

Census 2001 – What's New ?

Society changes and so must the Census

The first Census for England and Wales took place in 1801. Both society and methods for running a census have changed a good deal since then, but changes have also occurred since the last Census just 10 years ago – the effect of new technology and the way people now live and work. The 2001 Census will reflect these changes in the questions it asks, in its organisation and the way in which the census information is processed and stored.

New questions

To achieve a better-informed social policy aimed at minimising deprivation and social exclusion new questions have been introduced:

- General health – as an aid to predicting future health needs
- Unpaid personal carers – enabling an assessment of demand on social services
- Lowest floor level – providing a measure of potentially unsuitable accommodation

Changes in organising the Census

Post-back of census forms

The public will be issued with reply-paid envelopes in which to post back census forms to save second visits by enumerators. This frees up the field force to concentrate on areas where response is low.

New technology

- Processing the census forms – the tick-box and hand-written information which the public provide on some 32 million census forms will be scanned in and processed using optical recognition technology. This is part of a total data processing contract with information systems experts, Lockheed Martin, and will save an estimated £12 million in processing costs.
- Mapping out workloads – Geographic Information System technology has been specially developed to draw up enumeration districts saving time and money in planning workloads. This system will also enable data outputs according to post-codes and not just administrative boundaries.

Partnerships with community organisations

Contact is being made with Local Authorities, ethnic community leaders and religious groups, the Citizen's Advice Bureaux and organisations representing people with disabilities. The aim is to establish a working partnership with the voluntary sector to promote the Census, and ensure all groups within society are counted and to provide practical help with filling in the form.

Other factsheets:

1. The Census
2. Why We Need a Census
3. Counting Everyone In – the Big Challenge
4. Counting Everyone In – the Big Challenge
5. The Census Organisation
6. Census Jobs
7. The Census and the Law
8. Census Taking Through the Ages

Welsh language policy

- Welsh language forms – forms in both English and Welsh will be given to all households in Wales.
- Welsh Census 'Czar' – a special Census Manager for Wales post has been created to actively promote the Census and oversee the administration of the Census in Wales.

New methodology

- Where you live not where you are – the public are now required to fill in the form according to where they are usually resident rather than where they are on Census night. This reduces double-counting.
- Term-time address for students – students will be counted as resident at their term-time address.

Contact for further information:

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