



# The 2001 Census of Population

Presented to Parliament by  
the Economic Secretary to the Treasury,  
the Secretary of State for Scotland, and  
the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland  
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# **THE 2001 CENSUS OF POPULATION**

## **I INTRODUCTION**

### **The decision on the Census**

1. The Government has decided that, subject to appropriate legislative approval, a Census of Population should be taken throughout the United Kingdom in 2001; the proposed date is Sunday 29 April. The Census will be the twentieth in a series carried out every 10 years in Great Britain since 1801, except in 1941, and the eighteenth to be carried out in what is now Northern Ireland. The last Census was carried out on 21 April 1991 and was reported on fully by the Registrars General for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland<sup>1,2</sup>.
2. This White Paper sets out the Government's proposals for the Census, and is being published now because the Government believes that there should be time for public discussion of proposals that affect every person in the country.

### **Separate consideration of the proposals for the Censuses in England and Wales, in Scotland and in Northern Ireland**

3. To undertake a census requires the passage of subordinate legislation. For England and Wales, towards the end of this year the Government will prepare a draft Order in Council, embodying proposals for the Census, which will be laid before the Westminster Parliament. In Scotland and in Northern Ireland, the Census will be devolved. Accordingly, separate secondary legislation will be a matter for the new administrations there to promote. (See Chapter VII for the procedures for the devolved legislatures to consider the proposals for the Censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland.) The Government envisages that Scotland and Northern Ireland will wish to proceed on a similar timescale to that in England and Wales to ensure that there will be time to plan the Census properly and organise the work efficiently.
4. The arrangements described in this White Paper for the conduct of the Censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland, whether in common with the approach taken in England and Wales or in its references to proposals particular to Scotland or Northern Ireland, will, of course, be subject to the consideration of the respective local administrations. The Government, however, commends to them the detailed planning and preparations already in progress for the conduct of the Censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Not only do the proposals permit the necessary degree of harmonisation required across the United Kingdom, they also provide the basis for the Censuses to be carried out efficiently while acknowledging differences in approach, where appropriate, following the systematic consultations that have taken place about the Censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Continued close co-operation and joint working on the Census is also consonant with the aim of the concordat on statistics which the Government proposes between the United Kingdom administrations.

## **Meeting the need for information**

5. Government, local and health authorities, commercial business and the professions need reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households if they are to conduct many of their activities effectively. This need is currently best met by conducting a census every ten years covering the whole of the population, and by updating the population estimates each year between censuses using data from: (a) registrations of births and deaths; and (b) estimates of migration based on information on the number of people changing their general practitioner, changes in the electorate, and other material from sample surveys. However, over time, such data, especially on migration, accumulate inaccuracies, and a regular census is necessary to provide information for revising the annual population estimates.
6. The Government needs this kind of information to form policy, to plan services for specific groups of people and, in particular, to distribute resources effectively to local and health authorities to enable them to direct resources to where they are needed. The information must be authoritative, accurate and comparable for all parts of the country.
7. Only a census can provide the information on a uniform basis both about the country as a whole and about individual small areas and sub-groups of the population in relation to one another.
8. In 1992, the three United Kingdom Census Offices\* undertook a Census Policy Evaluation and Reappraisal (PEAR) to review the future needs for statistical information on population and housing and the options for providing such information. The then Government's decision, announced on 13 October 1992, for planning to proceed on the basis of a Census in 2001, followed the results of the PEAR review<sup>3</sup> which confirmed that;
  - (a) there would be a continuing need both in the public and private sectors for the type of statistical information on population and housing provided by the census over the period 1996-2016; and
  - (b) there were no alternative sources for providing such information on a nationwide standard basis for local areas.
9. The need for information is shared by the European Union (EU), and Guidelines calling on member states to hold a population census between 1 March and 31 May 2001, or for equivalent statistics to be prepared by other methods, were agreed in principle in November 1997. Statistics will be supplied to the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) for use by the European Commission in support of the European Parliament. The United Kingdom is playing a full part in discussions to ensure harmonisation of the statistics produced by the different EU Member States.

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\* The Office for National Statistics (in 1992 the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys), the General Register Office for Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (in 1992 the Census Office for Northern Ireland was part of the Department of Health and Social Services).

10. The United Kingdom will also comply, as far as possible, with any statistical requirements identified by the United Nations (UN). A set of principles and recommendations for the next round of censuses throughout the world has been adopted<sup>4</sup>, following a meeting of the UN Statistical Commission in New York in February 1997, and all countries have been asked to produce a set of core output which will be incorporated into a UN demographic publication.

### **Strategic aims and characteristics**

11. The Government's proposals for the 2001 Census are based on four broad strategic aims:
- to ensure that the question content is appropriate to meet the demonstrated requirements of users;
  - to deliver products and services to meet legal obligations and users' needs within stated quality standards and to a pre-defined timetable;
  - to ensure that all aspects of the census data collection operation and the dissemination of results are acceptable to the public and comply with Data Protection law;
  - to demonstrate that the Census represents value for money.

The previous Census was based on broadly similar principles, but, in a number of respects, the 2001 Census will take a different approach to cope with difficulties encountered in the 1991 Census, with changes in society, and with technological developments; and to satisfy needs for information to support Government policy initiatives on, for example, social exclusion, inequalities in health, crime prevention, carers and the new deal for the unemployed.

12. In summary (and subject to the approval by the respective legislatures):
- the 2001 Census will cover everyone resident in the country;
  - forms will generally be delivered by enumerators but, in some cases where contact is difficult, may be mailed; the public will be required to return completed forms by post;
  - help will be available to anyone who has difficulty in completing the Census form;
  - there will be a slight increase in the number of questions compared with the 1991 Census, but the form has been re-designed to reduce the amount of time and effort taken to complete it;
  - there will be some differences in the questions asked in England and Wales, in Scotland and in Northern Ireland;

- significant changes from 1991 in the questions proposed are: new individual questions on general health, provision of unpaid personal care, time since last paid employment, size of employer's organisation, and a question on religion to be asked in England and Wales\*; revisions to the questions on relationship within household, ethnic group, and qualifications; a question on ethnic group will be asked in Northern Ireland for the first time;
- the Government will continue to consider whether or not to include a question on income, having regard to the risks to the Census as a whole in so doing, and will include such a question in the Census Rehearsal in April 1999; the Government will make final proposals on whether or not the question should be included in the Census itself once research into possible means of securing relevant information from alternative sources has been completed;
- each question included in the proposals meets a demonstrated need and is suitable for a self-completed form; previous censuses or tests have shown the questions to be generally acceptable to the public, but the acceptability of all questions will be subject to a final assessment following the Census Rehearsal;
- stringent confidentiality and security procedures will protect the information gathered in the Census and will conform to the requirements of Census Confidentiality and Data Protection law;
- the Census relies on public co-operation, and to help achieve this there will be publicity to convey to the public the purpose and value of the Census and the confidentiality with which information is treated;
- unlike previous censuses in Great Britain when certain information was only used from a sample of returned census forms, all 2001 Census forms will be fully processed and used to produce statistics;
- initiatives have been put into place to maximise, and measure effectively, the quality of the information collected; in particular, a Census Coverage Survey will be carried out to measure the number of people not counted by the Census; and
- the statistical reports on the Census will be designed to meet user requirements, and dissemination will be to a pre-arranged timetable so that the value of the Census is fully realised.

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\* Subject to the necessary change in the Census legislation being made (see paragraphs 65 and 176)

### Cost and financial control

13. On the basis of present planning assumptions, the total cost of the 2001 Census in UK over the thirteen year period 1993-2006 is currently estimated to be £254m. The breakdown for the period 1993-98 and subsequent years is:

	(£ millions)									
	1993- 1998	1998- 1999	1999- 2000	2000- 2001	2001- 2002	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	<b>Total 1993-2006</b>
United Kingdom	19.6	12.4	21.4	53.7	107.0	20.1	7.6	6.3	6.0	<b>254.1</b>

14. Provision for the cost of the Census has been made up to the period 2001-02. Provision for later years will be subject to future spending reviews.
15. Costs of the Census operation will be closely controlled and monitored. The largest elements of the total cost are to pay for the delivery and collection of the forms and for the processing of the data. In a drive to improve the cost effectiveness of the operation, the Census Offices are taking forward options for outsourcing some aspects of the 2001 Census, building on the 1991 experience (see paragraphs 144-147). Altogether some 40 per cent of the planned costs of the 2001 Census have been identified for possible private sector involvement.



## II CONSULTATIONS AND CENSUS TESTS

### Consultations

16. The planning of the 2001 Census for the United Kingdom is co-ordinated by the UK Census Committee (UKCC) which consists of senior officials from the three Census Offices and the Welsh Office. In addition to its co-ordinating role, the Committee has played a key part in steering the early phases of development, during which the shape and content of the Census has been formulated in consultation with users, through a structure of Advisory Committees, Working Groups and topic-related sub-groups, *Census News*, information papers, the Internet and *ad hoc* public meetings. There have been many full and detailed responses from users that have been helpful in developing the proposals for the Census.
17. Government Departments were consulted, both on a bilateral basis and collectively through the Government Statistical Service and inter-Departmental Committees, to determine their needs for topics to be included. Local and health authorities, the academic community and the business sectors were similarly consulted through Advisory Groups convened by the Registrars General for England and Wales, and Scotland. In Northern Ireland, consultation has been co-ordinated through Government Departments and the Northern Ireland Census Advisory Group, which includes representatives of academia, business and the voluntary sector. In addition, the Census Offices have welcomed views and submissions on the Census from any source with or without invitation, and information papers have been issued regularly. All views have been carefully considered.
18. Consultations also covered (and are continuing to do so) the drawing of geographical boundaries for the areas for which results are to be made available (output areas). Consultations on the format and content of statistical output from the Census will follow the publication of this White Paper.
19. In addition to the PEAR review referred to in paragraph 8, a major survey of census users was carried out in 1994 to obtain user opinion of the efficacy of the 1991 Census and requirements for 2001. Almost 1,000 users throughout the United Kingdom responded to the survey in one way or another, and the need for statistical information on population and housing was once again clearly stated.

### Business cases for topics

20. Throughout 1997, the Census Offices conducted a consultation exercise among the census user community to ascertain the business cases for a range of topics that were being considered for inclusion in the 2001 Census. In summary, the criteria for accepting these topics were:
  - that there was a clearly demonstrated need;
  - that users' requirements could not adequately be met by information from other sources;

- that they should be shown, in tests, to have had no significantly adverse effect on the Census as a whole, particularly the level of public response; and
- that practicable questions could be devised to collect data which is sufficiently accurate to meet users' requirements.

### **Census tests**

21. The Government's proposals also take account of the results of a programme of cognitive research and tests of census forms and question wording. These tests were voluntary and the Government is most grateful for the co-operation given by members of the public in responding to them.
22. A major Census Test took place in Great Britain and Northern Ireland in June 1997 to evaluate new collection and processing methods, alternative styles of census forms and to test public reaction to some new and revised questions, particularly a question on income. As a result of the Test several of the procedures followed in the 1991 Census have been substantially revised. Changes include: the use of the Royal Mail for the public to return their census forms; a new, simpler, style of census form; using geographic information systems to plan enumeration and output areas; and the use of new technology to process the data.

### **Census Rehearsal**

23. A Census Rehearsal will take place in April 1999, with the aim of making sure that both the procedures for delivery and collection of the census forms, and the systems for processing the data and producing outputs, will be effective. It will also be used as the final opportunity, before the laying of draft Census Orders (see paragraphs 167 and 173), to assess the reaction of the public to the proposed census questions. The test will cover some 148,000 households throughout the United Kingdom in areas chosen to include a cross-section of the population and types of housing found in the country as a whole, for example, areas with high levels of multi-occupancy, student accommodation, hotels and holiday accommodation, various ethnic minority groups, rural areas, and areas with a high level of Welsh speakers. The selected areas are in the English districts of Bournemouth, Leeds and Lincoln, in Ceredigion and Gwynedd in Wales, in Dundee City and Angus in Scotland, and in the Coleraine and Limavady areas in Northern Ireland.

### **III POPULATION AND TOPICS TO BE COVERED BY THE CENSUS**

#### **The population base**

24. Traditionally each decennial census covers all the people in the United Kingdom, and this is proposed for the 2001 Census. Each household will be given a census form to complete, and the form will contain questions relating to each person resident in the household as well as to the household as a whole. However, unlike the practice in previous censuses, only the name and usual address of visitors to households on Census night will be recorded. If these visitors are normally resident elsewhere in the United Kingdom, they will be required to supply full information at their usual residence. This change in procedure will reduce the overall burden on the public in that information about any individual person will only need to be supplied once. Students and boarding schoolchildren will be regarded as being resident at their term-time address irrespective of where they are present on Census day thus making the Census more consistent with the base for the mid-year population estimates. People resident in some types of communal establishments, such as hotels and hospitals, will be given individual forms for completion. Separate arrangements will be made for the enumeration of other types of establishment such as prisons and military camps.
25. Thus everyone will be enumerated at the address where he or she is resident at the time of the Census; the return for a household will also include anyone normally resident there who happens to be away on Census night, whether in the United Kingdom or abroad. The resulting counts of the number of people usually resident in an area will form the basis of the population figures used in calculating Government grants to local and health authorities. Because of the importance of making these figures as accurate as possible, people in households entirely absent on Census night will be required to complete a census form on return to their usual residence, if this is within six months of Census night. Data for absent households, which do not return a census form within this period, will be estimated (see paragraph 155).

#### **Census topics**

26. The topics proposed for the Census are those that have been shown to be most needed by central and local government, the health service, academics, businesses and professional organisations. In each case, no other comparable and accessible source of the information is available in combination with other items in the Census. Consideration has been given to the public acceptability of topics and to whether or not questions can be asked in a way that elicits reliable answers. The cost of processing the answers to questions has also been assessed in relation to the usefulness of the results. Finally, the overall length and layout of the Census form has been considered so that the burden on the public is kept to an acceptable level within the overall objective of achieving optimum value from the Census.

27. The topics proposed are mutually supporting; that is, each one will provide information that will make others more useful. This is a particularly valuable aspect of a census, where information on a range of topics is collected simultaneously for the whole population to form a single source from which important inter-relationships between two or more topics can be analysed. Answers from the individual people forming households and families can thus be combined to provide valuable information on the number and characteristics of households and families of different types, such as, for example, the number of single-parent families where the parent is employed and the children are under school age.
28. In summary, the Government proposes that information on the following topics should be collected in the 2001 Census:

**At all properties occupied by households and for all unoccupied household accommodation:**

- the address, including the postcode; and
- the type of accommodation, including whether or not it is self-contained;

**For households:**

- names of all residents (whether present or temporarily absent on Census night);
- names and usual addresses of visitors on Census night;
- tenure of accommodation;
- whether rented accommodation is furnished or unfurnished (in Scotland only);
- type of landlord (for households in rented accommodation);
- number of rooms;
- availability of bath and toilet;
- lowest floor level of accommodation\*;
- number of floor levels in the accommodation (in Northern Ireland only)\*;
- availability of central heating; and
- number of cars and vans owned or available;

**For residents**

- name, sex, and date of birth;
- marital status;
- relationship to others in household;
- student status;
- whether or not students live at enumerated address during term time;
- usual address one year ago;
- country of birth;
- knowledge of Gaelic (in Scotland only), Welsh (in Wales only) and Irish (in Northern Ireland only);
- ethnic group;
- religion\* (not in Scotland);

- general health\*;
  - long-term illness;
  - provision of unpaid personal care\*;
  - educational and vocational qualifications;
  - economic activity in the week before the Census;
  - time since last employment\*;
  - employment status;
  - supervisor status\*;
  - job title and description of occupation;
  - size of workforce of employing organisation at place of work\*;
  - nature of employer's business at place of work (industry);
  - hours usually worked weekly in main job;
  - name of employer;
  - address of place of work; and
  - means of travel to work.
29. Some of these topics (those marked \*) are proposed for general inclusion in a census for the first time. However, the proposed question on floor level of accommodation has previously been included only in the census in Scotland. Furthermore, a question on religion has previously been included in the census in Northern Ireland, but the wording of the new question proposed for England and Wales for 2001 (see paragraph 65) would be different; the question will not be asked in Scotland.
30. All other topics were included, in one form or other, in the 1991 Census. The format of the question on ethnic group in England and Wales is more detailed than the question asked in 1991 to reflect changing needs. In Scotland, a variant form of the ethnic group question (more similar to that asked in Great Britain in 1991) is being proposed; and in Northern Ireland an ethnic group question designed to meet local needs is being proposed for the first time. (See paragraphs 58-63 for details of the proposed ethnic group questions.)
31. Questions on all the topics listed in paragraph 28 will be included on the Census forms to be used in the Census Rehearsal in April 1999. Additionally, a question on income will also be included in the Census Rehearsal before the Government makes a final decision on whether or not to propose to include the question in the Census itself (see paragraphs 98-104). Subsequently, the topics to be included in the Census will be set out in subordinate legislation to be laid before the appropriate legislatures towards the end of this year (see paragraphs 173 and 175).
32. The proposed questions to be asked of households and persons are described in the following paragraphs. The order in which they appear here is not an indication of their rank or importance.

### **Questions to be asked at all addresses**

33. The first job of the census enumerator before issuing census forms at each address will be to make preliminary enquiries about the number of residents living at each address and to ensure that separate households are correctly identified.

### *Names and address*

34. The **full postal address** of the household and **name** of the person responsible for completing the form will be put on the form by the enumerator if contact is made at delivery with a person in the household. The address helps ensure the correct handling of the forms by the field staff and it enables the Census Offices to check the receipt of those forms that are returned by mail. Strict confidentiality procedures (see paragraphs 117-119) will ensure that information on names and addresses will not be used to reveal to anyone outside the Census organisation any information on identifiable individuals or households other than for the purposes of the Census Acts.
35. As in the 1991 Census, the **postcode** of each address of enumeration will be recorded. This would enable output areas used for the presentation of census statistics, which would include administrative areas, to be defined in terms of postcodes and, in aggregated form, to be used in conjunction with other data organised on a postcode basis. This may suit users better than providing results based on enumeration areas. A typical postcode covers only a small number of addresses, and the choice of areas which could be built from postcodes is consequently wide. However, in order to preserve the confidentiality of census data for individual people and households, statistics other than simple headcounts would be released only for sufficiently large aggregates of postcodes.
36. The person responsible for completing each census form will enter the **name** of each household resident to be included on the form. This helps to ensure that the enumeration is complete and enables any queries to be directed to the right people if it is necessary for an enumerator to call back to check for missing information on the form.
37. The **name** and **usual address** of each visitor who is staying with the household on Census night is also to be entered on the census form, though no other information on such visitors will be required to be recorded. If these visitors are resident elsewhere in the United Kingdom, their particulars will be required to be recorded on the form delivered to their usual address.

### **Questions to be asked of each household**

38. Some questions will be asked about each household as a whole. Information on the **number of households** in the United Kingdom, and in each part of the country, is used in the planning, financing and management of services supplied to households as a whole. In addition, a wider range of census statistics about people and information on households and housing will aid decisions on rural development and on urban and inner city policies, particularly in the development of brownfield sites. Statistics derived from the Census will also help define areas with problems of deprivation and enable policies and resources to be directed to areas with special needs.

39. Where accommodation is unoccupied on Census night, the enumerator will record a few basic facts that will be used to augment the information collected from occupied accommodation. Households which are entirely absent from their usual address on Census night will be required to complete a census form on their return, if this is within six months of Census night (see paragraph 25).

*Questions about housing*

40. The Census will provide information about the accommodation occupied by each household. It will also provide a count of dwellings, including vacant dwellings, and of dwellings shared by two or more households. This will show the way in which the housing stock is being used and provide a firm basis for assessing current and future demands as the number and type of households change. No other data source gives such comprehensive information on housing stock at both national and local level.
41. At the local area level, the Census is the only source of nationally comparable information on housing, and this is used widely in calculations of grant entitlements to local authorities. Measures of inadequate housing and overcrowding are used in deciding on levels of housing investment and in targeting programmes which address social and economic needs in urban and rural areas. The following questions will be asked about housing.

*Type of accommodation and self-contained accommodation*

42. This will be used to identify separate dwellings and the characteristics of the accommodation in dwellings shared by two or more households. Households accommodated in caravans and other temporary structures will be identified. A question on the **lowest floor level of accommodation** will provide a measure of households and people living in potentially unsuitable accommodation, for example, households with young children or elderly residents, or people with long-term illness living several floors above the ground.
43. In Northern Ireland, given the nature of the housing stock, there will also be a question on the **number of floor levels in the accommodation** to help assess the extent of potentially unsuitable accommodation.

*Tenure of accommodation and type of landlord*

44. These questions will show how much of the housing stock in each area is in owner-occupation and whether it is subject to purchase by mortgage, or is local authority housing, privately let, or held by other types of tenure. In Scotland, further information will be collected on whether rented accommodation is **furnished or unfurnished**.

*Number of rooms*

45. This will help show, together with the number and characteristics of people in each household, the degree to which accommodation may be overcrowded or under-utilised.

### *Amenities*

46. Households will be asked whether or not their use of either a **bath/shower or toilet**, or both, is exclusive to the household or shared with other households. Shared or exclusive use of basic amenities remains an important indicator in the allocation of resources for housing development and regeneration. A question on the availability of **central heating** in some or all rooms will provide additional information about housing standards.

### *Household transport*

47. The question will ask how many **cars or vans are owned or available for use** by the household. It will help to identify areas where private transport makes the most demand on road space and will indicate the areas where people are likely to be most dependent on public transport. The statistics will also be used in making projections of future levels of car ownership, studies of road use and appraisals of the need for future investment in public transport.

### **Questions to be asked of residents in households**

48. About a half of the questions addressed to residents in households will apply to everyone; the questions relating to qualifications, economic activity, occupation and industry will not be asked of children under 16 or people who are aged 75 or over.

### *Basic population characteristics*

49. One of the most important tasks of the Census is to give an accurate and authoritative figure of the **number of people** in the United Kingdom and to show where they **usually** live and so provide a new and up-to-date base for annual mid-year population estimates for local areas.
50. In the years after a census, the annual population estimates are updated (from the census base) by using data from registrations of births and deaths, and estimates of migration based on sources such as changes in the electorate, patient registrations with doctors and information from sample surveys. Without the corrective effect of a census these estimates, particularly for local areas, would become progressively less reliable.
51. Long-term policies in government and elsewhere need to take account of future populations. Population estimates revised in the light of the Census will be the basis for making population and household projections for future years, and will be used to assess likely demand for goods and services in both the public and private sectors.
52. The number of people classified by **sex, age and marital status** provides a new basis for actuarial tables, which allow trends in life expectancy to be monitored and which are used for a variety of purposes such as planning provisions for state pensions and life assurance. Analyses of persons in households by combinations of age, sex, marital status and relationship will give information on different types of household, such as, for example, households comprising two persons of pensionable age, and enable statistics to be produced on separate family units.



The following questions will be asked:

*Sex, date of birth and marital status*

53. Apart from serving the essential needs for national and local population statistics described above, this key information will be used to estimate the demand for local authority services, such as facilities for the young and old. The data are fundamental to the major statistical series giving age- and sex-specific rates for morbidity, mortality, fertility, marriage and divorce. They will also be used, together with other census information, to estimate, for example, the numbers and ages of those who are working and who are employed in particular occupations or industries.

*Relationship in household*

54. In households of two or more people, a new style of question will ask about the **relationship between each person in the household**. This information will provide statistics of households analysed by family composition, and will be used by organisations providing services to families, who need to know how many families there are and what changes have been taking place over time. Applications include planning accommodation and services for the elderly and assessment of the potential demand for housing from young families.

*Migration - address one year ago*

55. The question will ask the **usual address of each person one year before the Census**. Where this is different from the current address, statistics will be compiled to give the numbers and characteristics of people and households who have moved from one area to another. The number of moves by type of person and household between each area and region of the country will also be given. The figures will show arrivals from outside the United Kingdom, but not those leaving, in the year before the Census.
56. This information is important since migration accounts for much of the growth or decline of the populations of areas between censuses. The information collected in the Census will allow inferences to be made about the level and pattern of migration in other years. It is most important, for this purpose, that a complete count of the number of people and households moving in the year prior to the Census is made. The Census is the only current source of reliable migration data for small areas, and analysis of migrants by their demographic characteristics and type of move provides more information on this important group of people, for planning purposes, than is available from any other source.

### *Country of birth*

57. This will provide information on people resident in the United Kingdom born in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland or in an overseas country. The information provides estimates of the numbers and circumstances of sometimes small immigrant communities from various countries, and in particular, refugees, who may have particular needs, in order to support resource allocation and policy development. The information will also be used, with data from surveys showing the relationships between country of birth and nationality, to make estimates of numbers by nationality. Furthermore, the question will provide proxy information on the number of non-UK nationals living and working in the United Kingdom.

### *Cultural characteristics*

#### *Ethnic Group*

58. A question on **ethnic group** was included in a census for the first time in Great Britain in 1991. There had been widespread support for such a question, and the information has enabled national and local government and health authorities to allocate resources and plan programmes taking account of the special needs of ethnic minority groups. In particular, response to the question provided baseline figures against which the Government can monitor possible racial disadvantage within minority groups. The question worked well and was one of the main successes of the 1991 Census, and, indeed, the classification of ethnic groups used in the Census is now widely regarded as a *de facto* standard.
59. The Government proposes to include the topic again in the 2001 Census, this time throughout the United Kingdom, though different forms of the question are proposed in England and Wales, in Scotland and in Northern Ireland to reflect differences in local needs for information.
60. The question proposed for England and Wales has been extensively researched and tested since the 1991 Census, both to meet users' requirements for additional information about people of mixed origin and sub-groups within the 'White' population, particularly the 'Irish', and to be as acceptable as possible to respondents. The new response categories are such as to provide optimum comparability with information from the 1991 Census question while, at the same time, attempting to improve response to the question among those communities who would prefer to describe themselves as 'Black British' or 'Asian British'. The new form of the question proposed in England and Wales is shown on page 16.

## Ethnic Group question to be asked in England and Wales

### What is your ethnic group?

- ◆ Choose one section from (a) to (e) then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background

#### (a) White

- British
- Irish
- Any other White background  
*please write in below*

.....

#### (b) Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed background  
*please write in below*

.....

#### (c) Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background  
*please write in below*

.....

#### (d) Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background  
*please write in below*

.....

#### (e) Chinese or Other ethnic group

- Chinese
- Any other  
*please write in below*

.....

61. In Scotland, the requirements stated for this topic were in line with the information provided by the responses to the 1991 Census question, but with the addition of a 'mixed ethnic group' category; and this is proposed for the question in the 2001 Census (shown below).
62. In Northern Ireland, where the question will be asked for the first time in a census, consultation with users has determined that the question should reflect conditions and needs in Northern Ireland. Accordingly the wording of the question there (shown below) will be similar to that in Scotland but with the addition of an 'Irish Traveller' category.

**Ethnic Group question  
to be asked in Scotland**

**To which of these ethnic groups  
do you consider you belong?**

*Tick one box only*

- White
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Black-Caribbean
- Black-African
- Black-Other  
*please write in below*  
.....

- Mixed ethnic group  
*please write in below*  
.....

- Any other ethnic group  
*please write in below*  
.....

**Ethnic Group question  
to be asked in Northern Ireland**

**To which of these ethnic groups  
do you consider you belong?**

*Tick one box only*

- White
- Chinese
- Irish Traveller
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Black-Caribbean
- Black-African
- Black-Other  
*please write in below*  
.....

- Mixed ethnic group  
*please write in below*  
.....

- Any other ethnic group  
*please write in below*  
.....

63. Though different forms of the question are being proposed in England and Wales, in Scotland and in Northern Ireland, the variants will, nevertheless, allow statistics to be produced which will be broadly comparable throughout the UK and, in Great Britain, with statistics from the 1991 Census.

*Religion*

64. A question on **religion** is being proposed for inclusion in the 2001 Census in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The topic is new to the Census in England and Wales, and responses to the question would help provide information which would supplement the output from the ethnicity question by identifying ethnic minority sub-groups, particularly those originating from the Indian sub-continent, in terms of their religion.

65. A decision to include the question in the 2001 Census in England and Wales depends on a change to the census legislation being made (see paragraph 176). The proposed question is:

**What is your religion?**

Tick one box only

- None
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Jewish
- Any other religion, *please write in below*  
.....

66. A question on religion has traditionally been included in the census in Northern Ireland, where the information is used to help in the monitoring of policies on equality issues. The question will be similar to that asked in the 1991 Census, but in addition, respondents who indicate ‘no religion’ will be asked to record the religion in which they were brought up (if any).
67. Consultation with users in Scotland indicated that there was a far less strong business case for information to be collected on religion there in the 2001 Census. This is consistent with the requirement for less detailed information on ethnic group than is being collected in England and Wales. Consequently it is not proposed to include the question in Scotland.

*Questions on Celtic languages*

68. The Census will ask questions on Celtic language in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, where it is the primary source of information about speakers of **Welsh, Gaelic and Irish** and about the change over time in the distributions of speakers of these languages. The questions will be asked in Wales (Welsh), Scotland (Gaelic) and Northern Ireland (Irish) and will ascertain whether the person speaks, reads, writes and/or understands the respective language.
69. This information will be used to measure the change in the use of the languages, the planning of bilingual education provision and to monitor the effect of support for the languages provided by the Welsh Office, Scottish Office and Northern Ireland Office. Similar questions were asked in the 1991 Census, though the aspect of the 2001 Census questions relating to ‘understanding’ the respective language is new.

## **Health**

### *Limiting long-term illness*

70. This question, which was included for the first time in the 1991 Census, will ask whether each person has any **long-term illness**, health problem or handicap which limits his or her daily activities or the work he or she can do. Problems, which arise from old age, will be included. The information will be used as a measure of the need for health and personal social services for the long-term sick at national level, health and local authority level, and around particular local facilities, either existing or planned. The Census is the only nationally consistent source for statistics at the local level.
71. The question will provide information on the circumstances in which the long-term sick live, for example, whether they live alone. It will also provide analysis by age which will be important as the number of elderly people increases. The information will be of value both to the public and private sectors for marketing services to the sick and disabled.

### *General health*

72. In addition to the question on long-term illness, the Government proposes to include a **general health** question which will ask the respondents to assess their own health over the preceding 12 months as either 'Good', 'Fairly good', or 'Not good'. This information has been demonstrated in surveys to have a good predictive power for health policy and the provision of services, particularly for the elderly. Its inclusion in the Census in 2001 for the first time will enable such information to be applied at the local area level.

### *Provision of care*

73. The Government recognises the increasing amount of **unpaid personal help** given to people with ill health, and is proposing the inclusion of a new question which will help to improve the understanding of variations in the need for care and the pressure on social services in an attempt to target resources more effectively. The aim of the question is to record whether or not the person **provides** unpaid personal help for a friend or relative with a long-term illness, health problem or disability, and the time spent each week in providing such care.

### *Qualifications*

74. The information from a question on **educational and vocational qualifications** will be used to assist in the measurement of shortfalls in the provision of education and training and monitoring of take-up of government initiatives, and will help in the assessment of the reserves of skilled and qualified people among the unemployed, including those not currently seeking work.
75. Information will be sought on the level of educational and vocational qualifications achieved with the primary intention of deriving the highest qualification. In Northern Ireland the question will collect additional details to meet local policy needs.

76. In England and Wales it is also proposed to collect information on whether people have teaching, medical, nursing and/or dental qualifications. This information will be used, together with that collected on occupation (see paragraph 84), for effective manpower planning. There is less of a requirement for such information in Scotland and, consequently, it is not proposed to collect it there.

### *Employment*

77. The Census is a primary source of information about the socio-economic characteristics of the population and is the most comprehensive source at the local level. It provides statistics about the ages and occupations of workers in different industries. These statistics are presented both by place of residence and, for those in work, by place of work. The Census also provides information about other groups over school-leaving age, such as full-time students, people looking after the home and family, and the retired.
78. The Census is also an important source of labour market information about sub-groups of the population, for which sample sizes at the local area level in the Labour Force Survey are too small to provide reliable estimates. For example, the Census provides detailed statistics for small areas on employment and unemployment among different socio-economic groups.
79. The Census further provides statistics on the pool of labour and the potential reserves of labour in all areas. Particular applications include projections of the future labour force, use by local authorities in drawing up structure plans and use by firms wishing to locate operations in areas where there is a potential reserve of labour.
80. The majority of questions refer to a person's main employment in the week before the Census, or, for those not currently employed, to their most recent job, if any. The questions refer only to those people aged 16-74, and cover:

### *Economic activity in the week before the Census*

81. A number of questions will be asked of everyone aged 16-74 to determine whether or not the person was in paid work (including paid or unpaid or work in own/family business) or whether he/she was:
- retired
  - a student
  - looking after the family or home
  - permanently sick or disabled
  - looking for work
  - available for work
  - waiting to start a job

These will provide the basic classification for analysis of economic activity designed to be as consistent as possible with definitions recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

*Time since last employment*

82. A question new to the Census will ask of those persons stating that they were not working in the week before the census, the year in which they last worked. This will help determine local differences in the periods of unemployment experienced and the extent of long-term unemployment. Use of the information includes assessing and monitoring disadvantage and exclusion, planning education and training, resource allocation, labour market analysis, and in studies of mortality and morbidity.
83. If the person has never worked, no further questions on employment will be asked. For those persons in paid work, or who have previously worked, further questions will cover:

*Occupation of main, or last main, job*

84. Asking people their **full job title** and the **main things done in their job**, will provide detailed and important information about the very wide range of work done in the United Kingdom. A revision to the current (1990) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is being prepared and it is intended that this will be applied in the coding of the 2001 Census data.
85. The statistics will be used in analyses of the labour forces of various industries and occupations, in studies of occupational mortality, and will provide the basis for the classification of people and households by broad occupational and socio-economic categories.
86. Two further separate questions will enhance the information collected on main occupation. A question on **employment status** will ask if the person works or worked as an employee or as self-employed with, or without, employees.
87. A second question, on **supervisor status**, will ask if the person has or had any supervisory responsibilities in their job. Responses to this question will help in assigning the person more accurately to the new National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) (see paragraphs 108-109).

*Industry of employment*

88. This will primarily be determined by asking people the **nature of the business of the organisation** that employs them. The information will be used, for example, in labour market analyses and in the production of regional accounts and economic indicators. Additional information on industry may be obtained for those people currently working from the name and address of their employer (see paragraph 95).
89. Industry will be coded to the most recent version of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) that is in use. The latest revision to this classification was made in 1992, but there are plans to update this. Should the revised classification be available in time to develop appropriate systems, it will be used for coding the information on industry from the 2001 Census.



*Size of workforce of employer's organisation or company at place of work*

90. A new question on size of employer's organisation is required in order to help derive the new NS-SEC (see paragraphs 108-109) and the European variant of the International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO 88 (COM), which is used by Eurostat.

*Hours usually worked weekly in main job*

91. A question to be asked only of persons currently in employment will distinguish those in full- and part-time work. The information will help give an understanding of changes in working patterns, and how these apply to particular occupations and industries. Use of the information will be made in assessing and monitoring disadvantage, in labour market studies, in rural policy and regeneration, in traffic modelling, and in the derivation of area and socio-economic classifications.

*Workplace and journey to work*

92. From the information on the questions on **employment** and **workplace** the Census will be able to show both where those who live in each area work, and where people with workplaces in each area live. This information is the basis for measuring commuting patterns and assessing the balance of housing and jobs. The Census also adds to the value and usefulness of many routine employment statistics which are based on area of workplace, rather than residence.
93. Census statistics on where employed people live and work are used by Government Departments in defining 'Travel to Work Areas'. These areas represent approximations of self-contained labour markets and are the smallest for which unemployment rates are published. Government Departments use unemployment information for small areas, such as wards, in identifying areas within the major cities to which additional resources should be directed.

The following questions will be asked:

*Address of place of work*

94. Responses to a question on **address of place of work** will show the destination of individual journeys to work in relation to the usual address which will normally be the origin of the journey, and will provide information on the numbers travelling to work from particular origins to particular destinations.
95. Additionally, the **name of the organisation** at which the person is currently working is requested solely as a further aid to the accurate coding of the type of industry (see paragraph 88) by reference to the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) - a list of large employers already classified by type of industry. Responses to the question will not be used to produce information on named individual employers.

*Main means used for journey to work*

96. This will show the mode of transport normally used for the longest part, by distance, of the journey to work. The detailed analyses of specific commuting flows by the main means of travel will be used in the planning for public transport provision and of facilities for private transport.
97. In Scotland it is proposed to extend the coverage of the questions on workplace and journey to work to cover place of study for students and schoolchildren. This will provide fuller information on daytime populations and travel patterns. There is less of a requirement from users in the rest of the United Kingdom for this additional information, and consequently the questions will not be so extended in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**The Government's views on including a question on income in the Census**

98. Consultations with users throughout 1995-98 have indicated a widespread requirement to have information on level of individual gross income available from the Census. Income is widely seen as a more discriminating variable than occupation or housing condition for the purposes of identifying areas of affluence or deprivation and in economic and social research. All main user groups made a strong case for a question on income in their business cases for census topics. In particular, central and local government users expressed a requirement for the information to be used to support a range of activities including resource allocation, policy and development review, the derivation of deprivation indicators, and in the assessment of inequalities and social exclusion.
99. The strength of the requirement for census information about income must be balanced, however, against the possible public disquiet about the acceptability of such a question in a compulsory Census, the doubts about the reliability of the information collected, and the availability of possible alternative sources of the information.
100. The Government has taken into account evidence from small-scale testing of various versions of an income question that respondents tend not to answer questions on income with accuracy. People may overlook, in census-style self-completion questionnaires, components of their income and tend to misunderstand what should, and what should not, be included. Accuracy of response in a census question is particularly important because many users require information relating to a household, which would have to be computed by aggregating the banded information from individual household members.
101. The Government has also taken into consideration whether public reaction to the inclusion of a question on income would pose a serious risk to the conduct of the Census as a whole. To assess the public acceptability of the topic in a census, a question on income was included in half of the forms used in the 1997 Census Test.

102. The Test showed a difference in the overall response rates between those households who had a form with an income question and those who did not. The inclusion of the question lowered response rates overall by 3 percentage points, with some evidence that the difference was greater in inner city areas, being as high as 6 percentage points in one test area. Furthermore, in a follow-up survey to the Test, 15 per cent of people who had the income question on their form objected to it, while 29 per cent of those who did not have the question said that they would have objected to it. The main reasons for their objections were that income was seen as personal information and that there seemed to be no reason why it should be needed.
103. The Government recognises the widespread need for information on income, but is also concerned about the risks to the conduct of the Census as a whole of including such a question. Because of this, the Government's preferred approach is to identify possible alternative means of securing relevant information. Accordingly, the Government Statistical Service is currently undertaking research into whether or not needs could be met by alternative sources of data.
104. The Government will make final proposals on whether or not a question on income should be included in the 2001 Census once this research has been completed. The question (which is being included in the Census Rehearsal as a possible final Census question) is shown below:

**Possible income question**

**What is your total current gross income from all sources?**

- ◆ *Do not deduct* Tax, National Insurance, Superannuation or Health Insurance payments
- ◆ Tick the box that covers your income  
*Count all income*, including  
Earnings  
Pensions  
Benefits  
Interest from savings or investments  
Rent from property  
Other (for example maintenance payments, grants)

Per week	<i>or</i>	Per year (approximately)
Nil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nil
Less than £60	<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than £3,000
£60 to £119	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3,000 to £5,999
£120 to £199	<input type="checkbox"/>	£6,000 to £9,999
£200 to £299	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10,000 to £14,999
£300 to £479	<input type="checkbox"/>	£15,000 to £24,999
£480 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	£25,000 or more

### **Arrangements for communal establishments**

105. The Census will enumerate all people resident on Census night in communal establishments. Full particulars will be required of residents in **hospitals, nursing and residential homes, prisons, educational establishments and hotels, etc**, and statistics on these residents, separately identifying resident staff, will be prepared for each type of establishment. Such communal accommodation is becoming increasingly widely dispersed in small units, which are difficult to cover in sample surveys. The Census provides a comprehensive and authoritative count of the population living in such communal establishments which is not available from other sources.
106. Special arrangements will be made to enumerate residents in **prison service establishments**, on **ships** in ports and on **military camps**, and other population sub-groups not resident in private households, such as **persons sleeping rough**.
107. No information on people temporarily visiting a communal establishment on Census night, other than name, will be required to be recorded. If resident elsewhere in the United Kingdom, such visitors - as for visitors to households - will be required to provide full information on the census form to be completed at their usual address.

### **Review of social classifications**

108. The Office for National Statistics is responsible on behalf of the Government for the design and maintenance of two social classifications - Social Class based on occupation and Socio-Economic Group (SEG) - which have been widely used both in the census and elsewhere for many years. Despite their general acceptance and use across a range of government and non-government statistics, both classifications have been subject to some degree of criticism because of, for example, their lack of any explicit conceptual basis and for their failure to classify people not currently in employment. The need for a review of the classifications was accepted by the Secretary of State for Health in 1990, and it was against this background that, in 1994, the ONS (then the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys) commissioned the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to conduct such a review.
109. The ESRC's final report, presented to the ONS in May 1998 and accepted by the Government Statistical Service in June, was published in November 1998<sup>5</sup> and recommended that the single classification should take the form of a revised socio-economic classification, conceptually based on employment relations and conditions. The design of the new National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) is such that the classification may be collapsed one way into a smaller number of categories and in another way to approximate to the classifications used in the 1991 Census. The questions on occupation and employment to be included in the 2001 Census have been designed to produce information that is as compatible as possible with the requirements of the new NS-SEC.

## **Topics and features considered but not included in the Government's proposals**

### *Topics*

110. The Government considers that each topic included in the proposals for the 2001 Census satisfies the criteria set out in paragraph 26. A number of topics were considered but are not proposed for inclusion either because the case for them was not considered strong enough, or because tests showed that the quality of the information obtained from a census question would not be fit for purpose, or because the questions would place too great a burden on the public, or because of a combination of these reasons.
111. The topics which have been considered but are not included in the proposals covered questions on:
- age of dwelling;
  - value of the home;
  - type of tenancy agreement;
  - furnished accommodation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland;
  - access to a garden or yard;
  
  - nationality;
  - duration of residence in UK;
  - disability;
  - receipt of unpaid personal care;
  - a question on religion in Scotland;
  
  - Scots language;
  - taught languages;
  - main language used in the home;
  - the extension of the questions on the Welsh language in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland to the rest of the United Kingdom;
  - the means of travel to, and location of, place of education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland;
  
  - individual's access to car or van;
  - size of car;
  - number of miles travelled per year;
  - commuting address;
  - address five years before the Census;
  
  - term-time-address of former students one year before the Census;
  - duration of residence at current address;
  - private education, health insurance and pensions schemes;
  - health lifestyle;
  - number of current jobs;
  
  - professional qualifications in Scotland and Northern Ireland; and
  - closed (tick-box) questions on occupation group and industry.
112. The Census Offices carefully evaluated all the suggestions submitted. Some topics were rejected at an early stage in planning but many were subjected to both small- and large-scale testing. The Government is grateful to all those who made suggestions and regrets that it has not proved possible to include more of them.

### ***Full information on visitors***

113. The Government also considered whether it would be desirable to attempt to collect full information from those persons present at an enumerated address on Census night but who were not usually resident there (that is, visitors), as was done in the 1991 Census. As has been previously explained (see paragraphs 24 and 37), it is proposed that full information from visitors who are usually resident elsewhere in the UK will be required to be recorded on the form delivered to their usual address. This new procedure obviates the need to collect duplicate information on visitors at the address where they are present on Census night, thereby reducing the burden on the public and helping to eliminate the risk of double counting.

### ***Revised definition of a 'household'***

114. In the 1991 Census, enumerators were instructed to deliver a census form to each individual household being defined as: either *one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping*. For this purpose 'common housekeeping' was defined as: *sharing at least one meal a day or sharing a living room or sitting room*. The identification of some households proved difficult in the 1991 Census, particularly those living in multi-occupied dwellings (that is, in accommodation originally intended for occupation by one household but which has been subsequently occupied by more than one household). The 1991 Census Validation Survey<sup>6</sup> estimated that around 11 per cent of such households were not separately identified.
115. In an attempt to improve the coverage of these households in the 2001 Census, a revision to the definition of a 'household' was proposed. The proposed definition was: either *a person living alone (with his/her own cooking facilities)*, or *a group of people sharing a kitchen/cooking facilities*. The Census Offices believed that this approach would simplify the enumerators' task of identifying households at the form delivery stage and would result in improved counts of households and persons within them. However, there were mixed views expressed by users to the efficacy of such a change to the definition in such a basic concept as a 'household', particularly with the stated need to have data comparable with the 1991 Census and harmonised with other major surveys.
116. The Census Offices subsequently tested the definition in a small-scale test in June 1998. While there was some qualitative evidence that in areas with a preponderance of multi-occupied housing there was a better understanding of the simpler revised definition, the results, in terms of improved coverage, were inconclusive. As a result the Government proposes that the 1991 definition of a household should not be revised for the 2001 Census.

## IV CONFIDENTIALITY AND COMPUTER SECURITY

### Confidentiality principles

117. The Census collects information from each person and household in the country. But it is not concerned with facts about *individuals* as such. Its purpose is to provide facts about the community, and groups within the community, as a whole. The public has a right to expect that information provided in confidence will be respected. In previous censuses, assurances have been given to the public that all the information given will be treated in strict confidence by the Census Offices. Similar assurances will be given about the 2001 Census. There is a well established tradition of maintaining census confidentiality which the Government intends to uphold.
118. The information collected in the 2001 Census will be used solely for the production of statistics and research. Usage will comply fully with census legislation<sup>7</sup> and the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. There are legal penalties for the unlawful disclosure of personal census information.
119. The following additional principles will govern the treatment of the information given in the Census returns:
  - (i) Only persons under the management of the Registrars General, or agents acting on their behalf, will have access to personal census information.
  - (ii) In most cases one form will cover all members of the household and will be returned by post; but people will, if they wish, be able to give personal information on a separate form in a way that will not reveal it to others in their household or establishment, or to the enumerator (see paragraph 132).
  - (iii) All members of the census organisation and agents providing services to the Registrars General in connection with the Census Acts will be given strict instructions, and will be required to sign legal undertakings, about confidentiality. They will be liable to prosecution for any breaches of the law (see paragraph 130).
  - (iv) The physical security of census documents containing personal information held in the Census Offices, by field staff or by authorised agents will be strictly enforced.
  - (v) The computer systems handling census data will have strict safeguards to prevent unauthorised access to the information held.
  - (vi) In releasing statistics from the Census, all possible steps will be taken to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of information about identifiable individuals and households (see paragraph 120).

### **Statistical confidentiality**

120. Precautions will be taken so that published tabulations and abstracts of statistical data do not reveal any information about identifiable individuals or households. Special precautions may apply particularly to statistical output for small areas. Measures to ensure disclosure control will include some, or all, of the following procedures:
- restricting the number of output categories into which a variable may be classified, such as aggregated age groups;
  - where the number of people or households in an area falls below a minimum threshold, the statistical output - except for basic headcounts - will be amalgamated with that for a sufficiently large enough neighbouring area; and/or
  - randomly modifying some data before the statistics are released.

### **Public access to closed census records**

121. The Government has given careful consideration to many requests since the 1991 Census, from genealogists and others, to reduce the period of closure for census records to allow public access to more recent returns for the purpose of researching family histories. The period of closure in Great Britain is normally 100 years (specified, for England and Wales, by the Lord Chancellor's Instrument no. 12 (1966) under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958 and, for Scotland, by Ministerial statement in the House of Commons in 1974). While the Government recognises both the sociological and commercial value of historical census records, it considers that the strict confidentiality assurances given about present and future censuses would be seriously compromised if it were seen to be departing from the assurances given about censuses in the past. Public confidence in the security and confidentiality of the information given in the census is paramount. Consequently, it is not intended that the Government's plans to revise legislation relating to greater access to public records, set out in White Paper proposals for a Freedom of Information Act<sup>8</sup>, should affect the current period of closure for census records.
122. Records from the 1901 Census in Great Britain will become open to the public in January 2002.
123. Currently, under the terms of the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, census records in Northern Ireland remain permanently closed. However, consideration will be given to availing of a suitable legislative opportunity to introduce similar provisions as those in Great Britain.
124. There are, however, two circumstances in which the Government considers that information from a census return may be made available during the 100-year closure period. First, if a person is prosecuted under the Census Act 1920 or Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 for failing to return a properly completed form, the form may be produced as evidence in court.



125. Second, following concessions announced in the House of Commons over the period 1972-93, a limited amount of information on a person, from the 1901 and 1911 Censuses only in England and Wales, may, in certain circumstances and on the authority of the Registrar General, be released to that person (or, if the person has died, to his or her immediate relatives and descendants), to help establish a legal entitlement, such as an inheritance, or (from the 1901 Census only) for historical family research purposes. Similar provisions relating to inheritance apply in Scotland covering the censuses up to and including the 1931 Census there.

### **Review of confidentiality and computer security**

126. At the time of the 1991 Census, the confidentiality arrangements, so far as they related to data processing, were considered by the British Computer Society, who reported favourably<sup>9</sup> on the measures then in place in the Census Offices to protect the confidentiality of census data. The Census Offices will undertake a similar review, or reviews, of the confidentiality and security arrangements for the 2001 Census and will publish the outcome of such reviews before the Census.
127. The Office for National Statistics has in place an Information Systems Security Policy suitably stringent to protect data up to and including the 'Restricted' category. In line with this policy, detailed security measures were implemented for the processing of data for the 1997 Census Test, and these will be updated and in place for the Census Rehearsal in 1999 and the 2001 Census itself. Similar safeguards will be put into place for the other UK Census Offices in advance of the Census Rehearsal.

## **V THE CONDUCT OF THE CENSUS**

### **Introduction**

128. The Census will be conducted in a way that is both acceptable and helpful to the public and will attempt to achieve completeness of coverage with an efficient use of resources. Although the Census will be taken broadly in the traditional way, the Census Offices plan to introduce changes that will improve the efficiency of the census operation and will provide better help to the public. For example, the use of the Royal Mail to facilitate the return of completed forms by post will enable field staff resources to be deployed where necessary in order to improve coverage, particularly in metropolitan areas and other places where householders are difficult to contact. There will be continuous monitoring of the progress of the enumeration so that extra assistance can be quickly re-directed where necessary.

### **Temporary census staff**

129. A field force of some 90,000 temporary census staff will be employed. There will be a hierarchical management structure to this field force, headed by some 140 Census Area Managers employed for about a year before the Census and for about four months beyond. Each will be responsible for the enumeration of an area of about 500,000 people (fewer in less densely populated areas). They will have the responsibility of recruiting and training some 2,400 local managers - Census Officers - who will, in turn, recruit, train and supervise teams of Assistant Census Officers and Enumerators.
130. Temporary census staff will be expected to have the skills to deal with the public and to be able to handle the information that they collect with complete confidentiality. They will be required to sign an undertaking that they will not, without lawful authority, divulge or make use of any information acquired in the course of their duties. They will be liable on conviction under the terms of Census Acts to imprisonment or a fine, or both, for any contravention (see paragraph 119(iii)). Staff employed in the Census Offices are, as a condition of service, bound by the provisions of the Census Acts. It is particularly important to guard against inadvertent disclosure, and all staff will be warned against this. Efforts will be made to avoid, as far as possible, employing enumerators in areas where they are widely known.

### **Delivery and collection of census forms**

131. Enumerators will identify and visit every address and household in the country to deliver a census form before Census day. This gives the enumerator an opportunity to explain the Census to the householder, to answer any queries and to provide help if necessary. Households will be provided with a pre-addressed pre-paid envelope for the return of their completed form within a required time period. In cases where a completed form is not returned, an enumerator will call to collect it and to offer any assistance where necessary. In such circumstances, a householder who does not want the completed form to be seen by the enumerator may return it in a sealed envelope.

132. Similarly, any adult member of a household who does not wish other people in the household to see his or her answers to the questions may ask for a separate form and an envelope in which to seal it for return by mail. In these circumstances, the householder will be required to enter on the main household form only the name and relationship in the household of anyone making a separate return.
133. In hotels, hospitals, prisons, military establishments and similar communal establishments, a separate form will be issued to each resident. A supply of envelopes will be given to the manager or other person responsible for the enumeration of the establishment so that anyone who wishes to do so may make a return without disclosing it to the manager. This will apply equally to the resident staff of the establishment and other residents. The person in charge of the establishment will be responsible for issuing and collecting forms and for completing the form where an individual is unable to do so, as may be the case, for example, in hospitals.
134. In all cases the statutory obligation to make a return will not be discharged until a completed form is received by the Census Offices. Persons refusing to comply with the statutory requirement to complete a census return will be liable to prosecution and a fine, the maximum level of which is currently £1,000.

#### **Arrangements in Wales in respect of the Welsh Language Act**

135. The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which is responsible for carrying out the Census in Wales, will make arrangements to ensure that the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993 are met with respect to the enumeration in Wales. In particular, there will be an attempt to recruit members of the field force who are bilingual in English and Welsh, especially in areas with higher than average proportions of Welsh speakers. Furthermore, enumerators in Wales will offer a choice of English or Welsh language versions of the appropriate census forms. Bilingual versions of all publicity and information material will also be available.

#### **Planning enumeration districts**

136. Each enumerator will be responsible for delivering the Census forms in a clearly bounded local area. These 'enumeration districts' (EDs) will cover the country without overlap or omission of any area so that nowhere is missed, and the enumerator will visit every part of his or her district so that no building or household is missed. The definition and mapping of areas for enumeration is a most important preliminary to the Census, and is already well underway with the use of geographic information system (GIS) technology.

137. A system to plan EDs in England and Wales which is quite radically different from that used in the 1991 Census has been developed by ONS and was tested successfully during the 1997 Census Test. The Government proposes that it should be adopted for the 2001 Census. In summary the new system:
- uses Ordnance Survey ADDRESS-POINT and digital map data through a geographic information system (GIS);
  - produces output for use in the field in the form of a single simplified reference map sheet for each ED with pre-listed addresses; and
  - could produce digital ED boundaries if these were required as areas for output.
138. A similar system will be adopted in Scotland, automating the procedures used to plan EDs there in the 1991 Census, using the postcode as a building block for constructing EDs. Similarly in Northern Ireland, a planning system will be developed, utilising Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland digital map and Computerised Point Address Service data through a GIS.

### **Data quality**

139. Quality is at the heart of planning the 2001 Census and many of the things, which were trialled in the 1997 Census Test, were about improving the quality of census processes and, thus, the data. A census, by its nature, is designed to cover the whole population, but errors can arise. For example, enumerators may fail to identify all residential accommodation in an area or fail to identify all households within a dwelling; there is non-response bias when people do not complete a census form and when individual questions are unanswered; and there may also be system or processing errors. The improvements which are being introduced for the 2001 Census have been designed to minimise these errors; for example, the re-design of the census form will make it easier to complete and will enable new technology to be used to scan and capture automatically the data on to the database.
140. Non-response or under-enumeration is the most significant error. While the estimated overall undercoverage in the 1991 Census was small (2 per cent in Great Britain), of more significance was its variation across population sub-groups and different parts of the country. Census statistics are used, in particular, in the formulae to calculate the resources to be allocated from central to local government. It is important therefore that the Census accurately identifies the demographic and socio-economic indicators, which feed into this process.
141. In planning for the next census the goals are to maximise the overall level of quality of data and to minimise the differential in quality between groups of the population so that the information released satisfies users' needs. The Census Offices aim to develop a strategy for assuring the quality of the 2001 Census database before any release of output. This will include conducting a Census Quality Survey in May 1999 immediately subsequent to the fieldwork for the Census Rehearsal.

### *Census Coverage Survey*

142. A Census Coverage Survey (CCS) will be the key source of information on the extent and distribution of the census undercount. The CCS will be an independent sample survey to be carried out throughout the United Kingdom as soon as possible after the Census.
143. The survey will take the form of a short *voluntary* interview to check on the coverage of households and people within households, and to collect basic demographic characteristics (such as age, sex, marital status, ethnic group and economic activity). It is proposed that the information obtained from the survey will be used, in conjunction with the Census data itself, to help produce a consistent set of census-based counts, which will form the new base for the series of annual mid-year population estimates for local and health authorities. The Census Offices will consult and inform users on the methodological approaches adopted, and will assess and report on the quality of the data produced.

### **Outsourcing parts of the census operation**

144. The Census Offices have traditionally engaged the services of persons or agents, not part of the permanent staff of the Registrars General, to undertake parts of the census operation. As part of the drive to improve the cost-effectiveness of the Census, the Census Offices employed a firm of management consultants in 1994 to define a strategy in relation to the contracting out of some further aspects of census work. In their subsequent report the consultants identified three areas where they felt worthwhile savings might be made from outsourcing the work. These were :
  - the recruitment and pay of enumerators;
  - the coding of non-numeric data and the capture of census data in electronic format; and
  - the provision of computer services for processing and output systems.
145. The Census Offices assessed the recommendations and subsequently decided to test their viability as part of the planning towards the 2001 Census. Further investigation of the costs and risks associated with the outsourcing of the recruitment of enumerators indicated that there was some uncertainty as to whether or not real cost savings would accrue and that the risk to the census operation was unacceptable. The United Kingdom Census Committee (UKCC) thus concluded that recruitment procedures should remain the responsibility of the Census Offices. However, UKCC agreed with the recommendation that the administration of the payroll for the temporary field force of enumerators by an outside contractor was indeed viable, and a subsequent contractor to test such a system was appointed for the 1997 Census Test. Following the successful trial in this Test negotiations were conducted throughout 1998 with a view to awarding a contract for the Census Rehearsal and the 2001 Census itself.

146. Data capture and coding was also an area where the Census Offices accepted that there were opportunities to outsource the work. The 1997 Census Test provided an opportunity to test the concept of using automatic data capture and coding technology, involving scanning and image recognition techniques, as well as automatic and computer-assisted coding of write-in responses. It was concluded that such techniques for processing the 2001 Census were viable. Subsequently an Open Options Procurement project was initiated early in 1998 to find suitably qualified suppliers to provide processing and related services. Contracts to the successful suppliers were awarded in December 1998, allowing time for a system to be set in operation for the Census Rehearsal.
147. The printing of forms, and other supplies, and their delivery and secure collection, are also areas which are being tendered amongst outside suppliers. All contractors will be subject to the same statutory confidentiality requirements as apply to the Census Offices' own staff, and the conditions under which the contractors will work will be included in any confidentiality and security review (see paragraph 126).

### **Publicity and information about the Census**

148. The Government is fully conscious of the fact that, while every resident in the United Kingdom is obliged by law to make a census return, it would be impossible to carry out a Census without the willing co-operation of the public. The Census Offices will arrange publicity to explain the purpose of the Census, to encourage householders to return completed forms and to ensure that they know when and how to do so, to convey assurances about confidentiality, and to deal with other matters of public concern. The Census Offices will also continue their programme of providing information about the Census to the media and to users of the statistical results through regular information and consultation papers, by convening nationwide roadshows, by participating in conferences, seminars and workshops, through their own regular newsletter *Census News*, via the Internet, and through direct contacts.
149. The basis of good public relations will be to make sure that enumerators are briefed and trained to be as helpful as possible as they deliver the census forms, and that there is informative liaison with local community groups. An explanatory leaflet will be delivered with each census form and publicity will increase as Census day approaches. An enquiry unit with a telephone help-line will be available to answer queries from the public while the Census is being taken.
150. Special assistance will be available to anyone who has difficulty with the census form, particularly through language or infirmity. Enumerators speaking both English and other languages and/or interpreters will be recruited, where necessary, supported by translations of a general information leaflet in many of the prevalent ethnic minority languages.

## VI THE RESULTS OF THE CENSUS

### Introduction

151. The Government recognises that the investment of time and resources in a national census is only justified if the results are made accessible to users speedily and in a clear and usable form. The Government intends that technological developments should be harnessed in the 2001 Census in order to improve the accuracy, timeliness, accessibility and user-friendliness of published output.
152. In particular, the Government is introducing two major innovations. First, national and local results will be released concurrently so that comparisons between any part of the country, or sections of the population, can be made immediately. Second, the more detailed main results of the Census will be presented as reports to the respective legislatures in succinct printed form supplemented by data in electronic form and by commentaries. The Government intends that a responsive approach will be maintained throughout the period serviced by the 2001 Census to keep abreast of further changes in user requirements and technology.

### Processing the Census

153. The vast amount of information to be processed once the completed census forms have been returned, and the short time available to do it, has traditionally demanded the employment of a large temporary clerical staff and a computer processing system which has been fully tested to avoid errors, breakdowns and delays. As has been already described (see paragraph 146), the processing of the census data has been identified as an area where there are opportunities to outsource the work as part of the drive to improve the cost-effectiveness of the Census. The technological advances in scanning and image recognition techniques as well as automatic and computer-assisted coding, provided by outside suppliers, will offer new opportunities to streamline the capture and coding processes with a view to reducing staff and accommodation costs, while improving the speed of processing so that outputs can be delivered to a timetable that best meets users' needs.
154. These developments will enable statistics for *all* topics to be based on 100 per cent of returns, including data from the responses to those questions with write-in answers that have been traditionally hard to code and which, in previous censuses in Great Britain, have been processed from a sample of returns only.
155. The census forms will be checked, during processing, for errors and missing responses. Any such errors and omissions will be resolved before releasing output by utilising either other information on the same form or information from other forms. This procedure is widely considered to be a better solution than simply coding the responses as 'not stated'. Data about people or households entirely missed by the Census will be estimated from the Census Coverage Survey (see paragraphs 142-143). All estimates of missing data will be combined with the actual data collected in the Census to produce a consistent set of statistics that will be immediately fit for use.

## **Disseminating the results**

156. In disseminating the results of the Census much emphasis will be put on responsiveness to users and on high standards in the production of statistics. There will also be a vital need for co-ordination and consistency in the presentation of statistics where policy responsibilities have been devolved to the Scottish Parliament and to the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies. The Director of the ONS, in his role as Head of the Government Statistical Service, will have the responsibility to fulfil UK obligations to provide results of the Census to the European Union.
157. There are two ways of making the results of a census available under present census legislation: (a) as printed reports that are laid before Parliament and sold as publications; and (b) as statistical abstracts which may be obtained, on request and for a charge, from the Census Offices. As a result of planned devolution, the Registrars General for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland will be required to present the results from the 2001 Census in reports to their respective legislatures. (The Census in Wales will not, under the terms of the Government in Wales Act be devolved to the Welsh Assembly (see paragraph 177), thus reports on the Census in Wales will continue to be presented to the Parliament in Westminster under the terms of the Census Act 1920.) There will be no statutory requirement to present such reports for Great Britain or the UK as a whole, but the Government envisages that the results for Great Britain and the UK should be made available, where the data collected permits, as a priority once the processing of the data has been completed.
158. The Government proposes that such reports should be in a form to meet the changing requirements of users. There would be national, regional and local authority summaries, and reports on key findings on particular topics, supplemented by information in electronic form comprising either detailed results in a standard form for areas down to the more local geographic levels, or more detailed statistics on particular topics. These supplements would be easy to access on personal computers so that single counts may be readily obtained or sophisticated analyses carried out.
159. The main national and local results will be released, to a pre-announced timetable, as speedily as possible over a short period of time - in effect, concurrently - once processing is completed and the total population of the country has been determined. Concurrent release will be made possible by exhaustive testing of output production systems in advance, by significant reduction in the volume of printed reports compared with the 1991 Census, and by the use of high capacity electronic media, such as compact disc, to distribute supplements. Charges will be set to make access to the results affordable to all types of users, and there will be a print-on-demand service to supply any of the material in the supplements to users who prefer paper copies.
160. The Government will also fulfil its requirement to provide the European Union with results from the 2001 Census in the form of a set of pre-specified statistical tables by the end of 2003.



161. Concurrent release would ensure that comprehensive results are promptly available for use in the systems for financing local government and the health service, and would also provide users with the ability to compare immediately any part of the country or sector of the population with any other.
162. The Census Offices will develop simple, cost-effective and rapid systems and procedures for users to request and pay for statistical abstracts. The service for such commissioned output will become available as soon as the main results are released. Such output will add considerably to the value of the Census, and is expected to provide some of the more specialised results previously included in the reports and to allow results to be provided for geographic areas not included in the reports.
163. Consideration will be given to providing an on-line service for the request and supply of tabulations, and for making available samples of anonymised records (SARs) of people and households so that users may carry out their own analyses that are not possible using aggregate data. Such availability will be subject to the overriding need to ensure complete confidentiality of personal data. The availability of such samples was a major, and successful, innovation of the 1991 Census. Furthermore, the Government proposes to extend the ONS Longitudinal Study (LS) by adding data from the 2001 Census for England and Wales to those records already included from the 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses. The LS is covered by the same rigorous confidentiality conditions as the Census itself, and the database will be held securely within the ONS, with access strictly controlled.
164. Products will be developed which will allow statistical and geographical information to be delivered together for geographical information systems with as much flexibility as possible commensurate with assurances on confidentiality. Consultation with users and the development of options will continue until nearer the time when results are delivered.
165. There will be arrangements for licensed use of output on a royalty basis by third parties to provide value-added products to complement those of the Census Offices. The Government intends that there should be agreement between ONS and Ordnance Survey to enable statistical output of the Census for England and Wales to be linked with the boundaries of the geographical areas to which it relates, in digital form, for use in geographical information systems, if possible by combining statistical and geographical information in single value-added products. Similar arrangements will be made, where appropriate, in Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the intention is to use, and disseminate statistics for, post-code based output areas (as in the 1991 Census).
166. The greatest care will be exercised to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of information about identifiable individuals through the statistical results of the Census. To protect confidentiality, various statistical measures will be applied (see paragraph 120).

## VII THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

### Primary census legislation

167. The primary legislation that provides for the taking of a census in Great Britain is the Census Act 1920; in Northern Ireland the corresponding legislation is the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969. Under the current terms of these Acts, Orders in Council, which may prescribe:

- the date on which the census is to be taken;
- the persons by whom and with respect to whom the census returns are to be made; and
- the particulars to be stated in the returns,

are required to be approved by both Houses of Parliament.

168. The Schedule to the Census Act 1920 authorises the inclusion, in the Censuses for Great Britain, of the following matters in respect of which particulars may be required:

- (1) Names, sex, age;
- (2) Occupation, profession, trade or employment;
- (3) Nationality, birthplace, race, language;
- (4) Place of abode and character of dwelling; and
- (5) Condition as to marriage, relation to head of family, issue born in marriage.

169. In addition to these topics, the Schedule to the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 specifies that particulars may also be asked in Northern Ireland on:

- (6) Education, professional and technical qualifications; and
- (7) Religion.

170. The inclusion in the Census in either Great Britain or Northern Ireland of questions on other topics which are:

- (8) Any other matters with respect to which it is desirable to obtain statistical information with a view to ascertaining the social or civil condition of the population,

is also permitted under a further paragraph of the Schedule to both Acts.

### Scottish devolution and the Belfast Agreement

171. Under the terms of the Census Act 1920, the Registrar General for Scotland is responsible for taking the Census in Scotland. As a result of devolution it will be for the Scottish Parliament to approve separate subordinate legislation relating to the specific arrangements for the Census in Scotland.

172. The Registrar General for Northern Ireland is similarly responsible for making arrangements for taking the Census in Northern Ireland. It is proposed that the necessary subordinate legislation relating to the arrangements for the Census in Northern Ireland will be made by the local administration.

### **Census Orders and Regulations**

173. Following the completion and evaluation of the Census Rehearsal, the UK Government will prepare a draft Order in Council in respect of the Census in England and Wales, towards the end of 1999, for approval by both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the Census Act 1920. The Order will prescribe the details set out in paragraph 167.
174. At a later stage (around March 2000), the Chancellor of the Exchequer will lay before Parliament, Census Regulations, which will make detailed provision for the conduct of the Census in England and Wales and will contain specimens of the forms to be used.
175. It is envisaged that the local administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland will wish to make similar arrangements with their respective legislatures for the conduct of the Censuses there.

### **Inclusion of a question on religion in England and Wales**

176. The proposal described at paragraphs 64-65 to include a question on religion in England and Wales in the 2001 Census would require a change to the primary legislation, since the Schedule to Census Act 1920 does not, as currently worded, permit such a question to be asked. Such an amendment would be necessary before a question on religion could be specified in the subsequent Order in Council for England and Wales. Before deciding whether to take such a step however, the Government would want to be satisfied that the inclusion of such a question in a census commanded the necessary support of the general public.

### **Welsh devolution**

177. Under the terms of the Census Act 1920, the Registrar General for England and Wales has responsibility for conducting the Census in Wales. Authority for conducting the Census in Wales is not, under the terms of the Order in Council made under the Government in Wales Act 1998, to be devolved to the National Assembly for Wales. Thus the same procedures will apply for making an Order in Council and Regulations jointly applicable to the Census in both England and Wales, as in previous censuses. The Registrar General for England and Wales recognises the importance of gaining the support of the Welsh Assembly for the arrangements for the 2001 Census in Wales and will ensure that the Welsh Assembly is fully informed of all such arrangements.

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- 7 The statutes under which the Census is taken - the *Census Act 1920* in Great Britain, and the *Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969* - ensure confidentiality in two ways. First, under the Acts, the results of the Census may only be used for either: (a) compiling into statistical reports laid before Parliament, or, at the discretion of the Registrars General, into other statistical abstracts, under Section 4 of the Acts; or (b) the preparation of statistics in respect of periods between one census and another, under Section 5 of the Acts. Second, the Acts (as amended by the *Census (Confidentiality) Act 1991* and the *Census (Confidentiality) (Northern Ireland) Order 1991*) provide legal penalties for unlawful disclosure of census information.
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