



Consultation document

The 2011 Census:

Initial View on Content for England and Wales

- Second Residences

Second Residences in the UK

1. Introduction

Living arrangements in the UK have become more complex in recent years, with a number of issues contributing to an increase in the number of people in the UK who have second residences:

- A larger number of divorces has increased the number of children whose parents live at separate addresses, and in many cases the children divide their time between the two homes.
- Employment patterns have given rise to alternative living arrangements such as a household member living away from the household for part of the week, or a sustained period of time. This person therefore has two residential addresses.
- There are a large number of people in residential homes who have a partner in a private residence. These people are often recorded as living at their partner's residence as well as at the residential home.
- Many elderly people spend large parts of the year living abroad, dividing their time between their home in the UK and their home abroad.
- International commuting is on the increase, resulting in people working in other countries for periods of time.

It is important to understand the issues surrounding multiple residences so that the planning of services for areas with large fluctuations in populations, such as commuter areas and holiday destinations, can be carried out effectively. With an increasing number of people being associated with more than one address there is an emerging requirement to include additional questions about residence patterns on the 2011 Census questionnaire.

Such questions would not only enable us to find out about the incidence and location of second homes across the UK, but would also support the enumeration of people with complex living arrangements.

The issue of second residences is also discussed in the paper *Socio-Demographic Context of the 2011 Census*, available on the National Statistics web-site:

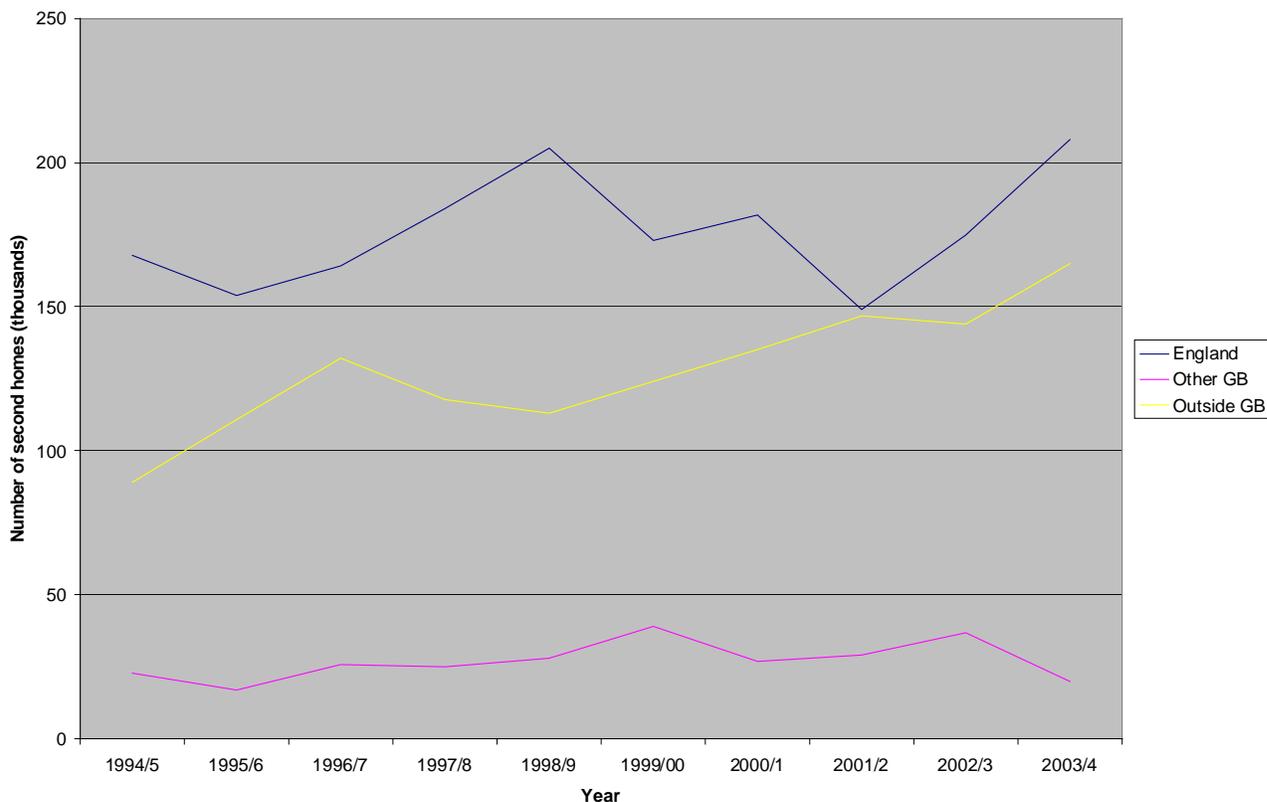
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/downloads/2011Census_consultation_social_context.pdf

2. Research

Data on second homes are available from a number of sources including the Survey of English Housing (SEH), the Omnibus Survey, Council Tax data and the Census. Recent data show that approximately 1 per cent of homes in the UK are second residences. Although this is only a small percentage overall, the proportion of second homes in some Local Authorities (LAs) is significant. Second homes make up around 10 per cent of households in several LAs, with some having as many as 26 per cent second homes.

The plot below shows how the number of second homes owned by households in England has changed between 1994 and 2004, based on the findings from the Survey of English Housing (SEH). It can be seen that there is an increasing trend in second home ownership, both in England and outside Great Britain, although there is considerable fluctuation. If this increasing trend continues, there will be a significant proportion of second homes in the UK in 2011.

The numbers of second homes owned, 1994-2004



Findings from the SEH show that approximately 50 per cent of second residences in the UK are holiday homes, and residences for people working away from their main home make up another 20 per cent. Areas with a lot of holiday homes will have large seasonal fluctuations in their population, and commuter areas will have a larger population during the week than at weekends.

Data from the Omnibus Survey gives slightly different results, with 'as an investment' being the main reason given for owning a second home. However, the definition of second homes used in this survey includes homes that are the main residence of somebody else. Such properties were not included in the SEH, which can explain the difference between the two sets of results.

Although we know that there are children of divorced parents who split their time between two addresses, and people in residential homes who may also have an address at a private residence, there is currently no information available on the numbers or location of these people and properties.

3. Conclusions

It is clear that the issue of multiple residences is important, particularly in certain LAs. Additional residency questions on the Census questionnaire would provide valuable information to service providers about areas which have fluctuating populations due to large numbers of second homes. Therefore, information on

additional addresses of respondents is being considered for collection by the 2011. Suggested additional questions are whether a person lives at another address for part of the year, and if so, what this address is, what the address is used for, and the amount of time spent at this address.

Information gathered from additional residency questions would not only give a better understanding of the complex living arrangements in the UK for service providers, but would also provide a better understanding of the coverage of the 2011 Census. This applies to both under-coverage and over-coverage. People with second homes can be hard to count because if they spend long periods of time at their second home, this reduces the probability that contact will be made with them at their main residence. However, it is also possible that people with second homes may be counted at both of their addresses, resulting in an overcount.

Additional residency questions and definitions would also support the enumeration of people with complex living arrangements. It would be easier for people with multiple residences to identify which address is their usual residence, enabling accurate information on both usual and second residence to be recorded.

The lack of data on children and elderly people with more than one residence means that these important and increasing populations are not well understood at present. There is therefore a good case for attempting to collect such information in the 2011 Census if it is possible to do so.

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