

CENSUS ADVISORY GROUP

AG (09) 09

Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion (EILR) classifications, derived variables and outputs

Summary

This note is to alert Census Advisory Group members that they will have the opportunity to comment, by email, on ONS's proposals for ethnic group, national identity, language and religion classifications, derived variables and outputs for the 2011 England and Wales census.

Background

Tick and write-in responses to census questions are processed using a number of rules to produce data suitable for analysis. For example **coding** corrects erroneous responses (e.g. counting second tick of two ticks in the same heading of ethnic group question). It also captures simplified information about what boxes are ticked and/or what information is written in. **Indexes** list likely write-in responses and link each one to a **classification**, often with several variations listed for each classification. For example the religion index lists 'Catholic', 'Roman Catholic' and 'R/C' all as variations of the 'Catholic' classification.¹

Derived variables allow two or more data (from either the same question or from several questions) to be combined to produce a third datum that can be used in tabulation. For example if a person's ethnic group is 'Indian' and their religious affiliation is 'Hindu' we could combine this to produce a data set of 'Hindu Indians' that could be used to produce a table of ethno-religious group by health status.

After 2011, ONS will use derived variables to produce a number of key tables in its **standard outputs** although as with the 2001 Census other tables may be commissioned on request²

Review process for 2011

In 2009, ONS will be looking at:

- revising the EILR indexes and classifications already agreed for 2009 Census Rehearsal in time for the 2011 Census (the language and national identity

¹ Other rules are being considered outside of this exercise:

- **Editing** uses one piece of data within a person's record to check, and sometimes correct, another piece
- **Filtering** removes data from questions that should not have been answered (e.g. English proficiency shouldn't be recorded if main language is English)
- **Imputation** deals with missing or irresolvable answers or missing people

² See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/get-data/guide-data/index.html> Not all derived variables will be published as standard and may only be available in commissioned tables. All outputs will be subject to disclosure controls

classifications are new but the ethnic group and religion classifications are as used in 2001)

- developing derived variables (including cross-question derived variables such as ethnicity/ national identity, ethnicity/ language and ethnicity/ religion)
- what standard outputs will meet user needs

ONS will consult on these as part of our output consultation later in 2009³ but prior to this, we will work with key stakeholders (including the Census Advisory Groups by email) over the summer 2009 to produce proposals that will then be consulted on. Our aim is that the proposals will:

- Improve ability of census to measure society and meeting user needs and fitting with how people self identify
- be usable across UK
- be usable in surveys
- allow comparability between 2001 and 2011
- meet actions agreed in EILR Equality Impact Assessment to address the fact that some groups will not have pre-designated tick boxes (see Annex A)

Annex A: Actions in EILR equality impact assessment relevant to this paper

1.4 Census outputs determine which minority groups should have full Census Outputs produced by winter 09

5.1 Census Outputs to consult with relevant community groups and with EILR Academic Advisory group and NSWGEI Autumn 08-Autumn 09

5.2 Census Outputs to formulate draft policy on how the written in answers will be output, including what range of outputs will be produced based on the written answers Winter 09

5.3 Census Outputs to conduct EIA on all census outputs content decisions Winter 09

5.4 Census Outputs to publish policy Spring '10

17.3 Statistical Design to consult key users about what level of detail of language they need coding for

For full Equality Impact Assessment see: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/collecting-info/dev-questionnaires/index.html>

³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/produce-deliver-data/index.html>