

Beyond 2011 Public Consultation on User Requirements - Report

August 2012

Background

The Office for National Statistics is currently taking a fresh look at options for the production of small-area population and socio-demographic statistics for England and Wales. The Beyond 2011 Programme has been established to carry out research on the alternative options and to recommend the best way forward to meet future user needs.

Beyond 2011 is considering a range of options including census, survey and administrative data solutions. Since 'census-type' solutions are already relatively well understood most of the research is focussing on how surveys can be supplemented by better re-use of 'administrative' data already collected from the public.

The final recommendation, which will be made in 2014, will balance user needs, cost and benefit, statistical quality, and the public acceptability of all of the alternative options. The results will have implications for all population-based statistics in England and Wales and in the longer term for the statistical system as a whole.

About this paper

This document provides the results of the first Beyond 2011 public consultation which ran from October 2011 to January 2012.

This document is one of a series of papers to be published over coming months. These will report our progress on researching and assessing the options, discuss our policies and methods and summarise what we find out about individual data sources.

For more information

Search Beyond 2011 @ www.ons.gov.uk or contact : beyond2011@ons.gov.uk

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Executive Summary

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is currently considering options for the future production of small area population and socio-demographic statistics in England and Wales. The Beyond 2011 Programme has been established to consider the different approaches that could meet future user needs for this 'census-type' data.

The range of options being considered includes a traditional field-work based census. However, most of the work is focussing on how to make efficient use of existing administrative and other data sources. Beyond 2011 is assessing whether these sources could provide a viable and cost effective means of producing the required statistics in future. A full understanding of user needs, quality, costs and the public acceptability of alternative approaches will inform Beyond 2011's recommendation on the way forward, which will be made in 2014.

The Beyond 2011 recommendation will have implications for all population-based statistics in England and Wales and perhaps, in the longer term, for the statistical system as a whole.

This document provides the results of the first Beyond 2011 public consultation which ran from October 2011 to January 2012. A total of 275 organisations and individuals provided responses to the consultation and 207 people attended the supporting workshops. All sectors of users were represented in the response to the consultation, although the highest response to the written consultation was from local authorities (44%) and genealogists or family historians (17%)¹.

The consultation focused on two broad areas:

- the current and future requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics on different topics; and,
- the trade-off between accuracy, geography and the frequency at which the statistics are produced.

Changes in user requirements for statistics

A full and detailed public consultation on user requirements was undertaken in advance of the 2011 Census. Therefore, the Beyond 2011 consultation took the Census consultation results as a starting point and asked users to identify which topics had increased (or decreased) in importance over the past few years. Respondents were also asked to anticipate which areas might become more important.

Many respondents commented on the growing pressures on local resources due to the economic downturn and the focus on 'localism'. These demands, together with societal change, are making the availability of high quality, up-to-date, statistics for small areas increasingly important. Figure ES1 summarises those topics about which users reported an increased requirement. Household structure, income and migration were all identified as being particularly important, or increasing in relevance. However, a wide range of topics are seen as being required for policy development and monitoring, and for resource allocation at the local level.

¹ Although we were aware of the genealogical interest in the census this consultation was primarily designed to capture the views of 'statistical' users. This is discussed in more detail in the consultation evaluation at Appendix D.

High quality, small area population counts by age and sex are a priority for virtually every user. As a result they are considered essential and are not included here. This table does not provide a checklist of our highest priorities, only those where users reported an increase in relevance. Users identified a number of topics not currently provided by the existing census approach. Beyond 2011 provides an opportunity to review all requirements and not simply focus on those that are met by current publications or by existing statistics.

Figure ES1: Changes in user requirements: Summary table of topics for which users reported an increased requirement².

Figure ES1 : CHANGE IN USER REQUIREMENTS :
 Summary table of topics where users reported an increased requirement
 Only topics receiving more than 10 mentions are included -
 (details of other topics mentioned by users are included in the relevant section for each theme.)

HOUSEHOLD & FAMILY STRUCTURE (232)

Household structure

Household size

Number of households

Marital/civil partnership status

ETHNICITY, IDENTITY,
 LANGUAGE & RELIGION (179)

Ethnicity

National identity

Religion and belief

Language

Welsh language

Sexual orientation

LABOUR MARKET & SOCIO-ECONOMIC (312)

Income

Transport to work/study

Qualifications

Economic activity

Occupation

Hours worked

Industry

NS-SEC

MIGRATION & NATIONALITY (230)

Internal migration

Country of birth

Country of previous residence

Country(ies) of parent's birth

'Fly-in fly-out' groups

Citizenship

Nationality

HEALTH & CARE (152)

Health status

Long term illness

Disability

Carers

Fertility

HOUSING (202)

Tenure

Type of accommodation

Number of rooms or bedrooms

Housing stock

Second residence

KEY

THEME (Total number of mentions)

100+ responses

50-99 responses

20-49 responses

10-19 responses

² Only topics that were mentioned on more than ten occasions (in the consultation) are included. Information on all the topics are covered in full in relevant sections of the report.

Summary findings

General themes

- Users welcomed the opportunity to discuss their needs and supported the principle of a review to look at new requirements.
- There remains, however, strong support for a traditional fieldwork-based census. In addition, there is concern about losing consistent, accurate, multivariate data for small areas as users see this as the key benefit of a census. Genealogists are concerned about the potential loss of the census as a historical record.
- Overall, data requirements have increased across all themes. In particular, there is a requirement for high quality data to underpin local decision making.
- There is a need for more responsive statistics about new and emerging topics.
- Users would like data to be more timely, and provided on a more regular basis than is currently available from the traditional census-based system. However, although the importance of this does vary by theme, most users are not prepared to trade accuracy or small area geography for frequency. There is a clear need for Beyond 2011 to focus closely on the balance between frequency and accuracy, and understand how and where accuracy adds real value.
- For many users and topics there appears to be a dual requirement: frequently updated estimates at local authority (LA) level, combined with a less frequent update (for example, every 5 years) at a lower level of geography.

Population

Population broken down by age and sex is a fundamental requirement for users of ONS statistics and this view is strongly substantiated by many respondents. There is a growing need for responsive population statistics due to an increasingly dynamic population structure caused by migration (both internal and international) and increased life expectancy.

Overall, respondents report that accuracy, frequency and geography are almost equally important for estimates of the population. Population counts by age and sex constitute the basis for many other outputs and ideally would continue to be available annually at high accuracy and for small geographic areas.

However, there is often a dual requirement. There is a clear user need to produce accurate, frequent estimates (perhaps every year) at the LA level, for funding allocation and monitoring purposes. At the same time, there is also a need for highly accurate outputs at smaller geographical levels. Whilst users would prefer these data more frequently, they are not willing to relinquish high accuracy or small area resolution in favour of increased frequency.

Household and family structure

Household structure and size has become more important for many respondents. Accuracy at small areas is most important, and a 3-5 year update is acceptable.

Ethnicity, identity, language and religion

Ethnicity, national identity, language and religion have grown in importance with the increasing diversity of the population and duties arising from the Equalities Act 2010. Data on these topics are central for monitoring policies and making decisions at the local level. While small area geography is most important, accuracy is also crucial. In Wales the importance of data on Welsh language continues to increase.

Health and care

Requirements for data on health status and long term disability have grown as local authorities become increasingly responsible for public health. Accurate outputs are required

for small geographies to target services and to identify characteristics of individual sub-groups. Frequency is less important because high level health trends are relatively stable and increased use is being made of other data sources.

Housing

As with virtually every other topic the importance of this theme has grown - with tenure (and type of landlord), type of accommodation and number of rooms being most important. More frequent data (for example, every 5 years) is desirable but of all themes this was the one for which frequency was thought to be least important. However, some topics such as central heating and second residences have declined in importance for many respondents.

Labour market and socio-economic

This theme was regarded as the second most important at the workshops, after household and family structure. Income was the most frequently selected topic at the workshops, followed by economic activity. Income has never been directly included in the traditional census because testing has shown that asking for income information results in a decline in response. Beyond 2011 provides an opportunity to revisit this requirement.

Transport to work/study was identified as another important area in the consultation. On these and other topics, Government initiatives such as the Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) and the 'Localism Agenda' are driving the need for timely and accurate socio-economic data for small areas.

This theme can be subject to rapid change so timeliness is particularly important and frequency is as important as accuracy and geography.

Migration

Increasing population mobility, both internal and international, combined with the drive for greater efficiency in relation to public service planning and delivery has significantly increased the demand for statistics about the number and characteristics of migrants.

As with the socio-economic theme, the dynamic nature of migration data means that frequency scores highly.

Migration shows the greatest variation in opinion between the different respondent groups. Community and voluntary organisations, together with academics, place a strong emphasis on geography while local authorities place greatest emphasis on accuracy.

Genealogy and historical research

Genealogists who responded to the consultation expressed concern about the potential loss of the census as a historical record and scored accuracy most highly for all themes. The genealogical requirement is important and there is a need to consider how the historical record might be maintained under our alternative options. We shall be taking this discussion forward with the genealogical and historical research community over coming months.

Next steps

The consultation has produced some substantive results and these will be incorporated into the evaluation criteria which will be used to assess the options. The methodology underlying the evaluation criteria will be published in October 2012. Our emerging understanding of which datasets are likely to matter most will also help to guide the next round of research on data sources. Nonetheless, the greatest value will come from the comments and views expressed by users.

Over the coming months, we will be engaging further with user's groups across all sectors in order to produce a final statement of user requirements. This statement will feed directly into the evaluation of the different options being investigated.

We shall need to convert what users have identified as 'needs' and 'wants' into an understanding of how different statistics add economic value. Our final recommendation needs to be fully justified in terms of value and the balance between costs and benefits. We will be working closely with users to identify where statistics are bringing financially quantifiable benefit in order to build the business case.

The first significant research results from Beyond 2011 will be published in October 2012.

Our second public consultation, which will focus on the alternative options and be informed by our research programme and engagement with users, will run in 2013.

Beyond 2011 will make a final recommendation in September 2014.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Beyond 2011 Programme

The Beyond 2011 Programme was established in April 2011 to assess options for meeting future user needs for population and small area socio-demographic statistics.

Ongoing engagement with users is central to Beyond 2011 in order to ensure that their needs and priorities are fully reflected in the development of the statistical solutions and the final recommendation. The Public Consultation on User Requirements represents the first stage of our engagement with users. The findings will be used to inform the way forward and will be the starting point for more detailed discussions with stakeholder groups.

1.2 Public consultation on user requirements

The Beyond 2011 Public Consultation on User Requirements ran for a period of 14 weeks from 17 October 2011 to 20 January 2012. The consultation aimed to:

- provide a first opportunity for users to feed in their requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics in order to inform the work on statistical options and their evaluation;
- create an awareness of the programme amongst users in order to communicate its aims and start a debate about future needs for population and socio-demographic statistics; and
- act as the starting point for wider stakeholder engagement and consultation.

1.3 Structure of report

This report presents the findings of the consultation as follows:

- section 2.0 outlines the approach taken and provides an analysis of the respondents
- section 3.0 presents the analysis of the consultation responses
- section 4.0 presents an analysis of the different priorities across different sectors of users, and
- section 5.0 provides concluding remarks and outlines the next steps

2.0 Approach and response

This section describes the methods adopted and the response received.

2.1 Consultation approach

The consultation document was available online and users were invited to submit their views via a questionnaire and interactive sessions run at a series of workshops. A small proportion of respondents chose to feed in their opinion using different methods, such as by letter or email.

2.1.1 Information requested by the consultation

In 2005 the Census 2011 team consulted widely with users of population and socio-demographic statistics, and produced a detailed and comprehensive analysis of user requirements. More than 2000 responses were received.

The stakeholder profile of Beyond 2011 is very similar to users of Census 2011 and so their needs have been taken as the starting point for understanding requirements. This consultation was designed to ascertain how user requirements have changed since the Census consultation and how they are likely to change over the next few years.

Specifically, the Beyond 2011 consultation provided respondents with the opportunity to discuss the following:

- current and future requirements for data on specific topics organised by broad themes including: population (by age and sex); ethnicity, identity, language and religion; health; household and family structure; housing; labour market and socio-economic; and, migration;
- views on the trade-off between the key quality dimensions of accuracy, frequency and geography; and,
- other relevant issues, including Welsh issues and any other comments relating to requirements or the consultation process.

2.1.2 Quality dimensions trade-off

The ideal would be to provide highly accurate statistics, for small areas (like output areas), more frequently (perhaps annually). However, there is a trade-off between these different dimensions. Producing more frequent outputs has direct implications for the geography or accuracy at which it is possible to produce statistics. Although Beyond 2011 will attempt to develop innovative solutions which allow us to improve on all of these dimensions, it is important to know what matters most to users for different types of outputs. Therefore, a central purpose of the consultation was to explore the relative importance of geography, frequency and accuracy.

Box 1 shows how this issue was approached in the consultation questionnaire. Users present at the workshops were asked to provide their views via a group exercise.

Box 1: Question regarding the key quality trade-off

In the context of your current data requirements, please assess and indicate the relative importance of having data at small area geography, high frequency and high accuracy, where:

- *Small area geography = outputs produced for output areas*
- *High frequency = outputs produced annually*
- *High accuracy = outputs as accurate as current census outputs*

Please apportion 100 points across the three data characteristics according to their relative importance to you/your organisation.

2.2 Respondent analysis

The consultation received 275 responses (190 submitted online and 85 via e-mail or letter). Feedback was also provided by 207 attendees at the workshops. The frequency tables for the following analyses are at Appendix A.

2.2.1 Type of respondents

Respondents are categorised into seven types of user:

- academia/education
- central government department
- charity/community
- genealogy/historical
- local authority
- other public authority e.g. health service, emergency services
- private/commercial

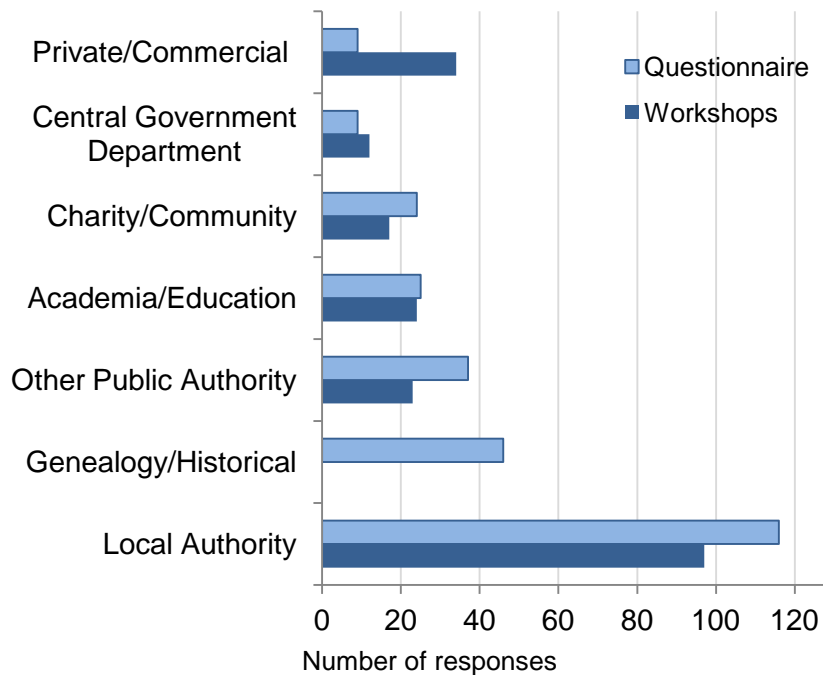
Figure 1 shows counts of questionnaires returned and attendance at the workshops.

Local authorities (LAs) are the largest group both in terms of responses to the questionnaire and attendance at the workshops. Genealogists are the second largest group in terms of questionnaire responses but were not represented at the workshops.

The consultation was aimed at users of published statistics, rather than those seeking access to individual historical records. Therefore, the consultation questionnaire was not designed to capture the views of genealogists, and neither were they specifically targeted in publicising the workshops. This issue is discussed in more detail in the consultation evaluation (see Appendix D).

Although central government departments accounted for the lowest proportion of responses, most key departments provided detailed submissions.

Figure 1: Workshop attendees and questionnaire responses: by type of respondent



The analysis of responses by respondent type should be interpreted with caution because some individual responses represent the views of several organisations or a large number of individual members. For example, the single questionnaire response from the Demographic User Group takes account of the views of a wide range of commercial organisations, and the single response from the Equality and Diversity Forum represents the views of 30 member organisations.

Equally, it is important to note that we will not be using the results produced directly and we will take account of responses that represent multiple users.

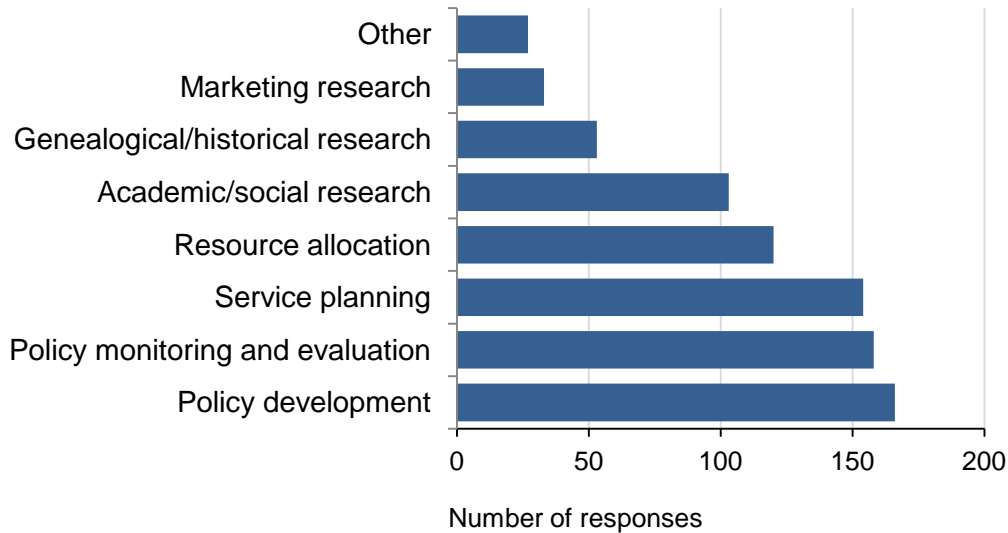
2.2.2 Type of data use

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to indicate how they used population and socio-demographic statistics. Uses were categorised as follows:

- academic/social research
- genealogical/historical research
- marketing research
- policy development
- policy monitoring and evaluation
- resource allocation
- service planning
- other (examples given include: geo-demographics, community-based funding bids and transport modelling)

Figure 2 provides further details on the relative importance of these broad categories of uses.

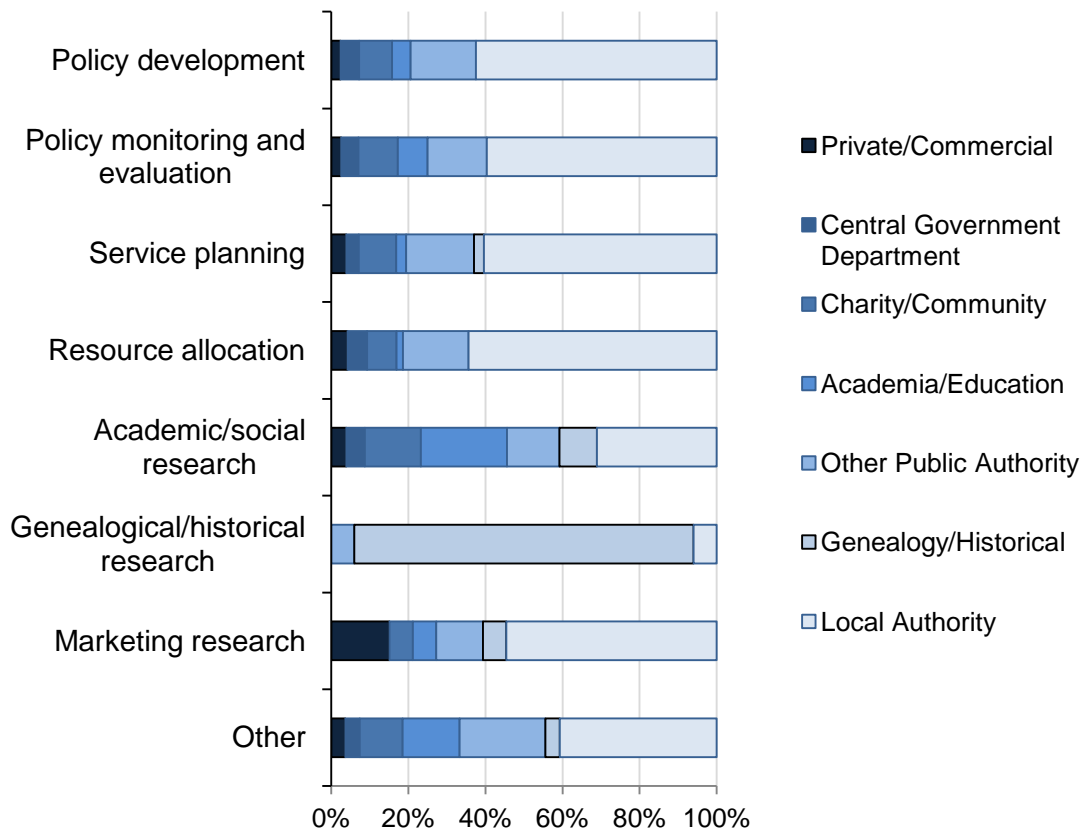
Figure 2: Questionnaire responses: by use of data



The main uses reported by respondents were in policy development, policy monitoring and evaluation, and service planning; with approximately 160 respondents stating an interest in each of these. This reflects the high response from local authorities and other public authorities. Resource allocation and research are also important for a large proportion of respondents.

Figure 3 shows how the data are used by key user groups. In most cases, there is a demand for data for a range of purposes. The exception is in the use of genealogical/historical research, which is predominantly limited to the genealogy/historical user group. Marketing research is the main use for ONS statistics by the private/commercial sector.

Figure 3: Use of data: by type of questionnaire respondent



2.2.3 Analysis of responses from genealogists

The requirements of genealogists are distinct from those of other users. This group is almost exclusively interested in access to record level data on families and households which is traditionally released after a hundred years. Quality and accuracy at the household level is paramount, but frequency is much less critical. Both family and local historians make extensive use of these data. In view of this their responses are considered separately in section 3.10.

3.0 Analysis of user requirements

This section presents the analysis of user requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics.

- Section 3.1 provides a brief discussion of factors which respondents believe will impact their future needs
- Section 3.2 provides a high level summary of the responses to the consultation
- Sections 3.3 to 3.9 provide analyses of user requirements for each individual theme
- Section 3.10 deals with issues of special relevance in Wales, and
- Section 3.11 discusses any other concerns raised by respondents

The commentary is complemented by box and whisker plots. An explanation of this method of visualisation is set out in Appendix B.

3.1 Future influences

A number of factors, repeatedly referred to by respondents, are expected to influence information requirements over the next ten years. These factors include: public policy changes, the economic downturn, and other societal changes. Whilst some of these factors will affect information requirements across all themes, the impact of others will be limited to specific themes. Further details are outlined below.

3.1.1 Public policy changes

Respondents identified that information requirements will be affected by a number of policy changes associated with the following legislation:-

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Child Poverty Act 2010
- Equalities Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Health and Social Care Act 2012

3.1.2 The economic downturn

The economic downturn, and the resultant pressure on resources, has led to a general increase in the need for detailed population and socio-demographic information. Several respondents noted that this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Detailed information is required to enable evidence-based decision making in support of targeted service planning, monitoring and evaluation.

“With resources becoming increasingly tight across the public sector it will become increasingly important to be able to benchmark and evaluate the impacts of public interventions against a range of secondary data. Interventions will be increasingly targeted at certain population groups and in certain areas. This in turn will create a need for greater drilling down into the data in terms of: smaller and more bespoke i.e. non-standard geographies; more specific variables; greater cross-tabulation.”
Liverpool City Council

Related to a reduction in budgets is an increased emphasis on partnership working and the sharing of data. At the same time, public bodies will also have fewer funds available to supplement the data that they can access from ONS and other government departments.

3.1.3 Other societal changes

Details of the societal and social changes likely to have a large impact on future information requirements are outlined below.

The ageing population:

“Addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by an ageing population, in terms of: the local labour market and employers’ skills needs; and....public sector service provision (particularly social care, public transport and other services on which older people are relatively dependent).”
Cheshire and Warrington Unitary Authorities

The obesity epidemic:

“Obesity is becoming a major, if not the major, health challenge. There is increasing concern at the levels of obesity in the population and the long-term costs to society; both health and social care costs, but also wider economic costs.”
Bristol City Council

The increasing complexity of migration patterns, both internal and international:

“An increasingly mobile population poses new challenges in identifying the location and characteristics of transient and temporary populations.”
Census and Geo-demographics Group (on behalf of the Market Research Society)

Digital inclusion and exclusion:

“Statistics about the accessibility of the internet are likely to be a future requirement, particularly as service provision is increasingly web-based.”
Local Authority, anonymous

Environmental agendas:

“Energy efficiency measures.... [are] useful as a measure of overall sustainability of residential buildings as we move into an era of high energy costs and greater public awareness of environmental issues. This information would be used as a direct means of targeting resources to those areas where energy efficiency targets are not being met.”
Bristol City Council

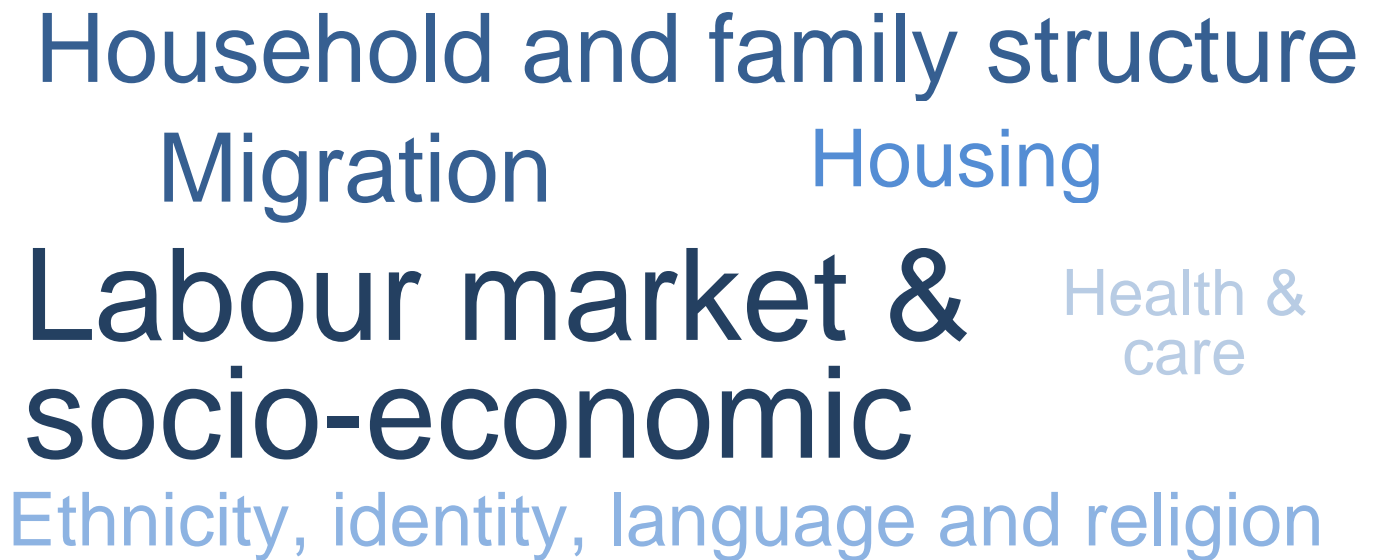
3.2 Summary of user requirements

3.2.1 Theme requirements

User requirements for population and socio-demographic data are grouped into the following seven themes:

- Population (by age and sex)
- Ethnicity, identity, language and religion
- Health
- Household and family structure
- Housing
- Labour market and socio-economic
- Migration

Overall, respondents' data requirements have increased across all of the themes. However, although information on all of the themes is important, there is greater demand for some themes than others. The 'word-cloud' below shows the relative importance of the different themes as reported in the questionnaire responses. The data used to calculate the word cloud proportions can be found at Appendix C.

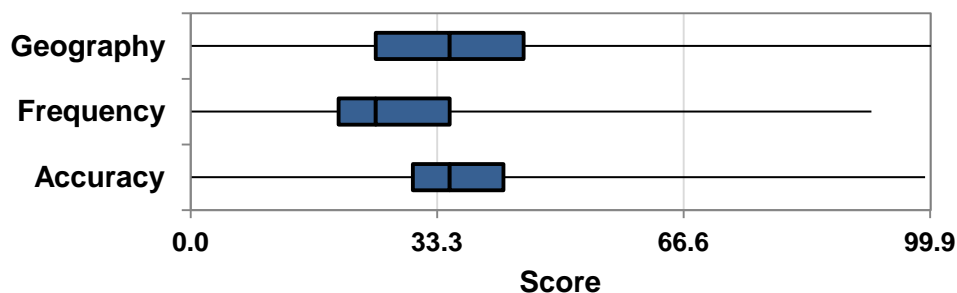


3.2.2 Quality requirements across all themes

Respondents were asked to comment on the relative importance of the quality dimensions geography, frequency and accuracy for each theme. Figure 4 below provides a summary view of responses across all themes.

Overall, respondents reported that having more frequent outputs would be desirable. However, they are not willing to trade high accuracy and small geography for this. Our solution needs to retain both quality and small area outputs – although, as we shall see in the following sections, this varies by theme.

Figure 4: Box plot showing the relative importance of geography, frequency and accuracy to all respondents across all themes (excluding responses from genealogists)



3.3 Population (by age and sex)

3.3.1 Summary

Population broken down by age and sex is a fundamental requirement for users of ONS statistics. This view is strongly substantiated by very many respondents to the consultation.

“Population estimates must form the spine of any population statistics system [developed by] Beyond 2011.”
University of Leeds

Moreover, responses suggest that the importance of these data has increased.

“The need for this data has increased as [our] population is becoming more diverse. The drive towards greater efficiency in relation to public service planning and delivery increases the need for reliable population estimates, projections and forecasts.”
Local Authority, anonymous

3.3.2 Population (by age and sex): changes in requirement

There is an increasing need for responsive population statistics due to the rapid changes in population structure caused largely by migration and increased life expectancy. Migration, both internal and international, has increased since the 2001 Census.

“The cumulative impact of both internal and international migration has resulted in increasing demographic change in certain areas of the city...Additionally, current and future expansion of the University [of Lincoln] will continue to have an impact on resident demographics.”
City of Lincoln Council

“[We have an] increasingly dynamic population in a traditionally stable area.”
North Yorkshire County Council

However, respondents commented that the mid-year estimates (MYEs) have not been able to account for the recent population changes caused by migration.

“An emerging issue is that MYEs do not include short term migrants.”
Dorset County Council

In addition, some respondents expressed the view that the current system of population estimates does not account for changing requirements caused by the ageing of the population.

“[We need] more information on the very old population i.e. a disaggregation of the 90+ age category to give single years of age up to 100 and then a 100+ age band. Particularly as the 90+ age band is increasingly large as a result of improvements in life expectancy.”
Greater London Authority

Issues which affect particular age groups have increased the demand for population broken down by age.

“Population broken down by age is of particular interest to the LEP [Local Economic Partnership] as it provides an indication of the current and future make-up of the working age population.”
West of England Local Enterprise

“Census-based age/sex distributions are used to plan the future provision of Jewish faith schools and child care facilities.”
Institute for Jewish Policy Research

Responses to the consultation also indicated that ‘usual residence’ is not always sufficient.

“[We need] counts on other population bases besides usual residence.”
Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies

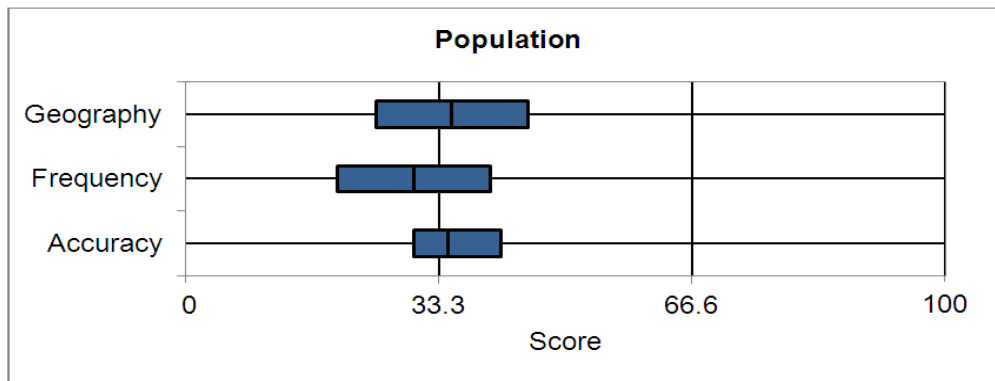
“[There are] increasing requests for different population bases.”
Milton Keynes Council

3.3.3 Population (by age and sex): quality dimensions

Summary

Overall, respondents find that accuracy, frequency and geography are almost equally important for estimates of the population. Population counts by age and sex constitute the basis for many other outputs and ideally are required annually at high accuracy and for small geographic areas.

“I want [to have] my cake and eat it – ideally I want census quality data every year!”
Hampshire County Council



Analysis

Data need to be accurate so that users have confidence that decisions made using outputs for small geographical areas will be effective.

“Accuracy is key for us as we need to be able to trust this data that is the basis for so much of our commissioning and planning.”
Hampshire County Council Adult Services

While high frequency is not considered to be the most important of the three dimensions, there is still a requirement for population statistics to be available annually.

“Annual small area data is something that we have come to rely on and expect from ONS.”
Bristol City Council

“The annual population estimates are such a well-established complement to the Census that it is almost impossible to imagine them not continuing to exist.”
National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Local authorities and other public authorities require small area geography and accuracy in order to identify population change, direct resources to the appropriate areas and target services effectively.

“Population data at low geographies impacts upon everything carried out at a local authority level, from housing and social care demand to the needs of minority groups.”
South West Observatory

“It is crucial that we continue to access this gold standard information at small area level.”
Public Health Wales NHS Trust

While the majority of responses from local authorities give equal importance to each dimension, others have given greater weight to specific dimensions, as illustrated by the comments below:

“The length of time it takes to produce high accuracy often negates the purpose of the data.”
Brighton and Hove City Council

“We would rather have accurate data less frequently than less accurate data annually.”
Bristol City Council

At the same time, different users have different requirements. For example, consultancies specialising in value added reselling require statistics at output area level³ (OA) as high quality building blocks for the data they produce for non-standard areas.

“We want annual updates at small area geography (Output Area). This is really important to us building quality up to date data sets for our clients.”
Beacon Dodsworth Ltd.

In contrast, many charity and community organisations clearly value accuracy and geography over frequency.

“With the big influence of localism on policy making it is important to have data impacts as locally as possible. It is also important that the data are reasonably accurate if the effect of specific policies is to be analysed. For looking at trends and influences it is not essential to have annual data as many effects follow causes more slowly.”
Fair Play South West

³ Output Areas (OAs) and Super Output Areas (SOAs) are an automatically generated statistical geography used for the publication of census outputs and Neighbourhood Statistics. There are two layers of SOA, with areas intermediate in size between 2001 Census output areas and local authorities. Lower Layer SOAs (LSOAs) have a minimum population of 1000 and Middle Layer SOAs (MSOAs) a minimum of 5000, each layer nesting within the one above. SOAs were automatically generated in 2004 to provide a stable, consistent geography for reporting small areas statistics. They will remain key output geographies for the 2011 Census.

“The Church of England is organised into a parish structure. Over the decades parish boundaries have become increasingly different to government and statistical boundaries, and are regularly revised. To calculate basic demographic information for a parish a ‘mapping’ process must be used to convert the data from government to ecclesiastical boundaries... The further we move from accurate OA figures, the less robust this calculation is likely to be.”

Research and Statistics, Archbishops' Council, Church of England

Central government departments are the only group which places more emphasis on frequency than geography. The main data uses of planning and resource allocation have a requirement for annual data at local authority level.

“For planning purposes, we need information on the latest birth rates and school-aged population at least annually, especially given the short planning window between a change in the birth rate and those children entering education (<5 years). We need population data at LA-level, but no smaller.”

Department for Education

With population (and many other themes) there is often a dual requirement. There is a clear user requirement for accurate, frequent estimates (perhaps every year) at the LA level to enable funding allocation and policy monitoring. However, at the same time, there is a need for accurate outputs like those produced from the census for much smaller areas e.g. for Output Areas. These are used at the local level to allocate resources or identify areas in need of action. Although users would prefer these data more frequently they do not appear willing to give up quality or small area resolution in order to increase frequency.

3.4 Household and family structure

3.4.1 Summary

The theme 'household and family structure' includes the following topics: household size, household structure, marital/civil partnership status, number of households, relationship of individuals and visitors.

For the majority of respondents the requirement for this theme has become more important. These findings were strongly substantiated by feedback from the series of workshops where household structure and household size were the most popular topics.

Again the word cloud shows the relative importance of the different topics within the theme as reported in the questionnaire responses.



3.4.2 Household and family structure: changes in requirement

The drive towards greater efficiency in relation to public service planning and delivery has increased the need for detailed information about household structure at the local level.

“For an inner city borough like Camden it is becoming more and more important for us to understand the complex ways in which people live.”
London Borough of Camden

Moreover, having access to up-to-date information is increasingly important for planning housing requirements.

“Number and type of households are key pieces of information when it comes to compiling Housing Needs Assessments, Housing Allocation Plans, the Local Development Framework and other key pieces of work in Housing Strategy. Currently there is no other comprehensive source of information on households that we could utilise that would provide the same level of detail as the Census.”
Bolton Council

Changes in social policy and the requirement for equalities monitoring across public sector organisations is also increasing the need for such data.

“As marriage and civil partnerships are protected characteristics under the new Equality Act, data on household and family structure has increased in importance for us. We have a duty to pay regard to these characteristics and the data will be useful to help us understand if we are providing adequately for both groups.”
Hampshire County Council Adult Services

Some respondents, including local authorities and commercial organisations, mentioned that their requirements for data on marital/civil partnership status have decreased.

“Marital status is really a less important indicator than familial relationships and household structure. For instance whether people are single or living together is more relevant in service planning & resource allocation e.g. Housing Allocation Plans, than whether or not the people living together are married.”

Bolton Council

3.4.3 Household and family structure: impact of not having data

A range of users underlined the importance of maintaining the existing information on household and family structure for decision making and resource allocation, to meet the needs of specific minority and vulnerable groups, and for general research purposes.

Respondents from both public sector and commercial organisations maintained that effective decision making, essential for the efficient targeting of resources, would be impaired without these data.

“What would happen if we didn’t have it? We would not have any basic understanding of our population and their household characteristics and formation particularly at small geographies. This would then lead to poor decision making based on limited understanding of needs and composition.”

London Borough of Camden

“Targeting of local markets and segments of consumers would be less accurate, leading to worse decisions, and bad investment decisions (which can total hundreds of £millions p.a. for large companies).”

Demographic User Group

In many cases respondents highlighted that minority and vulnerable groups within society in particular would be adversely impacted by a lack of detailed household data.

“Many services are specific to particular user groups and it is essential that we can identify where residents of specific types exist in order to effectively plan service provision.... This relies on knowledge of household composition.... This information is not available accurately at small levels [sic] from other sources, as even socio-economic characteristic products which are available at cost are based heavily on census data... This [data] is especially important for our work to tackle child poverty as this is more prevalent in some types of household than others.”

Bristol City Council

In addition, the likely direct financial cost to the public was highlighted.

“The organisation would either have to ‘muddle through’ without evidence-based planning, or would have to collect the data itself (either in-house or through consultants), at a cost to the public. The consequences of either alternative would be a reduction in the amount or quality of services provided to local residents.”

Herefordshire County Council

Furthermore, the importance of the data for research was highlighted.

“...evidence-based research [would be] virtually impossible, particularly at the local level.”

University of Leeds

“An absence of such data for small geographic areas (census output areas) would lead to less accurate and efficient provision of private sector services. Therefore the provision of this information to the market, social and opinion research sector, to help inform such decisions, is essential... Household structure is of particular interest to the research sector.”

Census and Geodemographics Group on behalf of the Market Research Society

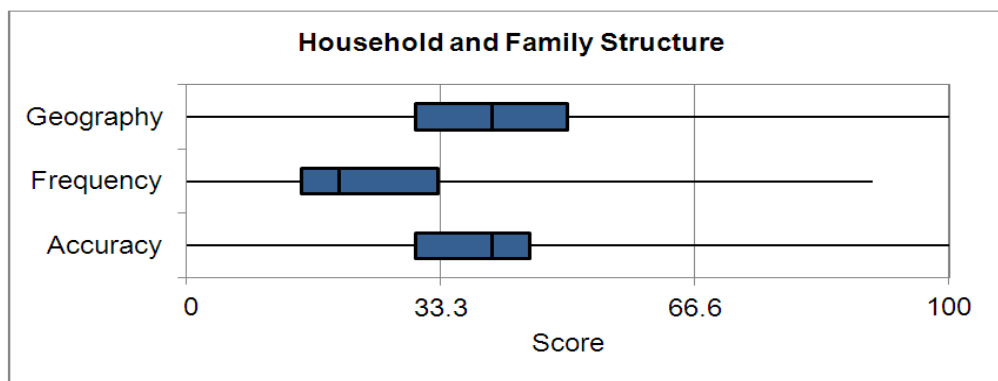
3.4.4 Household and family structure: quality dimensions

Summary

Information on household and family structure is required at high accuracy for small geographical areas. Frequency is generally considered less important because household and family structure is not subject to rapid change.

“Family structure patterns across society as a whole do not change rapidly so frequency is less important. We need detailed information so that we can target small areas successfully”

Oldham Council



Analysis

Statistics on household and family structure are required at a higher frequency than the current provision of decennial outputs. This is required to more effectively monitor changes in the population which may have an impact on service provision.

“It would be an improvement to have information more regularly than currently, but things don’t change that quickly: 3-5 years would be optimum.”

Herefordshire Council

“Accurate information needs to be provided on a five yearly basis – ten years is too infrequent, with today’s rapidly changing population.”

London Borough of Harrow

The exception is for data on the number of households which are required at a higher frequency, preferably annually, as these are used as a base for looking at other household characteristics.

“We want annual updates at small area geography (Output Area) of the number of households.”

Beacon Dodsworth Ltd.

“Accuracy and frequency is of most importance for total number of households.”

Bristol City Council

The availability of outputs for small geographical areas is especially important for resource allocation and the effective targeting of services. The minimum requirement is for outputs at Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) or ward level, but the general consensus is for the lowest geographic level possible without significantly compromising accuracy.

“With the big influence of localism on policy making it is important to have data impacts as locally as possible. It is also important that the data are reasonably accurate if the effect of specific policies is to be analysed.”

Fair Play South West

“As we move into an era of reduced public sector budgets, interventions will need to become more and more targeted and localised, therefore having data about households (such as details of pensioner and single person households) down to very small geographical scales is considered essential.”

Liverpool City Council

Such requirements are especially relevant for commercial users as information for small areas is needed for the construction of non-standard geographies and to target investment.

“Small area geography is of greater importance to the research sector than frequency or accuracy, as it enables outputs to be produced for a full range of geographical areas and also for non-standard areas by aggregations.”

Census and Geo-demographics Group on behalf of the Market Research Society

Low level data on households can also be used to produce small area estimates for other population characteristics for which information is only available for larger geographic units.

“It may be that if some household data were available at OA level, then it would be possible to use this as a way to estimate other data, for example applying marital status proportions at LSOA or MSOA level to OA data on the number of households.”

Archbishops' Council, Church of England

Other users emphasised the importance of both geography and accuracy. This is especially relevant where household information is used to support investment decisions including the provision of appropriate housing and other local services. Accurate small area estimates are also vital for forecasting trends and monitoring change.

“It might make a lot of difference whether a small area contained large families requiring 3 or 4 bed homes, or whether they contained couples who might require 1 or 2 bed flats or smaller houses.”

Housing Vision

“Long term planning for the future requires accurate data at local level, but not very frequently.”

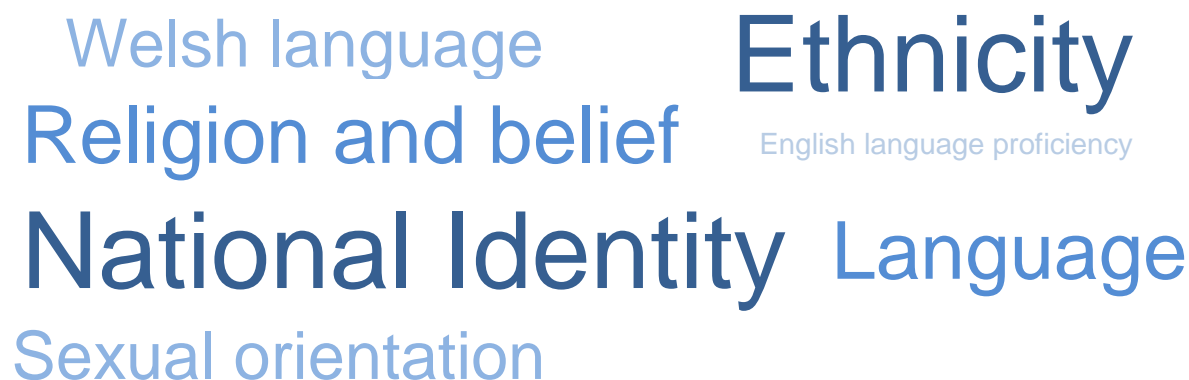
Cotswold District Council

3.5 Ethnicity, identity, language and religion

3.5.1 Summary

The theme 'Ethnicity, identity, language and religion' includes the following topics: English language proficiency, ethnicity, language, national identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation and Welsh language.

For the majority of respondents and those attending the workshops the need for this type of information has increased. The word cloud illustrates the relative importance of different topics and shows that both ethnicity and national identity were of special relevance.



3.5.2 Ethnicity, identity, language and religion: changes in requirement

Overall, respondents stressed the increased importance of data within this theme.

“Information about these topics has continued to increase in importance to the extent that they are almost as fundamental in describing the population as age and sex. Ethnicity and religion, sometimes taken together, are important for identifying disadvantage and need, whilst language may be important for communicating and delivering services.”

Charity Organisation, anonymous

Respondents explained that the increasingly diverse nature of the population has amplified their requirement for this information.

“The population is becoming increasingly diverse. We need to have an understanding of this diversity to ensure our services meet the needs of our communities.”

Chesterfield Borough Council

In common with other themes, detailed information is particularly important for evidence-based decision making and the efficient targeting of service delivery.

“Understanding the make-up of the population is a key requirement for local authorities where more and more emphasis is being placed on accurate evidence-based decision making...ethnic make-up is an area where it is key to have accurate information, as groups often congregate at small area levels and have specific needs.”

Hampshire County Council

Having a detailed understanding of the diversity of population is also necessary for other reasons - most notably to help the promotion of community cohesion and in preventing social isolation and the exclusion of minority groups.

“Incidents occurring nationally and internationally have had an impact at a local level. This information is vital to help develop frameworks around community cohesion and social inclusion.”

Local Authority, anonymous

“This is an essential resource for the equalities agenda and our work on community cohesion (especially interfaith).”

Diocese of Manchester (Church of England)

Furthermore, the public sector equality duties arising from the Equalities Act 2010 have increased the requirement from public bodies for data across the seven equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

“This is an emerging information requirement in the context of Equalities Impact Assessments which involve gathering information and analysing the potential or actual effects of a policy for different groups. We rely on this data to carry out Equalities Impact Assessments and are not aware of any suitable alternative sources.”

Department for Education

“We have experienced an increasing need for data on the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population of the UK, in response to changing legislation regarding sexual orientation.... We envisage that this need will increase or at least remain the same in the coming years.”

The National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Partnership

In Wales, the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy will increase demand for data on Welsh language.

“Data on the Welsh Language are of great importance in Wales and to date the Census has been the only source of detailed data that allowed us to measure the prevalence of the language amongst communities and detailed sub-groups of the population. This requirement will be sustained and strengthened in the future. The forthcoming Welsh language strategy is likely to include a strong focus on the use of language within families and intergenerational transmission, and the position of Welsh language in communities.”

Managing Diversity Limited

It was stressed that current data on this theme, although vital, is not adequately meeting user needs. There are limitations in ONS’s ethnic estimates and alternatives are unreliable. These points were highlighted by numerous respondents:

“Ethnicity data is still one of the most requested pieces of information from the Census. Although ONS now produce annual population estimates at local authority level this information is not sufficient to understand the needs/ characteristics/ distribution of our ethnic population.”

Shropshire County Council and Partner Organisations

“Because so much has changed in this area over the last few years we are having to rely on qualitative data, anecdotal evidence, the School Census and our Childrens Services Department’s Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service in order to estimate how we need to deploy resources. The data from schools, however, is inadequate particularly in relation to services for the older population. The school census covers only state schools and many pupils are reluctant to reveal their Traveller identity due to stigma, rendering the data inaccurate.”

Hampshire County Council Adult Services

“These data are only available on a comprehensive basis from the census. Other sources may only provide these for subsets of the population and not in a consistent way.”

London Borough of Camden

3.5.3 Ethnicity, identity, language and religion: impact of not having data

Without the type of data provided by the Census, as a minimum, public bodies and other organisations would not be able to carry out some of their current functions.

“Comprehensive information on Ethnicity and Religious identity is not available from any other source, so the council would not be able to perform many of its duties without it. All of the services that the council provides have to be accessible to different groups within the borough, and as a public body we have a duty not to discriminate. Without these figures we would have nothing to measure the different social groups in Bolton with and nothing to benchmark against.”

Bolton Council

“Given that this area covers several of the protected characteristics, loss of these data would be extremely serious for the Commission.”

Equality and Human Rights Commission

“Loss of ethnicity information for small areas would be serious, and loss of information on language (or, relatedly, country of birth) or religion would be significant for the collection of market, social and opinion research data.”

London Voluntary Service Council

If the data were not available then users would have to conduct their own research in order to gather the information.

“Specialist surveys would have to be drawn to specifically explore minority experience. However, these would still require something like census data to validate the disproportionate sampling techniques used.”

Samples of Anonymised Records Support Team, Centre for Census and Survey Research

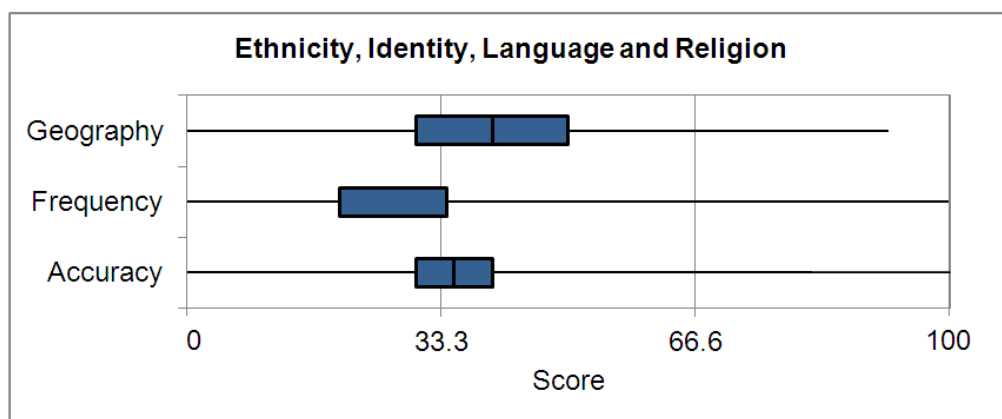
3.5.4 Ethnicity, identity, language and religion: quality dimensions

Summary

Geography is the most important dimension as information is required at the community level in order to monitor equality and cohesion. At the same time accuracy is also crucial in order to have reliable and representative information on what can be very small groups. Many respondents agreed that frequency is less important.

“This dataset may be subject to rapid change, but I believe it is more important for the information to be accurate and at a low geographical level (in my opinion, if it is only available at local authority level it is almost meaningless).”

Essex County Council



Analysis

Central government departments and some local authorities specified a trade-off between the frequency and geographic level of outputs that are required. Data for small area geographies would be sufficient on a less frequent basis (every five to ten years) as long as information was also provided at the local authority level at more frequent intervals in between. However, for these users accuracy is expected to be high.

“Ideal if high geographical detail were produced on an infrequent basis, particularly for ethnicity, but with more frequent (e.g. annual) estimates at local authority level.”
Department for Transport

“Whilst having small area detail is useful, it is not essential, especially on a regular basis. Small area detail every 5 years for example, would be sufficient, with district level detail every year.”
Kent County Council

Despite the overall importance of geography the actual level at which the data are required depends upon the nature of the local population, most notably the size and composition of individual groups.

“For ethnicity and national identity the main message is that this was required at a high level of accuracy for areas lower than local authorities (but not as low as OAs) and it would be welcome around every 5 years. In areas where there is quite a mixed community it is more likely to be required at lower levels of geography.”
Welsh Government

“Small area geography has a relatively high level of importance for the reason that analysing spatial concentrations is important for identifying local factors, and being able to plan and deliver appropriate services.”
City of London Corporation

Small area geographies are important so that policy and services can be targeted locally at small potentially rapidly changing communities.

“Accuracy at small area level is also paramount, given the spatial disaggregation of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) populations within Cheshire & Warrington. Ideally we would want small area level data to be both accurate and updated relatively frequently.”
Cheshire East Council

“Accuracy is essential, as is small area geography AND high frequency of establishing changing profiles. Our area experiences significant large scale and rapid changes to resident profiles; these have clear connections to our ability to deliver appropriate services that engage with and supply the needs of changing communities.”

Slough Borough Council

Specifically on the topic of Welsh language, having outputs at small geographies is more important than receiving outputs at high frequency as this allows policy intervention and monitoring for individual communities.

“Welsh language policy intervention has included a great deal of community-level intervention to promote the use of the language in specific areas. A level of low geographic detail is required to inform and monitor such intervention.”

Welsh Government

As some of the minority groups are very small, outputs need to be of high accuracy so that statistics on the characteristics of these groups can be used effectively to comply with requirements in the 2010 Equalities Act.

“Accuracy is important to us as we have a relatively small BME population, thus lower accuracy may substantially misrepresent our population.”

Hampshire County Council Adult Services

While frequency is the least important dimension, outputs on ethnicity and religion are still required at least every five years to detect basic levels of change which are not captured in the current decennial cycle.

“Changes in the population structure have been so significant over the last 10 years as to render 2001 data almost useless. MYE estimates of ethnicity at a small area level would be invaluable.”

Leeds City Council

“Significant cultural change will impact these statistics. Therefore for the statistics to be of benefit to business and society it will be important to measure with greater frequency than 10 yearly, and with some accuracy.”

Census and Geo-demographics Group (on behalf of the Market Research Society)

However, in contrast to other requirements, for sexual orientation the emphasis is on high frequency and accuracy.

“High frequency is important, given that there is currently very little data on the LGB (lesbian, gay and bi-sexual) population, and that regular and repeated inclusion of questions on sexual orientation would build up an evidence base. Research has shown that it takes repeated monitoring exercises to build up people’s confidence with monitoring and to generate more accurate responses.”

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

3.6 Health and care

3.6.1 Summary

The theme 'health and care' encompasses the following topics: carers, disability, fertility, health status, lifestyle, long term illness and wheelchair use.

For the majority of respondents to the questionnaire their requirements for information on this theme have increased. The importance of this theme was echoed in the outcome of the workshops, although it was selected fewer times than some other themes. Participants at the workshops emphasised the importance of long term disability and health status.

The word cloud shows the relative importance of the different topics within the theme as reported in the questionnaire responses.



3.6.2 Health and care: changes in requirement

User demand for health data in general has increased. However, some respondents, including local authorities and commercial organisations, noted that their reliance on census data had declined because more detailed health data are available from other sources.

“The requirement to obtain health data via the Census has declined as much more detailed information is available locally through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.”

Leeds City Council

“Most health data is supplied by the NHS, for instance health episode statistics and hospital admissions data.”

Essex County Council

Moreover, the inadequacy of Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI), both in terms of being used in its own right and as a proxy for disability, was frequently mentioned.

“[Census health data is] not used much within the Council. Limiting long term illness is one of the few pieces of health data available at output area level, but is a very broad self categorisation and therefore of limited use, and rapidly becomes dated.”

Hastings Borough Council

“There remains a gap amongst our professional community for useful data on the volume and nature of disability at the local level and we need this data to understand equality issues. As our population continues to place extra pressure on social care and health sectors, we need more information on health and disability, certainly not less.”

Warwickshire County Council

Despite these issues, many users still rely heavily on census health data.

“A large proportion of local government's budget is spent on health and social care and detailed local information at this level is vital. There are numerous data sources of health information but the census provides a thorough starting point for any work in this theme area.”

Worcestershire County Council

“The Census provides valuable population level data on health status, disability and carers. There is no other robust national/local source for this data.”

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

The increase in requirement for health data largely comes from public bodies to enable them to meet public health obligations. A key requirement for local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) is to support the completion of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), a requirement of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

“[The] council also has a statutory requirement to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of the health and wellbeing of the local community. Without health data we wouldn't be able to undertake this.”

Kent County Council

“Information on health also underpins our equalities agenda, in particular information on carers and Long Term Limiting Illness [sic]. These pieces of information are a crucial part of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which is a statutory responsibility to inform the commissioning of services and the local Health & Wellbeing Strategy.”

Bolton County Council

Public bodies also increasingly require information regarding LLTI and disability in order to understand equality issues.

“Disability has always been perhaps the biggest gap for us in terms of datasets and any reduction in the type of information made available on this theme would be a significant problem.”

Warwickshire County Council

“There is an increasing need for more up to date statistics on long term limiting illness/disability for service provision and equalities monitoring both for the population as a whole and for the economically active population....Statistics on nature of disability is an existing identified need which has yet to be met. If someone has a disability it does not mean they are ill, and vice versa.”

Bristol City Council

Moreover, the forthcoming changes to public health legislation will further increase demands.

“With current changes in public health legislation, we would also anticipate Local Authorities' demands for public health data increasing significantly.”

Liverpool City Council

“As the role of Local Authorities is set to grow in terms of public health responsibility, an understanding of the changing health issues of our population will become crucial to wider numbers of service providers within our own organisation.”

Lincolnshire County Council

Health is a theme for which there are emerging requirements which cannot be satisfied by the information currently available. For example, the link between health and other socio-demographic characteristics.

"[We] need to identify patterns of health and care needs and their links to socio-demographic and economic characteristics e.g. to develop integrated health and social care policies."

Gloucestershire County Council

"[We] need to better understand the relationships between health and other factors, such as worklessness, deprivation, housing conditions, the built environment etc."

Liverpool City Council

Other societal issues, in particular the ageing population and the obesity epidemic, are increasing demand for health information.

"Monitoring the health of the whole population is vital in order to allocate NHS resources equitably and in order to plan for the resources that will be needed as the population ages over the next 30 years."

University of Leeds

"Obesity... is becoming a major, if not the major, health challenge. There is increasing concern at the levels of obesity in the population and the long-term costs to society; both health and social care costs, but also wider economic costs. The National Child Measurement Programme provides data on primary school age children but there is no consistent, accurate national data (such as the Health Survey for England) on teenagers and adults that is available at small areas."

Bristol City Council

3.6.3 Health and care: impact of not having the information

Despite the acknowledged limitations of health data provided by the Census, it is of importance and value. In particular, LLTI is of special relevance because of the Good plan - lack of data on disability and the inadequacy of health information in general.

"We would be unable to accurately assess the scale, nature and location of a range of health related issues, including limiting disability. Reliable estimates from other sources are not available."

Cheshire East Council

"Long term limiting illness from the census is currently the only source we have of this information."

West of England Local Enterprise

Without access to this small area data on health, respondents felt that their ability to perform essential functions would be impaired.

"Service planning would be compromised without census data on health. Although it provides limited detail, the complete coverage can help identify that proportion of the disabled or health impaired population who for various reasons do not register their disability and do not engage with targeted health services."

Wakefield Council

"[Welsh Government] would find it difficult to monitor health needs for small areas (LSOA level). Other sources are available for larger areas but we are dependent on ONS Census data for small areas."

Welsh Government

A range of respondents explained how it would affect their work.

“[We] would not be able to establish incidence rates for diseases and disorders, and how these vary by social and economic determinants of health.”

Academic Organisation, anonymous

“[We would] lose an important baseline for evaluating health gains from use and proximity of natural areas.”

Natural England

“This is the most significant social issue in our area. The absence of accurate (especially small area) data would undermine support for local health initiatives.”

Diocese of Manchester (Church of England)

“[We] would be unable to determine how changes to bus/rail networks/timetables would affect different people.”

Metro (West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive)

Some respondents also commented on the implications for vulnerable groups.

“Resource allocation for carers would be more difficult. Needs of vulnerable people would be harder to plan for.”

Tees Valley Unlimited

“JPR [Jewish Policy Research] would lose its ability to assess the prevalence of disability/infirmity and long-term illness in the community. That is expected to affect most significantly its ability to advise on the development of Jewish care facilities for the elderly.”

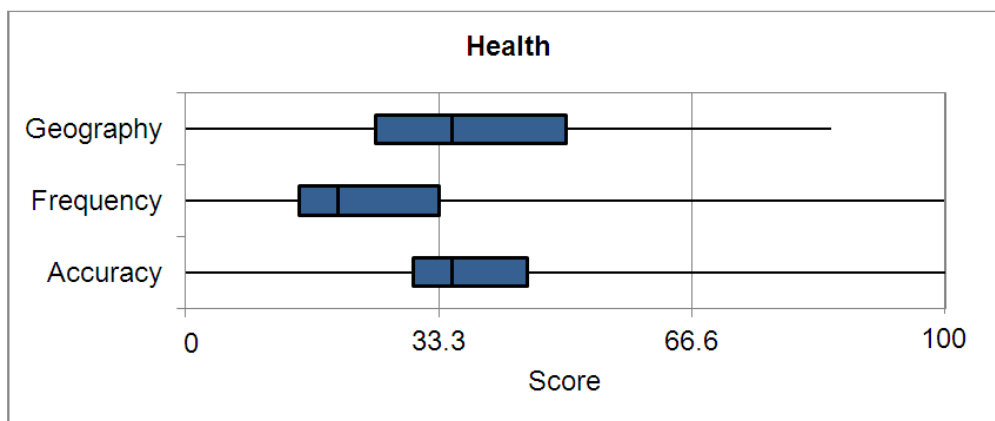
Institute for Jewish Policy Research

3.6.4 Health and care: quality dimensions

Summary

“Quality [accurate] statistics for small areas are most important. Intra-Census trends can be spotted using other surveys, from health sector partners’ work and from other data sets.”

Cheshire East Council



Analysis

Again, responses show that accurate outputs at small area level are more important than the frequent production of statistics.

“Data in this area has never been particularly good and it would be an important step forward to improve the accuracy of this kind of data. However, it is also important to be able to identify communities where ill health and need are clustered; therefore, a smaller geography is also needed to focus resources.”

London Borough of Camden

“Accuracy and analysis at output area level is of greater importance than frequency of updating this information.”

Cleveland Fire Brigade

“We would anticipate changes in health status occurring more gradually than other data and would therefore place greater emphasis on receiving accurate data down to small geographies.”

Liverpool City Council

In all respondent groups (with the exception of local authorities) geography is scored as the most important quality dimension by the greatest number of respondents. Data are required for small areas to target those with the greatest need, as poor health often reflects the level of deprivation and tends to be concentrated in specific areas.

“Small area data are important as poor health is generally concentrated in clusters of Output Areas often associated with areas of deprivation.”

Oldham Council

“More accurate data for smaller geographic areas is steadily increasing. LLTI is still requested and there has been an increase in requests to identify areas where certain health issues may be more prevalent.”

Commercial Research Organisation, anonymous

Specific groups, such as the elderly, have special needs and thus effective targeting requires information to be available at small area level.

“Sometimes we are profiling a local authority but want to determine the location of pockets of older persons who may have higher care needs. We may then want to compare this to the current location of sheltered housing and residential care schemes to look at adequacy of provision relative to areas where greatest need is concentrated.”

Housing Vision

Data at very small levels down to OA are also required so that information can be aggregated up to different health related geographies.

“As we will be increasingly working with GP consortia areas for commissioning we need to align data with their areas - this is very difficult when data relates to lower super output area or bigger.”

Hampshire County Council Adult Services

“Clinical Commissioning Groups will need information at a sub-local authority level, preferably for small areas that can be built to GP practice catchment areas.”

Bristol City Council

Local authorities have more balanced needs with both accuracy and geography being highly rated, although accuracy is slightly more important. This is partially because data at small area level must be accurate in order to be effective.

“The level of accuracy needs to be appropriate for the geography in question – i.e. not having such wide confidence intervals that no conclusions can be drawn.”
Herefordshire Council

“With greater integration between local authority and health functions, the provision of accurate data at a small geographical area is becoming more important. Accuracy and consistency of data is also critical for the planning of health and social services that cross administrative boundaries.”
City of London Corporation

Accuracy is also important as topics related to health are especially difficult to measure.

“Health status and related topics are difficult to measure so accuracy is considered the most important.”
Oldham Council

As some of the sub-groups of interest are very small, accurate outputs are essential in order for policies and service provision to be effective.

“Working with differently abled people high accuracy is very important particularly regarding provision for their needs.”
Harrogate and District Branch of Parkinson's UK

As a result, some local authorities prefer to use older census data over more recent surveys, because census data are known to be highly accurate and they have more confidence in the data.

“Although this data exists and is produced frequently, we prefer to use census data as we feel this give us more reliable data on this subject even though it is very dated.”
Bristol City Council

“We probably use other sources more than the census at the present time because of their timeliness (e.g. hospital admissions, benefit claimants data) but much of the underlying analysis of the wider determinants of health is based on information that comes from the census.”
Herefordshire Council

Frequency is less essential as health patterns are not subject to rapid change, and also because more frequent health information can be obtained locally from the Health Service.

“This data supplements more regular health data available from the Health Service locally and gives more generalised information.”
Nottingham City Council

“Increasingly we use data from local health services so frequency is not such an issue.”
London Borough of Hammersmith

While frequency is not considered as essential as geography and accuracy, there is a requirement for updating information so that trends in health can be profiled effectively in order to support planning of future service provision and monitor the impact of policy change.

“Frequency over accuracy - normally go with accuracy but the pace and scale of government policy change in health, social care and welfare in general is so great that we can expect substantial knock on effect to our populations in terms of unpaid care, health and tenure so I think more of a balance is needed.”

London Borough of Camden

“Number of carers needs to be more frequent than it currently is, this type of information is vital for performing certain health and care planning services.”

Bolton Council

“[More frequent outputs] will enable Livin to regularly assess its health related strategies and actions to take into account health levels, and illnesses. It will also enable Livin to trend health related issues within its areas of operation on a more regular basis.”

Livin

3.7 Housing

3.7.1 Summary

Topics included within the 'housing' theme are: affordability, central heating, energy efficiency, homelessness, housing quality, housing stock, internet access, number of rooms and bedrooms, overcrowding, second residence, self-contained accommodation, supported living, tenure (including type of landlord), type of accommodation, and vacant dwellings.

For most respondents the requirement for the housing theme has increased. However the theme was not regarded as one of the most important at the consultation workshops.

The word cloud shows the relative importance of the different topics within the theme as represented by the consultation responses.



3.7.2 Housing: changes in requirement

Tenure (and type of landlord) and type of accommodation, followed by number of rooms or bedrooms and housing stock were the topics within the housing theme most frequently mentioned as having increased in importance, although respondents most often noted that it was their general requirement for housing data which had increased without specifying an individual topic.

Generally the requirement for more detailed local level housing information is driven by an increasing need to plan development and availability of housing stock and target resources as effectively as possible. There is also a growing demand for housing data to inform housing policy and strategy and support bids for funding.

“The planning department within Welsh Government are increasingly using census data and the population and household projections (which make use of census data) to assess local development plans prepared by local authorities... Information on the dwelling stock is needed to judge whether housing need is being met and occasional accurate detailed data enables more frequent estimates of the dwelling stock to be produced.”

Welsh Government

“The data collected in the census on housing (i.e. tenure, type, size, second residence, etc) are essential for housing policy and strategy development....The current housing market situation and the affordability issues makes robust information necessary to address issues of tenure, size and household type. Such data helps to formulate policies and strategies to meet the housing need and provide the right type of housing in the right location. Attracting funding for affordable housing provision from HCA [Homes and Communities Agency] and other funding streams also needs to be based on robust data.”

Oldham Council

There are also increasing data needs based on developments within the housing sector itself, such as the growth in the private rented sector or buy-to-lets.

“In recent years there has been a change of tenure balance with significant growth of the private rented sector. In addition, benefit changes are likely to lead to more shared accommodation. As a result, the need for more timely statistics giving a full tenure breakdown has increased.”

Bristol City Council

“There has been increasing need for information about change in tenure, following the proliferation of buy-to-lets and illegal conversions to maximise profits to landlords from the incoming population. Overcrowding is believed to have become an issue with the increasing demand on housing in the borough.”

London Borough of Newham

It was stressed that data are increasingly needed to address the equalities agenda and deprivation within both the public and private sector:

“Housing related poverty indicators (such as unfit housing, overcrowding, etc.) have become of more interest and relevance lately.”

Essex County Council

Not all topics were felt to have increased in importance for all respondents. Several local authorities mentioned that they no longer had a significant need for data on second residences, central heating or self-contained accommodation:

“We don’t make use of types of central heating as much as we might once of (or at least whether or not a home had central heating). There are other measures of deprivation we tend to make more use of...Generally with regards to other variables there is no significant change in need – but whether or not a dwelling is self-contained is not particularly important.”

Hampshire County Council

“Understanding the volume, make-up and location of our housing stock is important and feeds into a range of areas of strategy. However, some of the specific areas mentioned [in the consultation]...are not explored on a regular basis. We do need, however, to have a good understanding of tenure and accommodation type.”

Warwickshire County Council

Responses suggest that while some topics may have diminished in significance for some users, even where this is the case, the theme as a whole remains important and is considered essential across the public sector as a whole.

“The abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies [RSS] and the requirement for Local Authorities to determine their own strategic housing requirement will considerably increase the requirement for (and local understanding of) population, household and economic projections at the district (and sub-district) level. Prior to the abolition of RSS’ (and previously Structure Plans) the level of housing which local authorities were required to plan for, was set at the regional (or county) level.”
South Gloucestershire Council

3.7.3 Housing: impact of not having data

The most commonly expressed concern about the effect of losing data on housing related to the planning and delivery of services and targeting of resources. Respondents also stressed that their ability to develop policy and strategies and to secure funding, would be impaired if the data were no longer available. This was particularly the case for local authorities and other local service providers.

“...if the data was not available Herefordshire Public Services would not have the necessary evidence to effectively plan services and target resources where they are needed most.”
Herefordshire Council

“Future policies and strategies determined by Livin will not be supported by the relevant intelligence posing a risk to their sustainability. There will also be a risk to the organisation through the potential of delivering new builds or other housing related services that are not relevant to the housing demands or needs of the local community.”
Livin

The loss of census-standard housing data would affect research capability, most notably in relation to research relating to the equalities agenda and deprivation.

“JPR [Jewish Policy Research] will entirely lose the capacity to assess and monitor the variations in types and quality of housing as well as type of tenure. This will seriously limit its ability to monitor socio-economic deprivation in the community as well as its capacity to advise on the development of Jewish care facilities for the elderly, child care and understand socio-economic characteristics of the ultra-orthodox population, with a view towards poverty relief among the latter.”
Institute for Jewish Policy Research

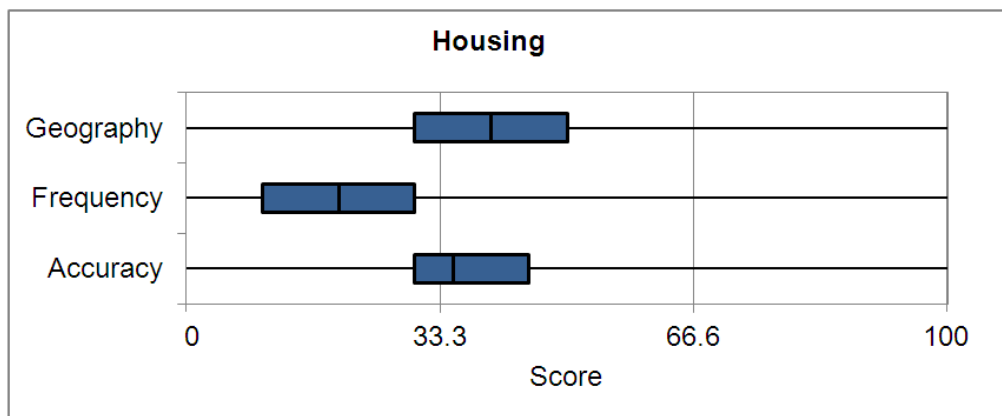
“Change of tenure within Newham has been an issue for some time, with many formerly owned properties now changed to buy-to-let for private renting. Because of the ancillary pressures that arise from this type of tenure, such as anti-social behaviour, overcrowding and pressure on services such as education, refuse collection, electoral registration and Council Tax, we need more timely information about such change in tenure.”
London Borough of Newham

3.7.4 Housing: quality dimensions

Summary

Geography and accuracy are the key requirements for housing data, while frequency is much less important.

“We don't need a running commentary on this, just occasional high quality estimates down to small area level.”
Public Health Wales NHS Trust



Analysis

There is a common emphasis across the respondent types for accurate outputs at low geographical levels as the housing stock is relatively stable over time.

“We would like detailed data at Output Area level. If this was updated every 5 years that would be fine, the housing stock doesn’t change that much over time.”

Beacon Dodsworth Ltd.

“This data is less subject to rapid change, so updates every five years would be more than sufficient.”

Diocese of Manchester (Church of England)

Accuracy is considered to be of a slightly lower importance than geography, although there needs to be confidence in the data for it to be applied at small geographic levels. The highly accurate data currently provided by the Census are used to update more frequent information from alternative sources. This use of the Census outputs as a benchmark is important as the alternative sources rarely provide housing information down to the required geographic levels of OA or LSOA.

“Accuracy is of utmost importance as it gives us confidence in the data. Good data provides a baseline on which to build using our own information based on monitoring of residential development.”

Bristol City Council

“High accuracy and small area geography would be most useful for housing numbers as then new build numbers can be applied in the intermediate years.”

Lincolnshire County Council

High accuracy is also crucial to be able to identify housing characteristics for specific sub-groups to monitor equality.

Information is needed at low geographic levels so that investment can be targeted at the local level where there is greatest housing need, and for use as a building block to aggregate up to different geographies.

“Measuring small area change is very important for our work – Output Areas are ideal for this purpose.”

Call Credit Ltd.

“Small area geography is of greater importance to the research sector than frequency or accuracy, as it enables outputs to be produced for a full range of geographical areas and also for non-standard areas by aggregations.”

Census and Geo-demographics Group (on behalf of the Market Research Society)

“Very high geographic detail combined with reasonably high frequency (at least once every 5 years) might be beneficial for transport planners in considering the location of developments.”

Department for Transport

The variation in opinion between responses from local authorities is related to the type of housing data required. For example, the rate of change in tenure is more rapid than changes in type of accommodation and these differences affect information needs.

“As accommodation changes slowly and doesn't move the emphasis is on accurate & reliable 'base data'. The exception here is tenure and second residence, which would require higher frequency.”

Nottinghamshire County Council

“Having this data updated every five/ten years would probably be sufficient, sacrificing frequency for accuracy and small geography with the exception of tenure data.”

London Borough of Newham

“Tenure information is needed more frequently than at present, particularly in relation to owner occupied and private rented sector.”

London Borough of Harrow

3.8 Labour market and socio-economic

3.8.1 Summary

The theme 'labour market and socio-economic' includes the following wide range of topics: debt levels, economic activity, hours worked, income, industry, migrant workers, National Statistics Socio Economic Classification (NS-SEC), NEETs (people, 16-24, not in education, employment or training), number of cars/vans, occupation, place of work, qualifications, sustainable employment, transport to work/place of study, and volunteering.

For most respondents the requirement for the labour market and socio-economic theme has increased. The theme was regarded as the second most important at the consultation workshops after the household and family structure theme. Income was the most frequently selected topic in this theme at the workshops, followed by economic activity.

The word cloud below shows the relative importance of the different topics within the theme as reported in the questionnaire responses.



3.8.2 Labour market and socio-economic: changes in requirement

Income, transport to place of work or study, economic activity and qualifications were the topics most frequently mentioned as having increased in importance, though respondents to the questionnaire often noted that it was their general requirement for labour market and socio-economic data that had increased, without identifying an individual topic.

The requirement for more detailed information is often driven by the need to improve the efficient delivery of services and target resources effectively but also for policy development and monitoring:

“Increasing demand for data on employment/ economic activity status, qualifications and benefit claimants to be broken down by age group, as this helps in tailoring the provision of public services and in allocating resources more effectively.”

Cheshire East Council

“This is important for ensuring adequate service provision, to inform and plan service delivery and policy development and for monitoring change (such as changing employment patterns, skills or sectoral change).”

Manchester City Council

Some central government respondents were more specific on why their demands for socio-economic data had grown.

“Socio-economic information has increased in importance due to need to identify housing needs/costs etc.”

Central Government, anonymous

However there are also increased socio-economic data needs based on developments within the economy itself, such as effects of the recession and the rise in unemployment.

“Economic and employment information has increased in importance especially with the recent issues with the economy. Direct employment information is useful, but also particularly industry breakdown, and vocational skills to help understanding and planning interventions.”

Hastings Borough Council

“The requirement for timely labour market and socio-economic data has increased in importance considerably in recent years as a result of the economic recession. Additionally, following the recent establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships [LEPs], and the need to generate economic growth, the need for labour market, socio-economic and migration data is likely to increase in the future.”

South Gloucestershire Council

“The data from the Census was used extensively in developing district level Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) recently. Driving economic growth is an increasing priority and so more analysis of these topics from the Census has taken place in recent times.”

Community Organisation, anonymous

These examples also illustrate that the increasing need for data is being driven in part by Government initiatives such as Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) as well as the ‘Localism Agenda’ with all the associated implications for local authorities.

“Labour market and socio-economic data is of key importance to LEPs as it helps to measure economic growth. Statistics on the labour market and socio-economic data will be increasingly important as the work of the LEP progresses.”

West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

“With increasing emphasis on Local Authorities, Local Economic Assessments and Local Enterprise Partnerships - and the need to generate economic growth - labour market and socio-economic data and migration data has become increasingly important.”

Bristol City Council

Emerging topics mentioned as being significant include estimates of the number of ‘green’ jobs, employment/unemployment data for younger and older people, commuting data (both for where travel takes place and on the method of transport used), information on ‘NEETs’, the increasingly transient nature of communities, volunteering/charity work, and household income.

“As a result of the recession there has been increasing interest in employment/unemployment data in recent years, particularly for young people and older people. Whilst frequent data on the labour market is important within this topic area, socio economic data is used in many contexts when looking at characteristics of areas....Also information on commuting is of increasing interest. This includes data both on the areas where the travelling takes place and the methods of transport used to do this.”

Welsh Government

Not all topics were felt to have increased in importance for all respondents. Several respondents commented on the decreasing importance of data covering the general socio-economic theme (the majority of these were within the ‘genealogical’ user group), and the transport to place of work/study and hours worked topics, while views on NS-SEC and number of cars/vans were more mixed.

“NS-SEC has a little less importance to the research sector than in previous decades.”

Census and Geo-demographics Group (on behalf of the Market Research Society)

“Certain aspects of labour market data are becoming less important- NS-SEC is rarely used as an indicator anymore, and some aspects of labour market data are more readily obtained elsewhere (e.g. DWP benefits data as a proxy for unemployment, etc).”

Bolton Council

3.8.3 Labour market and socio-economic: impact of not having data

A very large proportion of respondents reported concerns about losing data on the labour market and socio-economic theme and how this would affect their ability to develop policy or strategies and to plan and target service provision in the future. This was particularly the case for local authorities and other service providers.

“Currently specific projects are targeted in certain areas due to socio-economic needs. Without quality assured data it would be very difficult to target resources where they are most needed.”

Chesterfield County Council

“In the current economic climate, as much local information on the labour market, and un/employment as possible is required to monitor trends, to understand where issues are occurring and to understand where support to businesses and residents is required. Information such as this provides the foundations for service planning and targeting into the local economy and so without it we would be unable to target efficiently.”

Lincolnshire County Council

Lack of adequate data would also severely impair applications for funding.

“Without economic data we would be unable to provide evidence on which to base investment decisions and secure funding.”

Herefordshire Council

Both within and outside local and central government it is recognised that the loss of quality data will have a serious impact on research or the ability to identify and react to socio-economic trends with the desired speed.

“We would have difficulty in supplying adequate data to the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] for the conduct of some analyses of the labour market outcomes of education and skills, particularly regarding levels of qualification attained.”

Department for Education

“[We] will need to know the socio-economic characteristics of the population to relate it with number of health-related issues such as dementia and depression.”

NHS Lincolnshire

“Without the data we couldn't demonstrate the levels of exclusion and exploitation Latin Americans face in the labour market.”

Latin American Recognition Campaign

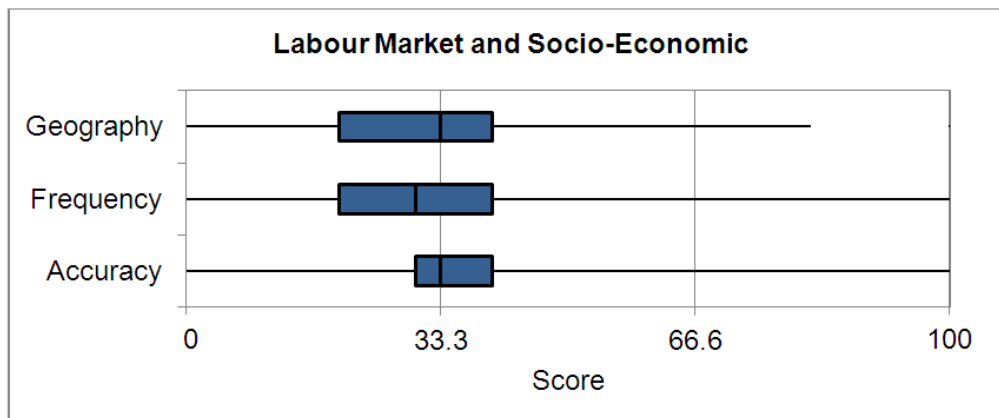
3.8.4 Labour market and socio-economic: quality dimensions

Summary

Respondents found this theme particularly difficult to score as requirements vary significantly between the different topics within the theme. As illustrated in the box plot below, there is a roughly equal emphasis on the three key quality dimensions.

“The balance between frequency, geography and accuracy varies according to the specific labour market and socio-economic datasets in question.”

Cheshire East Council



Analysis

Overall, having highly accurate data for small geographic levels is considered more important than high frequency – but the balance is closer here than on most themes.

“The supply of this information every 5 to 10 [years] should be sufficient for our needs, with data available at a reasonably small level of geography and at least as accurately as is currently available within the census.”

ACTIVE Solutions Europe Ltd.

Low frequency is considered generally acceptable as there are alternative data sources which can be used to update information for some topics.

“The labour market statisticians mainly use the LFS [Labour Force Survey], APS [Annual Population Survey], ASHE [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings] etc. for data that is required frequently.”

Welsh Government

“This can be obtained from economic activity from the 2001 Census but it can also be obtained from DWP JSA [Jobseeker’s Allowance] statistics from the NOMIS website for small areas down to Lower Super Output Area.”

Housing Vision

“There are a range of socio-economic stats available on an annual (or more frequent) basis - Business Register and Employment Survey, Annual Population Survey, DWP data, claimant count etc.”

Chesterfield Borough Council

The value of the current Census outputs is in their high accuracy which supports the validation of data from other sources, as well as the ability to provide cross-classifications.

“As an alternative to the Census data there is a range of labour market and socio-economic data from a range of different studies of variable quality, whereas the current Census of Population provides a consistent high accuracy source.”

City of London Corporation

“From time to time it is useful to have a fuller picture providing all the cross-classifications of the individual characteristics at small area level to enable a better understanding of differences between areas and therefore enable targeting of policies and programmes.”

Greater London Authority

Consequently, while frequency is not considered as important as providing accuracy and small geography, there is still a requirement for outputs to be produced more frequently than the current decennial cycle because changes in economic activity and the labour market can happen quite rapidly.

“Generally we do not make much use of the census data for the labour market as it changes so much between censuses so anything which would plug the gap would be welcome.”

Welsh Government

“The labour market is very dynamic and up to date information is important so changes can be monitored and policies adjusted as and when required.”

West of England Local Enterprise

“These are areas that can change rapidly in response to outside influences and there is a continuing need to monitor the effects of the recent recession, so frequency and accuracy are equally important.”

Equality and Human Rights Commission

“This is important and changes considerably faster than the census cycle is currently able to capture, so more frequent data would be a help here.”

Samples of Anonymised Records Support Team, Centre for Census and Survey Research

“We have given a higher value for frequency for this topic, due to potential speed of change.”

Demographics User Group

As well as being more frequent economic data must be timely for it to be of value.

“The timeliness of data is also key for us and we would like to see a quicker release of data from the date of reference. Waiting 1-2 years for data is not helpful.”

Kent County Council

There is a very broad range of opinion between local authorities on the importance of each of the quality dimensions for different topics.

“Of all the themes outlined...the Labour Market and Socio-Economic Data theme proved the most difficult to assign priorities to. Those consulted provided a range of responses depending on the individual datasets being considered.”

Liverpool City Council

“Balances between the trade-offs will vary a lot between the different detailed topics within this theme, so it’s almost impossible to score.”

Herefordshire Council

High frequency is required for some topics, especially in relation to employment, as economic changes can occur very rapidly and local authorities need to respond appropriately, adjusting investment, service provision and policy change accordingly.

“Regular information to monitor the labour market and economic activity is vital, especially relating to employment & unemployment.”

Tees Valley Unlimited

“Economic activity can shift very quickly and to plan and commission services (e.g. employment support for disabled people) the data needs to be much more frequent than it is now.”

Hampshire County Council Adult Services

“As these are fast changing indicators we feel that high frequency is the most important characteristic for this theme.”

Lincolnshire County Council

Outputs are also required for most topics at small area level so that services and investments can be targeted appropriately.

“There is a greater need for small area geography since this determines/enables targeted provision of advice, guidance and support to drive up skills and improve employment opportunities.”

Slough Borough Council

“Since the character of labour markets varies enormously between localities, small area data is vital to assess needs and measure progress of individual communities.”

Darlington Borough Council

“Small area geography is highly desirable as within a given local authority area the relevant labour market and socio-economic characteristics can vary significantly spatially.”

City of London Corporation

Nevertheless, accuracy is the most crucial dimension, with universal application for all topics. Data provided at high frequencies and for small areas must be accurate to be effective.

“Accuracy is of utmost importance as it gives us confidence in the data and enables us to draw conclusions from the data.”

South Gloucestershire Council

“In order to deliver services and policies effectively, we need to have data for small areas, and this information needs to be sufficiently accurate for us to target resources efficiently.”

Cheshire East Council

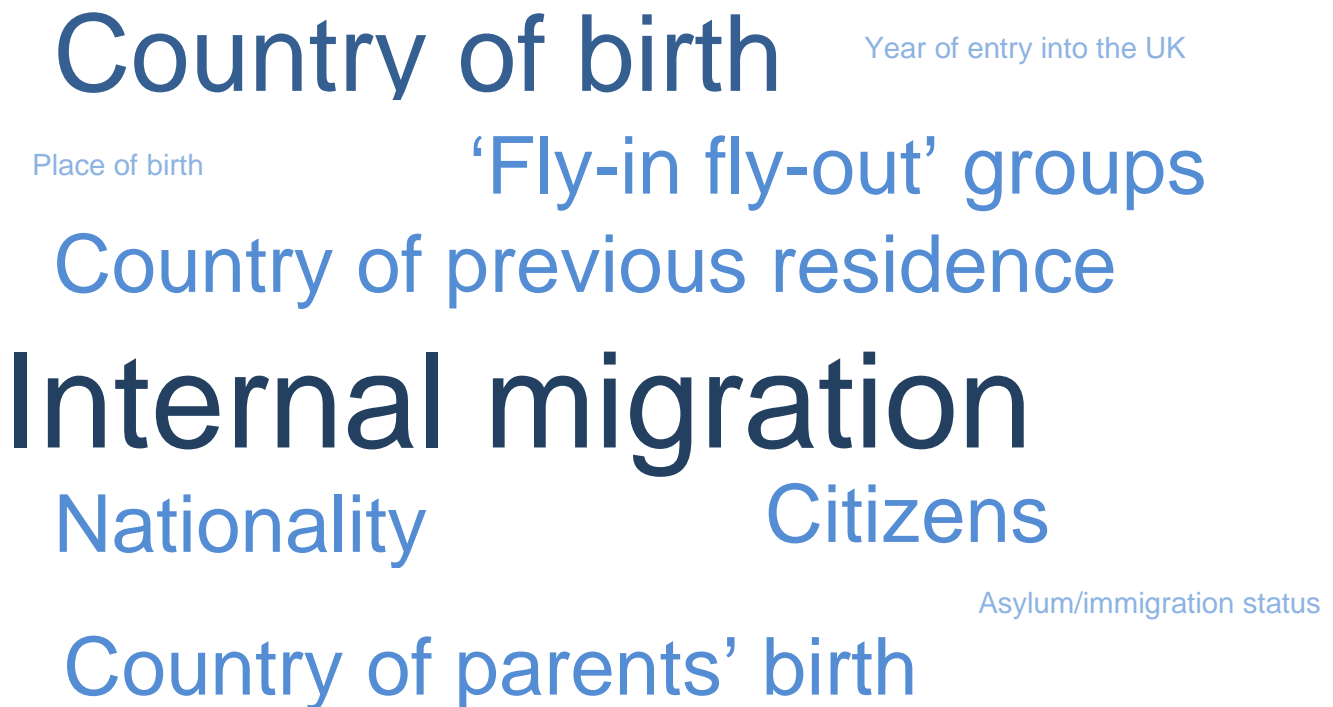
3.9 Migration

3.9.1 Summary

Topics included within the 'Migration' theme include: address one year ago, asylum or immigration status, citizenship, country of birth, country(ies) of parent's birth, country of previous residence, 'fly-in fly-out' groups, intention to stay in the UK, internal migration (address one year ago), nationality, place of birth and year of entry into the UK.

For the majority of respondents to the consultation questionnaire the requirement for this theme has increased. This was supported by participants attending the workshops, with address one year ago (a proxy for internal migration) and other migration topics being especially relevant.

The word cloud below shows the relative increase in importance of the different topics within the theme as reported in the questionnaire responses.



3.9.2 Migration: Changes in requirement

Increasing population mobility, both internal and international, combined with the drive for greater efficiency in relation to public service planning and delivery has significantly increased the demand for migration statistics.

"[We have an] increasing demand for migration data in general, both internal and international. This is in part a result of relatively large flows of East European and other foreign migrants into (and out of) our sub-region, and the challenges and opportunities that this presents."

Cheshire East Council

"Our interest in international migration has increased greatly, with known flows of Eastern European migrants seeking employment opportunities in the area and people/families seeking asylum in this country as a result of war, famine etc."

Shropshire County Council and Partner Organisations

Migration has a direct impact on the demand for services because of both the overall increase in population and the specific needs of particular migrant groups. Therefore, in addition to an increased demand for information on flows, respondents, particularly those representing local authorities, expressed the need for more detailed information about the characteristics of migrants.

“The need for reliable migration data has increased, reflecting considerable increases in the mobility of the population locally and globally. We need to have a good understanding of flows of migrants over time, their characteristics and needs and economic activity. There is an increased need for this information for allocating resources to identified services as well as providing appropriate levels of services.”
Shropshire County Council and Partner Organisations

“Migration statistics are increasingly required to help us to understand the changing nature of the population of the West of England, which is increasingly influenced by international migration. The characteristics of migrants i.e. age profile, skill levels; help us to understand whether they are economic migrants who will return to their home country or long-term migrants.”
West of England Local Enterprise

Migration by international students is also important in some areas.

“Students form a significant proportion of Camden’s population, with HESA [Higher Education Statistics Agency] records indicating some 24,000 students resident in 2009-10. Development planning has seen a rise in applications for student developments, particularly ones to attract affluent foreign students.”
London Borough of Camden

Central government respondents also reported an increased need for migration data. For example, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission needs information about international migrants for analysing and assessing human rights in Britain through the Human Rights Measurement Framework.

“Our need to understand the impacts of migration (pupil numbers / migrant teachers helping to meet demand for teachers) on the demand for, and supply of, DfE services has increased significantly in the context of the Coalition Government’s ambition to reduce net migration to under 100k by 2015.”
Department for Education

Alongside these trends, respondents claimed that the data currently available are not adequate for their needs.

“More current information on WHERE new migrants have moved to within the borough will enable services and resources to be better targeted....Lack of accurate population information – particularly of migrants – has made it much more difficult to adequately plan for school places, housing, language difficulties, etc.”
London Borough of Newnham

“More transient populations and new populations may have different service needs which need to be considered by local service providers. Currently there is not a lot of accurate data about migrant populations, their location, their anticipated stay time and the type of services they are accessing or additional services needed.”
Chesterfield Borough Council

3.9.3 Migration: impact of not having the data

Although some respondents indicated that current migration data do not meet their requirements, concern was also expressed about the quality of the alternative sources available.

“Address One Year Ago provides the basis for migration estimates, although we obtain information from movement in GP registrations these are by no means comprehensive, and many groups (students, young males, international migrants) are often missed out.”

Bolton Council

“The absence of a change of address register means a lot of faith is placed upon data sources such as the patient register which was not designed for this purpose....In Shropshire the International Passenger Survey, National Insurance and Home Office data loses its value even at the County level, through rounding, disclosure control and reliability. The ‘address one year ago’ question in the census provides information on the characteristics of migrant families, which the aforementioned datasets do not.”

Shropshire County Council and Partner Organisations

Another issue raised is concern that costs could be passed on to other areas of the public sector if census-type migration data were no longer available.

“Any diminution in the quality or detail of the migration data available to public service providers would result in increased uncertainty in relation to service planning and potentially greater costs incurred in service delivery. ONS and the Government should demonstrate that proposals to reduce the cost of data collection by utilising non-Census data sources do not result in an increase in the cost of public service delivery.”

Local Authority, anonymous

“...the Commission needs up-to-date information on the composition of the population, such as by ethnic group, from a national down to local authority level. Since this is affected by migration both into England and Wales and within the two countries, we would expect any solution to capture the equality characteristics of people arriving into or leaving an area.”

Equalities and Human Rights Commission

Migration information has become increasingly important, and without this information local authorities would not be able to understand their communities and maintain cohesion.

“We would be unable to accurately assess the scale of, and geographical variations in, inward migrants’ specific needs for Local Authority services. Nor would we be able to assess the scale, nature and impact of outward migration (e.g. on demand for housing), or the impact of inward and outward migration on transport and communications infrastructure...We would also be less successful in managing the socio-economic effects of migration flows, and social cohesion would suffer as a result.”

Lincolnshire County Council

Those conducting health-based research would also be adversely affected.

“[We] would not be able to establish incidence rates for diseases and disorders and how these vary by social and economic determinants of health. Our social cohesion policy would be more difficult to implement and review.”

Leeds University

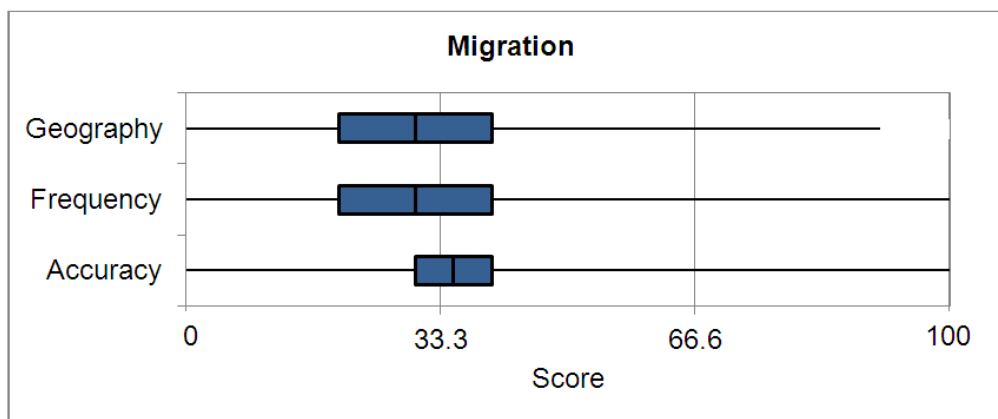
3.9.4 Migration: quality dimensions

Summary

Accuracy is considered to be most important because migration is a key part of the demographic equation and has a large influence on population structure and the demand for services. Due to the pace of change, migration is required at higher frequency than for other themes, and most respondents are willing to forego geography for more frequent and accurate data.

“[We need] good quality annual estimates of internal and international migration at LA level.”

Herefordshire Council



Analysis

All respondents emphasised frequency because the provision of regular outputs is essential to understand and deal with the rapid pace of population change.

“The pace of migration change means that much migration data is at least a year out of date and therefore does not reflect service pressures nor can it help anticipate future service pressures.”

Migration Yorkshire

“Frequency may have a higher importance for this type of dataset than some others as migration patterns can change a lot over a ten year period. It is important for us to know about the changing patterns within the areas we are profiling, therefore we have given this one slightly less emphasis on the small area geography.”

Wright On Research

Migration shows the greatest variation in opinion between the different respondent groups. Community and voluntary organisations together with academics place a strong emphasis on geography, with at least 60 per cent of respondents claiming this to be the most important of the quality dimensions.

“We find that geographical area is the major stumbling block to using available data; many sources do not provide information at a level of detail that is necessary to be useful.”

Migration Yorkshire

By contrast local authorities, and their representatives, place the greatest emphasis on accuracy as this is crucial for effective decision making.

“We need Local Authority (LA) level migration data which are relatively accurate, so that we can make decisions about service provision which are based on a sound understanding of the scale and nature of migration flows.”

Cheshire East Council

“Data on short-term migrants is also essential to developing policy and understanding the changing needs of our population, although local authority level geographies and higher are acceptable in this case.”

South West Observatory

Highly accurate data are required frequently to cope with the impact of waves of migration which can have far reaching implications for the composition of the population and demands for services.

“Frequent information about migration is important for planning as the numbers change regularly but impact on population numbers.”

Wrexham County Borough Council

While it would be useful to have this information at small geographic levels, most local authorities appreciate that the accuracy of data on migration would decline as the level of geography decreases. As a result annual data at district level is cited most often as being the basic requirement.

“Worcestershire has had significant in-migration over recent years and accuracy of the data is considered most difficult for decision making. As the numbers are relatively low it will be difficult to obtain very low geographical levels so district or a large sub-district level is sufficient.”

Worcestershire County Council

“Small area detail is useful but we accept the difficulty of measuring this accurately. Therefore we are happy to lose geographical data for more accurate, timely data. District level detail is required at a minimum.”

Kent County Council

“Undercounting of international migrants has been a real issue for Newham for some time, and we would prefer to have high accuracy and high frequency over small geography, as we can identify the demographic characteristics of migrants from other data sets.”

London Borough of Newham

Alternatively, it was suggested that it would be useful to produce district level data annually with more detailed small area estimates every few years.

“Some respondents wanted migration data annually at the level of local authorities whilst others required data every 2 or 3 years at a lower level of geography.”

Welsh Government

“We would like to be able to use accurate city level and preferably ward level data collated annually, with LSOA level data every 5 years.”

Manchester City Council

However, the importance of frequency does reflect local levels of migration. For those areas with more stable populations having information for small areas becomes more important.

“Useful for long term future planning to inform house build requirements, therefore small area data important, but not needed very frequently.”

Cotswold District Council

3.10 Genealogical and historical research

Genealogists and historical researchers use individual level data from the traditional Census released one hundred years after it was captured. These data contain a wealth of household level details and information about household relationships that is not currently available elsewhere. The requirements of this group of users differ significantly from those who require published statistics. Therefore, their requirements are considered separately.

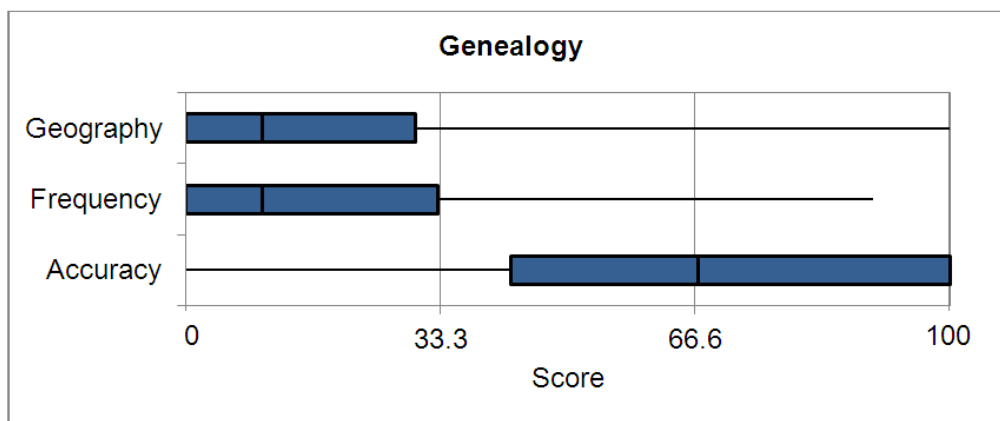
Genealogists responding to the consultation expressed great concern about the potential loss of the Census as a historical record.

“Hundreds of thousands in the UK (to say nothing of the millions overseas in the former colonies) research their ancestors and they cannot do without the Census in all its glorious detail.”

Local Historian and Genealogist

“Quite frankly, if the regular census taking were to stop, genealogists would miss out and be very annoyed.”

Genealogist



The key requirement for this group is accuracy, with more than 70 per cent of respondents scoring this as the most important dimension for all themes other than ethnicity, giving an average score of 65 out of 100.

In this case there are two key aspects affecting accuracy namely, the need for an individual return to be completed by each household so that the personal details are recorded for the whole population and individual households and family groups can be identified, and for all information to be recorded correctly.

“The importance to my organisation is the Historical Data, provided by the census, so to have it every year would be fantastic, but realistically every 10 years, has been fine up to now.”

The Featherstone Society

For family structure, there is some emphasis on frequency to ensure that records are collected on a regular enough basis to capture complete families.

“To have this information on a regular basis, be it every year or every 5 years, is very often the only way of keeping track of the number of children born to one couple.”

Genealogist

General opinion is that a much simpler Census form would be sufficient, as the volume of questions currently asked is not only intrusive but makes the Census more costly and detracts from the accuracy of the information.

“A simplified collection of data could be collected locally, shared nationally for all purposes/current ONS users, with highly accurate data on individuals... This could be done through current local government collection of data for the electoral roll and extended to all age groups in the population or using the model the Netherlands use where every family is required to register with the district in which they reside or have a residence.”

Genealogist

Historical Census records are also used by social scientists and other members of the research community who wish to examine and understand long term trends in demography and socio-structural changes.

“Longer-term historical research by social scientists of the future will be rendered less viable if the Census is replaced by data collected in a variety of ways which themselves may change over time.”

British Society for Population Studies

It is clear that the genealogical requirement is a very real one and that there is a need to consider how the historical record is maintained under our alternative options. It is much less clear that that the traditional Census (or even a shortened version) is the only way to lay down a historical record. We will be taking this discussion forward with the genealogical and historical research community over coming months.

3.11 Wales

Respondents with a specific interest in Wales were invited to comment on issues of special relevance to them. Eleven respondents chose to provide comments. The main areas of concern identified were: the comparability of statistics with England and the rest of the UK; issues of Welsh language and identity; problems associated with disclosure control due to small numbers; and, compliance with the Equalities Act 2010. These issues are discussed below.

3.11.1 Comparability

The importance of comparability across England and Wales was highlighted. This is especially pertinent because the administrative boundary of Wales and service delivery boundaries do not coincide.

“[It is] most important that data for Wales remain strictly comparable to English data - especially important in north east Wales which is part of the SW Lancs, Cheshire, Merseyside travel to work area. This economic region crosses the administrative boundary of Wales.”

University of Liverpool and North Wales Regional Equalities Network

“Referral patterns to health services are not constrained to administrative boundaries. It is important that similar population data is available in England and Wales.”

Academic Organisation, anonymous

3.11.2 Language and identity

Respondents also emphasised the ongoing importance of statistics on the number and geographical spread of Welsh language speakers in Wales.

“The results relating to Welsh probably receive more publicity in the news media in Wales than any other census data, perhaps partly as a consequence of history. Questions relating to Welsh have been included in the census since 1891, and results have been published including geographical and age breakdowns from the start. Although the geographical distribution of people who can speak Welsh is now more even across Wales than for many generations, albeit occurring as much by a fall in the number of areas where high percentages can speak Welsh as by a growth in the numbers with formerly low percentages, geography remains important socio-linguistically.”

Welsh Language Board

“Welsh language data is of particular interest for archives and other repositories in Wales. The Census can be a useful resource for mapping use of the Welsh language in different parts of Wales over a prolonged period of time highlighting times of decline and also, in recent years, times of resurgence.”

Welsh Government

3.11.3 Small area data

Data provided about Wales is often highly aggregated because of the disclosure issues associated with small population numbers.

“Some Welsh statistics often appear to be provided as one and it is hard to break down the story from the statistics - it would be helpful to have stats that relate to north, mid and south Wales - and by borough.”

Local Authority, anonymous

“...statistics quoted for 'Wales' are heavily weighted to the south coast periphery - equivalent to 'England' data with London included. Whatever data are used important to over-sample in the rural areas of Wales where disclosure risks current restrict data-availability (Notably in SARs and CAMs - but hardly any national survey data available at, for example, ward level).”

University of Liverpool and North Wales Regional Equalities Network

3.11.4 Equalities monitoring

Problems associated with small numbers, lack of disaggregation and disclosure control create specific difficulties for equalities monitoring.

“....separate data are needed for Wales for all Framework measures and broken down by all equality characteristics....Problems are frequently experienced with different types of gaps in the data. The first type is where, although there are data for the Welsh population as a whole comparable with that used for England, the data for protected groups in Wales are either non-existent or unreliable due to the small sample sizes, e.g. for small ethnic groups or religions.”

Equality and Human Rights Commission

“We are told statistics are not available due to low numbers and risks of identifying people. But this information is useful and helps us to understand our minority communities - many of whom are very small indeed. When working on equality issues it is important to have information about very small groups of people (ethnic, cultural, religious etc.) so that they are not overlooked.”

Local Authority, anonymous

3.12 Other issues

Respondents were able to provide further comments on any matters not covered elsewhere within the consultation questionnaire. The additional points raised by respondents were largely related to the importance of derived variables, the Longitudinal Study and the ability to conduct multivariate analysis at small geographies. There is great concern that these analyses would not be possible if the Census was replaced with an alternative system based on administrative data.

Respondents were worried that the cross-tabulations provided by the Census could not be generated from other sources, except at broad geographical scales where sample sizes are large enough.

“...it is vital to recognise the importance of cross-tabulation of variables. For instance, looking at the ‘administrative data’ options it is clear that unless a 100% linkage is achieved then a tremendous data resource will be lost, as there will be no way to compare vital pieces of information with each other....and no way of doing this at small area level or over time (longitudinal studies). This will be particularly marked when smaller proportions of the population are involved (e.g. employment status of ethnic minority carers), as smaller locally commissioned surveys will be unable to reach the required sample sizes.”

Bolton Council

Datasets including the Samples of Anonymised Records (SARs) and the Longitudinal Study (LS) (established in 1991 and 1971 respectively) provide an invaluable resource to the research community. For example, the benefits of the SARs over any other survey or administrative dataset are: large sample size; complete coverage of the population, including people residing in communal establishments; wide range of characteristics for each person and household, all of which can all be cross-tabulated against each other at the individual level. In addition, the LS links a sample of individuals over successive Censuses combined with supplementary data, and as a result has facilitated detailed analysis of change over time. The value of this longitudinal research increases with the addition of data from each Census.

“The suite of datasets known collectively as the Samples of Anonymised Records (SAR) have greatly extended the value of the Census since 1991. Besides allowing users to readily extract alternative cross-tabulations, it also permits them to undertake micro-level modelling.....Even more powerful for social science research is the ability of users to track anonymised individuals through the UK’s three Longitudinal Studies (LS), based on linking their Census records together but also through adding information from other sources....Much valuable policy-relevant research relies on the high level of consistency between decennial Censuses to understand change over time and this would be lost by shifting to data collected in different ways.”

British Society for Population Studies

This is another area where we will be paying special attention – again we recognise the value of these data for research and monitoring policy and will be looking at how the series might be maintained or enhanced. As with all aspects of this work we will need to look for clear evidence that any associated costs can be justified by the benefits gained – but this consultation has at least indicated a strong demand for this type of data.

4.0 Differences in priorities across different sectors of users

Appendix E provides a set of graphs showing the scores provided by all respondents to the accuracy / geography / frequency trade-off question included in the questionnaire and at the workshops. Together these graphs provide a summary view of respondents' priorities. The graphs are available to download in a separate A3 pdf file.

However, it is important not to place too much emphasis on this type of evidence. The trade-off question is inevitably an over-simplistic one and the real value can be derived from the more subtle messages within the users' comments. Nonetheless, when viewed together these graphs provide a broad overview of how user views differ by topic, and how priorities differ by type of user.

Differences between the themes have already been discussed in detail in the theme sections of the report but they are also evident here.

Accuracy and geography dominate throughout. Again, although users would like more timely and more frequent results they are not, for the most part, prepared to trade accuracy or small area data for this. The relative importance of accuracy and geography varies by theme and sector and the differences are sometimes subtle. The differences will be explored in further detailed discussions with user groups focussing on how data are actually used and how they add value at different geographic levels.

There are clearer differences between different types of user.

Individuals (largely genealogists) emphasise accuracy for all themes. However, the questionnaire was not well suited to capturing their views, which in most cases is for a regular high quality historical record at the household level. We will look separately at this requirement with genealogical groups and other experts.

The responses from **local government** are variable reflecting the wide range of ways in which data are used. Broadly, accuracy dominates, but many respondents also emphasise the importance of small area outputs for local planning. **Community organisations** also favour accuracy, although small area geography is most important for migration and housing data.

Other public organisations (which include many health organisations), **academia** and **commercial** organisations are slightly different. All favour geography over accuracy, with frequency coming in a weak third place. However, there were signs that more frequent outputs were needed for migration and labour market topics.

Across the sectors the same message recurs: more frequent and timely data are desirable but our solution needs to retain accuracy and produce data for small areas. Good quality data, perhaps every three or five years would help, combined with more flexibility and responsiveness in the topics covered.

The range of responses demonstrated the wide variation in views and different uses to which census-type data are put. For some respondents accuracy dominates, for others having small area data is most important.

We are aware that the trade-off question was difficult to answer because ideally, users want all of these dimensions. A large number of responses are concentrated in the middle of the triangles. This is most evident in the local government plots but also more widely.

Hampshire County Council put it most simply:

“I want [to have] my cake and eat it – Ideally I want census quality data every year!”

This is actually what virtually everyone wants – and as far as possible what our research will press for, but given the growing cost and difficulty of undertaking a Census it is all but certain we will have to make some compromises. This consultation, combined with more detailed follow-up discussions with users will provide clear pointers to what really matters and where the priorities for our research should lie.

5.0 Conclusion and next steps

5.1 Conclusion

The consultation has highlighted the complex nature of users' requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics. Despite this complexity, it is possible to draw some broad conclusions from the analysis of the responses.

5.1.1 Changes in requirement

It is clear that users feel their requirements for data have increased since the Census 2011 consultation and that 'localism' is increasingly important. Whilst this is the case across all themes, there is a particular demand for more frequent and reliable sources of data on topics covered by the Equalities Act 2010, such as ethnicity and disability. Related to the demand for ethnicity statistics, is the need for migration data; although this covers a strong demand for information on internal as well as international migration.

Users' requirements for data on the labour and socio-economic theme are also pronounced, although a number of these topics are regularly available from other sources.

There is a demand for statistics covering some topics that will not be provided by Census 2011 outputs. The most commonly stated requirements are for data on income, gender/sexual identity and for more dependable information on disability. Many responses note that an alternative approach would be helpful in allowing data to be collected about new topics when required.

5.1.2 Quality dimensions

The consultation results suggest that there are subtle differences in opinion over the relative importance of geography, frequency and accuracy, both across themes and between different groups of users. The range of responses demonstrates the variation in views and different uses to which census-type data are put. For some, accuracy dominates, for others the availability of small area data is most important.

However, the same message keeps appearing: more frequent and timely data is desirable but our solution needs to retain accuracy and produce data for small areas. Good quality data, perhaps every three or five years would be sufficient for many topics, and the ability to be more flexible and responsive in the topics covered would be beneficial. In some cases there is a clear two-tier requirement – where frequent high quality statistics at perhaps the LA level and less frequent (perhaps every five, or even ten, years) at a much lower level are needed.

5.2 Next steps

The main purpose of this consultation was to start the dialogue about statistical uses and priorities with users and to help us better understand the key issues. In part it was also intended to get users thinking about possible trade-offs and what really matters for them. It has been successful at meeting all of these aims and the results are already proving useful.

The consultation has produced some substantive results which will be fed into our early thinking about the evaluation criteria to be used in assessing the options. Our emerging understanding of which datasets are likely to matter most will help to guide the next round of research on sources.

Over the coming months, we will be engaging further with users groups across all sectors in order to produce a final statement of requirements. This statement will feed directly into the evaluation of the different options being investigated.

One key next step is to start to convert what users have identified as 'needs' and 'wants' into a real understanding of how different statistics add economic value. Our final recommendation needs to be fully justified in terms of value and the balance of cost and benefit to the nation. We will be working closely with users to identify where the statistics are bringing real benefit in order to build the business case.

The first significant research results from Beyond 2011 will be published in October 2012. These will include a detailed discussion of the approach we plan to take for evaluating the statistical options.

Our second public consultation will focus on the alternative options, and will be informed by our research programme and discussions with users.

Beyond 2011 will make a final recommendation in September 2014.

For further information or to discuss any aspect of this work contact beyond2011@ons.gov.uk

Appendix A: Frequency tables

Workshop attendees: by respondent type

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Local authority | 97 | 47 |
| Private/commercial | 34 | 16 |
| Academia/education | 24 | 12 |
| Other public authority | 23 | 11 |
| Charity/community | 17 | 8 |
| Central government | 12 | 6 |
| Genealogy/historical | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 207 | 100 |

Questionnaire responses: by respondent type

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Local authority | 116 | 44 |
| Genealogy/historical | 46 | 17 |
| Other public authority | 37 | 14 |
| Academia/education | 25 | 9 |
| Charity/community | 24 | 9 |
| Central government | 9 | 3 |
| Private/commercial | 9 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 266 | 100 |

Questionnaire responses: by use of data

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Policy development | 165 | 20.5 |
| Policy monitoring and evaluation | 156 | 19 |
| Service planning | 154 | 19 |
| Resource allocation | 118 | 15 |
| Academic/social research | 103 | 13.5 |
| Genealogical/historical research | 50 | 6 |
| Marketing research | 33 | 4 |
| Other | 27 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 806 | 100 |

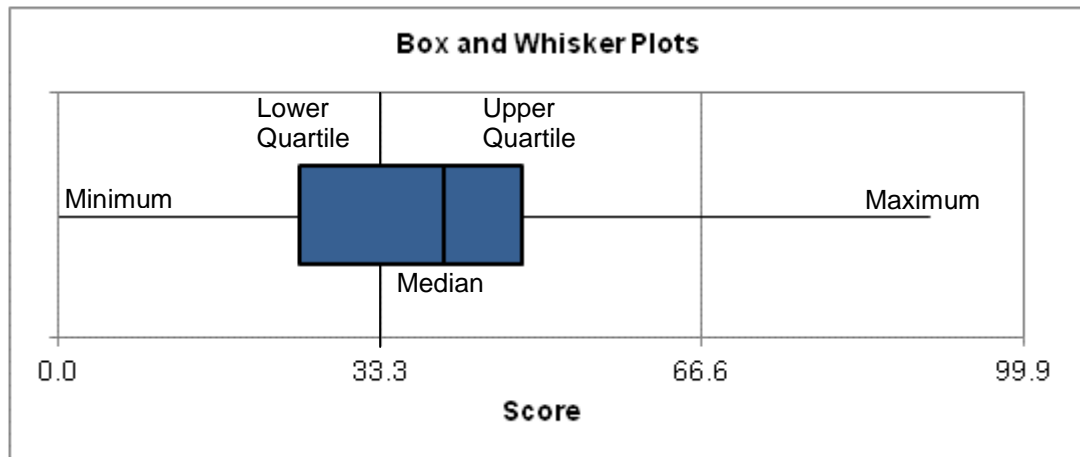
Use of data: by respondent type

| | Frequency | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| | Policy development | Policy monitoring and evaluation | Service planning | Resource allocation | Academic/Social Research | Genealogical/Historical Research | Marketing research | Other |
| Academia/education | 8 | 12 | 4 | 2 | 23 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Central government | 8 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Charity/community | 14 | 16 | 15 | 9 | 15 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Genealogy/historical | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 44 | 2 | 1 |
| Local authority | 103 | 93 | 93 | 76 | 32 | 3 | 18 | 11 |
| Other public authority | 28 | 24 | 27 | 20 | 14 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Private/commercial | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 165 | 156 | 154 | 118 | 103 | 50 | 33 | 27 |

Appendix B: Explanation of figures

Box and whisker plots

Box and whisker plots display information about the scores provided for accuracy, frequency and geography, revealing the relative importance respondents as a whole place on each dimension.



The box is constructed from three points:

The middle line is the median – the middle value when all the scores are arranged in order from smallest to largest – and shows general opinion on the importance of the dimension taking into account all responses.

The outside lines are quartiles – the lower quartile (also known as the 25th percentile) is the middle value of all the scores below the median; the upper quartile (the 75th percentile) is the middle value of all the scores above the median.

The length of our box therefore contains half of the scores and reflects how varied the responses were – the longer the box the greater the range in opinion on the importance of that dimension.

The whiskers extend from the end of the box to the maximum and minimum scores showing the complete range of values.

Appendix C: Word clouds

Details of the theme word cloud

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: by theme

| | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Labour market and socio-economic | 312 | 24 |
| Household and family structure | 232 | 18 |
| Migration and nationality | 230 | 16 |
| Housing | 202 | 16 |
| Ethnicity, identity, language and religion | 179 | 14 |
| Health and care | 152 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 1307 | 100 |

Details of the topic word clouds

Key showing colour and font of text: by number of respondents reporting an increase in a requirement

| <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Size and colour of font</u> |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| < 10 | Size and colour |
| 10 - 19 | Size and colour |
| 20 - 49 | Size and colour |
| 50 - 99 | Size and colour |
| 100 + | Size and colour |

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: Household and family structure

| | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Household structure | 115 |
| Household size | 61 |
| Number of households | 25 |
| Marital/civil partnership status | 18 |
| Relationships of individuals | 8 |
| Visitors | 5 |
| TOTAL | 232 |

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: Ethnicity, identity, language and religion

| | Frequency |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Ethnicity | 70 |
| National identity | 37 |
| Religion and belief | 22 |
| Language | 21 |
| Welsh language | 12 |
| Sexual orientation | 11 |
| English language proficiency | 6 |
| TOTAL | 179 |

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: Health and care

| | Frequency |
|-------------------|------------|
| Health status | 54 |
| Long-term illness | 31 |
| Disability | 22 |
| Carers | 19 |
| Fertility | 15 |
| Wheelchair use | 8 |
| Lifestyle | 3 |
| TOTAL | 152 |

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: Housing

| | Frequency |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Tenure | 82 |
| Type of accommodation | 43 |
| Number of rooms or bedrooms | 22 |
| Housing stock | 15 |
| Second residence | 12 |
| Overcrowding | 7 |
| Housing quality | 6 |
| Vacant dwellings | 4 |
| Homelessness | 3 |
| Self-contained accommodation | 2 |
| Central heating | 2 |
| Energy efficiency | 1 |
| Supported living | 1 |
| Internet access | 1 |
| Affordability | 1 |
| TOTAL | 202 |

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: Labour market and socio-economic

| | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Income | 112 |
| Transport to place of work/study | 52 |
| Qualifications | 32 |
| Economic activity | 29 |
| Occupation | 21 |
| Hours worked | 15 |
| Industry | 12 |
| NS-SEC | 12 |
| Number of cars/vans | 9 |
| Place of work | 8 |
| Migrant workers | 5 |
| Sustainable employment | 2 |
| Debt levels | 1 |
| Volunteering | 1 |
| NEETs | 1 |
| TOTAL | 312 |

Number of respondents reporting an increase in requirements: Migration and nationality

| | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Internal migration | 102 |
| Country of birth | 53 |
| Country of previous residence | 18 |
| Country(ies) of parent's birth | 14 |
| 'Fly-in fly-out' groups | 12 |
| Citizenship | 10 |
| Nationality | 10 |
| Asylum/immigration status | 3 |
| Place of birth | 3 |
| Year of entry into the UK | 5 |
| TOTAL | 230 |

Appendix D: Consultation evaluation

It is important to evaluate the success of the consultation to determine what worked, what didn't work, and why, so that we can improve practice in our future engagement. It also gives us the opportunity to directly address some of the comments and issues raised by respondents.

Participation

A wide range of users took part in the consultation, both attending the workshops and completing the questionnaire. This provides a comprehensive contact and information base on which to build our ongoing engagement with users and wider communication plans.

The consultation was well received by users who were very keen to engage with the Beyond 2011 Programme. Some users chose to promote it more widely within their user groups, using online websites and discussion forums.

"I love the fact you are engaging and asking."

Workshop Participant

"Just a "well done" on undertaking this consultation - the meetings & the survey - refreshing to have such an important aspect of the governance of the country subject to such an open inclusive approach."

Ambrose Associates Consultancy Ltd.

"Thank you for holding this consultation, for making it so thorough and for seeming to value our contributions so much. This is deeply reassuring."

Genealogist

While users were glad to have an opportunity to contribute, some are concerned about whether their views will be taken seriously. For example, 95 per cent of workshop attendees agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to contribute their views to the discussion but only 64 per cent thought their input would contribute to decisions made by the Beyond 2011 Programme.

"I'm still unsure about how much we will contribute to the real....decision. Sorry - but honestly that's how I feel."

Workshop Participant

Genealogists constituted the second highest group of respondents. However, there was no representation from them or this sector at the workshops. This is because the consultation was targeted at users of current ONS outputs and in view of this there was minimal promotion to other groups/sectors. In retrospect this was a mistake but one we are aware of. Genealogical interests and requirements will be considered closely as part of our wider stakeholder engagement activities through workshops with relevant groups.

"I only heard about this consultation and the chance to have my say by reading about it in Lost Cousins news letter. I feel it is such an important item in the lives of Genealogists that it should be made more publicly known. How could this be done?"

Genealogist

Workshops

The workshops were well attended, requiring two additional workshops, in London and Birmingham, to meet demand, with a total of 207 attendees representing a wide range of users.

“Well worth a day of my time.”

Workshop Participant

The presentations on the Beyond 2011 Programme were considered to be informative and useful by the majority of attendees, with more than 90 per cent of respondents classifying the presentations as good or very good.

Many attendees at the workshops commented on how the event helped them in completing their questionnaire response and that it would be helpful to have the presentations available on the web pages so they could be shared with colleagues.

There were mixed views on the usefulness of the trade-off exercise allocating 100 points between the quality dimensions of accuracy, frequency and geography. Overall, it worked better in the workshops where it was possible to fully explain the concept and the assumptions that were being made. The main aim at the workshops was to stimulate debate on how the relative importance of each of the dimensions varies, sometimes considerably, depending on the use of the data. For this purpose the exercise worked very well due to the interactive nature of the sessions and the diversity of participant’s views.

“It’s difficult to reach consensus when we have such different needs - that’s the whole point I realise!”

Workshop Participant

“[I] really enjoyed the round table discussions: excellent debate and some very different views.”

Workshop Participant

“[It was] very good to get a range of interests together so that we can hear each other’s views. Can get a bit stuck in interest group silos and it is refreshing and thought-provoking to hear other’s views - don’t envy ONS the task of reconciling different interests.”

Workshop Participant

Questionnaire

The opportunity to fill in the questionnaire online was well received with 203 of the 285 responses being completed this way. This significantly decreased the amount of questionnaire data capture required before the results could be analysed.

However, around 40 per cent of responses started online were partially completed, with no details beyond those relating to organisation type and main data uses being provided. The majority of these incomplete responses were returned by local authorities (35 per cent) or members of the public (32 per cent). There would appear to be different reasons for the high drop-out rates for these two groups.

We received almost the same number of email responses and incomplete online responses from local authorities. This suggests that many local authorities started the consultation online but found the need to consult with others within the organisation made it more appropriate to complete the questionnaire in a paper-based format where it could be more easily accessed and reviewed. This is corroborated by the fact that overall, the emailed

responses contained far more detail than those completed online. From this point of view online completion may not have been ideal, especially in view of the complexity of the questionnaire.

The high drop-out rate for members of the public may reflect the fact that the questionnaire was designed for, and aimed at, users of current ONS outputs. It is clear that genealogists and historical researchers found the consultation difficult to engage with. As previously indicated the consultation was focused on users of published statistics and as a result the questionnaire did not cater for users of record level data such as genealogists or those with specific research requirements (such as longitudinal analysis).

“I have found it totally impossible to fit myself into the questionnaire as I belong to no organisation, nor are most of the questions applicable.”

Local Historian and Genealogist

It would have been beneficial to have had a simpler route through the questionnaire for those who wish to provide general comments. Some respondents who found the questionnaire unsuitable provided email responses directly to the Beyond 2011 team.

“We would welcome consultations on a broader basis, with less prescriptive templates and more opportunity to comment on both the programme overall, and the specifics of the approach.”

Email response, anonymous

The trade-off exercise was not as effective in the questionnaire format as in the workshops. The limitations of questionnaire design meant that the complex concepts could not be properly explained. Also, individual users found it more difficult to provide information.

“It is difficult to complete the ‘trade off’ part of this consultation in the way that is suggested. In many cases (and essentially with regard to population data) data must be frequent, low level and accurate and this system does not enable such a response without diminishing the importance of each individually.”

Lincolnshire County Council

“If we had not attended one of the workshops, we would have found it difficult to answer the questions in this consultation questionnaire, particularly the apportioning of 100 points between frequency, geography and accuracy.”

National Council for Voluntary Organisation

“[The trade-off question] was difficult to complete as some of the data within the identified themes are required at different frequencies and geographies but the format of the questions groups them all together.”

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Despite these difficulties, the majority of respondents managed to complete the trade-off questions and the patterns revealed in the results, presented in this report, show that while the exercise was difficult it was successful at identifying high level priorities and how they differ between both the themes and the respondent types.

Some respondents found that the structure of the questionnaire made it difficult for them to state specific requirements, particularly as the sections asked about themes rather than specific topics.

“The consultation is so varied and general that it is difficult to provide complete and detailed responses.”

Worcestershire County Council

The aim of the consultation was to provide an opportunity for users to feed in their requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics as a starting point for wider engagement and as part of an ongoing process to identify and understand detailed needs. The responses received to the difficult questions we posed, especially around the accuracy/frequency/geography trade-offs, were detailed and well considered, providing an invaluable source of information and a basis for taking forward subsequent communication and engagement plans.

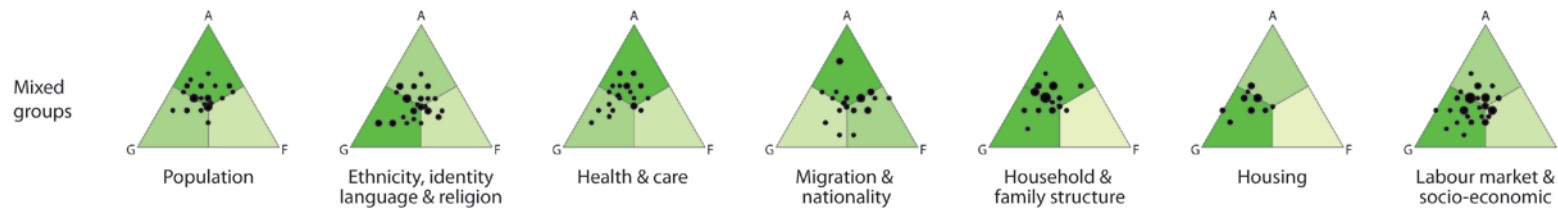
Thank you to all who responded in any way. We will build upon the responses received in the next stage of consultation which will focus a great deal more on bilateral discussions with individual stakeholder groups and representatives.

If you are interested in receiving updates on the progress of the Beyond 2011 Programme and future events and are not currently on our contacts list, please email beyond2011@ons.gsi.gov.uk with your name and organisation stating your main interest in the Programme.

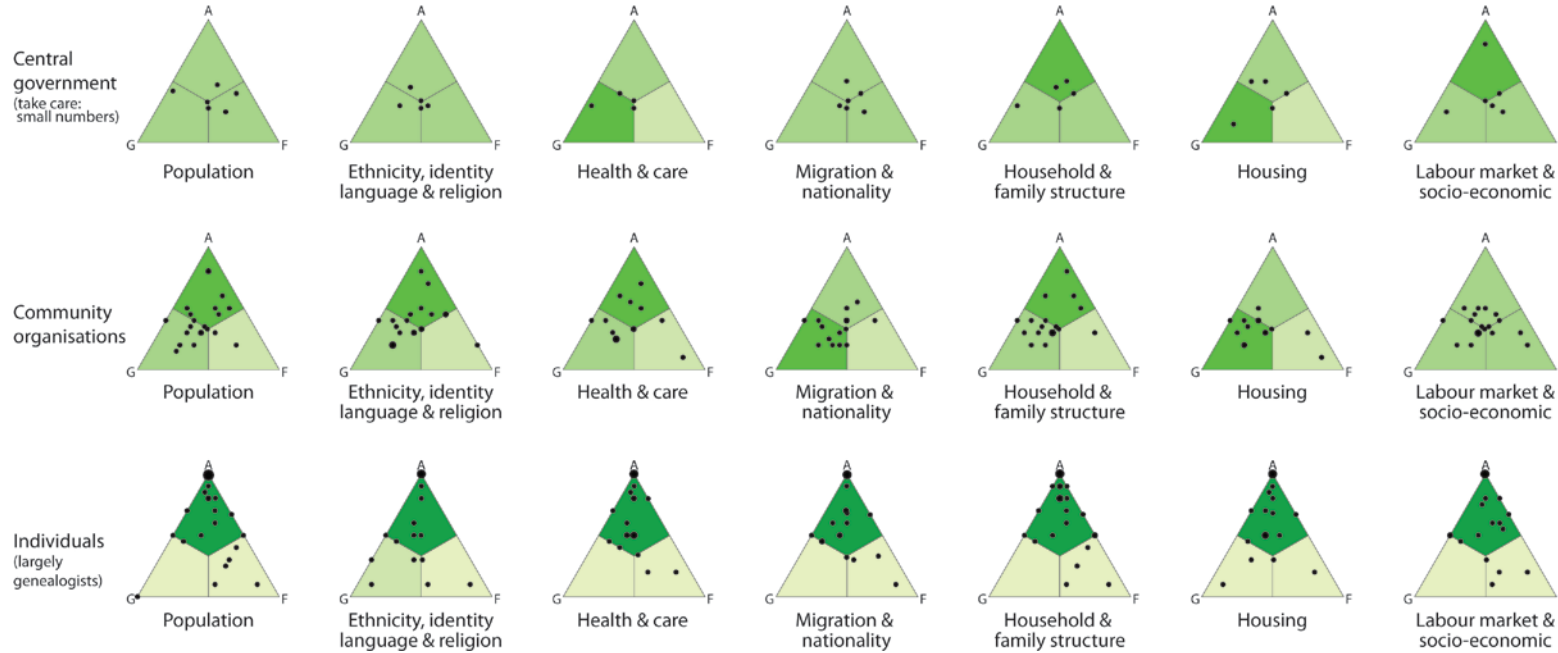
Thank you for your interest.

Appendix E: Summary graphs of priorities for all themes and sectors

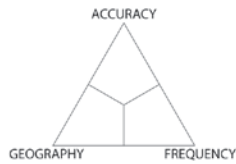
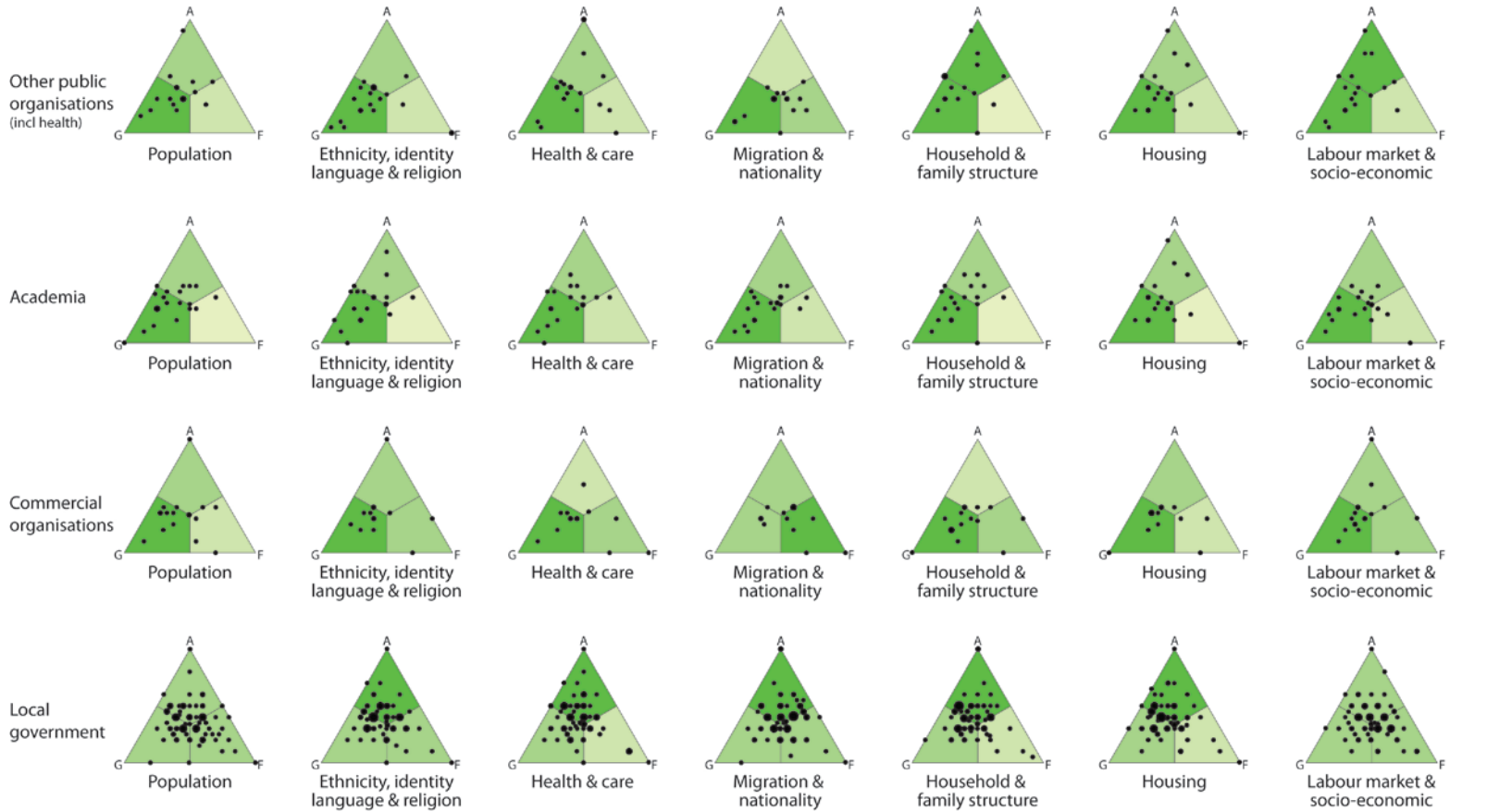
WORKSHOPS



QUESTIONNAIRE



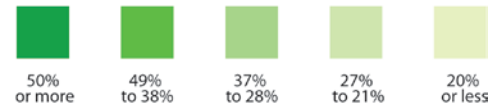
QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)



- 1 response
- 2 responses
- 3-4 responses
- 5-9 responses
- 10-14 responses

Dots indicate the actual scoring from each questionnaire response. Colours provide a summary of overall average scoring for each theme and sector in order to summarise the pattern.

See separate description over for how to interpret the triangle graphs.



Triangular graphs

As discussed earlier, users were asked to record the relative priority of three key dimensions of quality – **accuracy, frequency and geography** for each theme - by allocating 100 points across the three dimensions. These triangle graphs summarise the results for all scores for all respondents.

This type of graph allows the ratio between the three dimensions to be plotted in a two dimensional space. The three scores from an individual response must sum to 100, so only two scores are needed to plot the point on the graph, with the score for the final dimension being the difference between the sum of these two scores and 100.

The closer a plotted response score is to a corner of the triangle then the more importance has been placed on that dimension at the expense of the other two.

In the diagram shown here, the triangles have been divided into three segments to aid interpretation. The segment in which a response score falls is the dimension which the respondent has given the highest score and therefore is the dimension which they consider to be the most important. Where multiple respondents provided the same score these are indicated using the proportional circles as indicated.

The individual segments have been coloured to represent the percentage of the response scores which fall within them thus providing a visual indication of the relative importance of each dimension for each theme and sector.

