalised, by the end of September 2000. Senior field managers would need to be recruited that Autumn, and briefed on their initial duties.

37. However, in 2001 the timetable relative to Census Day would be similar to that for the Rehearsal, despite the larger scale. This is because the various activities will be run in parallel in different parts of the country and so will not take that much longer to complete. For example, we will have 8 Team Manager recruitment teams operating rather than 4, and 4 Team Manager training courses running rather than 1.

38. Perhaps the two most important issues in planning for 2001 are how to ensure that the recruitment advertising is effective yet affordable, and how to ensure that the field staff pay in all areas is adequate. These two matters equally affect the Census, and will be taken forward jointly with the Census teams.

John Dixie
CCS Project Manager
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