

## CENSUS ADVISORY GROUP

AG (12) 01- 2011 Census Highlight report  
Spring 2012

### 2011 Census Highlight Report

#### Summary

This highlight report describes progress for the following topics, not covered on the agenda items:

1. **Headline messages**
2. **Data processing and quality objectives**
3. **Update on census analysis project**
4. **2011 Census benefits realisation management overview**
5. **Spring Roadshows**

#### 1. Headline messages

- We are confident that we have met our response rate targets – 94% for England and Wales overall; and at least 80% in every local authority area
- We did achieve our target of a 90% response rate in the census coverage survey.
- Online completion rates at regional, local authority, ward, lower super output area and output area geographies were recently published on the ONS website
- We plan to publish further information on the usage of support for languages and accessibility, shortly.
- The Manchester census processing centre is now being decommissioned and all the data has been captured and coded and put on microfilm. Shredding and pulping of 2000 tonnes of questionnaires is underway.
- We are confident about the quality of the data collected and processed and expect to meet our quality objectives.
- Almost 200 completed prosecutions to date for non completion of questionnaire
- The coverage assessment and adjustment, and quality assurance of the census population estimates is progressing well, indicating that the 2011 Census design methodology has been successful
- The census outputs prospectus will be published by the end of March
- We are on schedule to produce the first census release in July

- Development of the new online tools and functionality to enhance user access to ONS data is well underway and we welcome your feedback and encourage your involvement in the user testing

## **2. Data processing and quality objectives**

Processing of the census results continues, with good progress being made. All the data have been captured and coded and put on microfilm. Work has started on the shredding and pulping of the questionnaires. Currently we are working through the later stages of processing, including finishing estimation and adjustment for those people missed in the census. Work is continuing to quality assure the census population estimates. They are rigorously checked to identify, resolve and/or explain any anomalies. These later stages are critical to ensure that the census population estimates are robust and fit for purpose.

Processing is going well. We have of course encountered challenges over the last nine months. This is to be expected given the size and complexity of the operation. The processes we had in place have ensured effective resolution.

We remain confident about the quality of the data collected and processed and we:

- have exceeded our targets for the accuracy of capture and coding from the census questionnaires
- expect to meet our quality objectives with respect to the level of item non-response. Item non-response rates remain low for the vast majority of questions, including new questions, and are lower than for 2001
- are confident that we will meet our response rate target of 94% overall and above 80% in all local authorities

The coverage assessment and adjustment and quality assurance of the census population estimates is progressing very well. In the overwhelming majority of areas processed so far, the evidence suggests that the improvements made to the design have been successful. Specifically:

- the address register worked well to underpin the operation and is providing a rich source for the estimation and quality assurance processes
- the fieldwork design, particularly allocating more effort in the harder to enumerate areas to reduce variability, was highly successful, with no significant gaps in enumeration and reduced variability in response rates across the country;
- the sound coverage assessment and adjustment methods we developed are being successfully employed and are working well.

We are also thinking ahead to the scheduled first release of census population estimates in July. The material to be published in July has been developed to provide users with the relevant material to understand their census estimates and have confidence in the results. As well as the census population estimates for each local authority, additional material will also be provided for each local authority covering:

- census population estimates and their comparator (aggregated) sources, such as the school census, patient register and DWP's customer information system (CIS) pensions and child benefit data
- a summary of the census population estimate, the census count, response rates and confidence intervals

- the relevant components for each census population estimate, including the count, the amount added by coverage assessment and adjustment, plus any other necessary adjustments

To help users understand the material, we are considering running a series of tutorials ahead of the publication of the results, similar to the sessions run in November 2010. It is intended that there would be about 4 tutorials, to be held in the second half of June. These are aimed at users, to help them understand and have confidence in how the estimates were constructed and how the quality assurance process was undertaken. The session would provide clear and simple explanations with anonymised examples covering:

- the coverage assessment and adjustment process
- the different components used to construct their estimate
- the quality assurance process

**Action:** Advisory group members are asked to comment on the value of running the tutorial sessions and provide suggestions on content that users would find helpful.

### **3. Update on Census Analysis project**

The ONS is carrying out a census analysis work programme to provide users with a planned and coordinated work plan to contribute to the production of timely analysis that meets user needs. This requires a coordinated approach across ONS, other governments departments, local government and external researchers & academics. This work programme will deliver a series of analytical products and develop and maintain an analytical centre for the census.

#### **Developing the ONS census analytical work programme**

ONS has consulted with users including, government departments, local government and academic & research organisations, to seek their feedback. As well as identifying topics to be covered by the analytical programme, user views will inform on the type of products produced and when they are needed. For example, a series of short stories on some of the key topics will be published on the ONS website following the second release of 2011 Census statistics. ONS will be delivering a rolling programme of analytical products that includes further short stories, themed papers and compendiums. The ONS analysis will be supplemented by other forms of media such as visualisations and podcasts.

The development of the work programme continues and the short term aim will be to provide initial plans by topic area for consideration by key users. High level analysis plans will be included in the census outputs prospectus, followed by further updates as information becomes available.

#### **The Analytical Centre for the Census and links with census analysis produced externally to ONS**

The ONS census analysis work programme is not solely about identifying analysis to be produced by ONS. A key aim is to link and coordinate with other government departments, local government and academic & research organisations. This work will play a key role in developing a census analysis work programme that is coordinated across all of the UK and be beneficial for the users of census data. The development of an analytical centre for the census (ACC) will be a key tool for helping us to achieve

this goal. The development of the ACC is still at the scoping and defining stage, but some suggestions about what the centre might provide include:

- a news section and a plan of scheduled work to be produced by both ONS, other government departments, local government and academics / researchers
- a facility to access internal and external analysis (split into appropriate categories). ONS products could be supplemented by visualisations and social media, while other products produced externally to ONS could include a synopsis and a link
- guidance and best practice (including some templates to ensure that ONS products are branded)
- access to a discussion forum

In order for the ACC to work and deliver on its aims, it is imperative that users 'buy-in' to the ideas expressed and have a mechanism for their analysis to be included in a timetable and then ultimately as a link. To ensure that this happens, ONS is currently liaising with a number of key organisations. Early discussions have proved extremely useful and the ideas of the ACC have been welcomed.

#### **4. 2011 Census Benefits Realisation Management Overview**

The benefits of the census are significant but will only be realised when users make use of the published outputs. For users to use the outputs they must be accurate, accessible and timely, and users must have confidence in them.

The 2011 Census programme is actively working to help ensure that the benefits of the census are realised.

The benefits realisation work has been broadly split into three main strands of activity:

- quality target monitoring
- exploitation of census outputs; and
- benefit realisation quantification and monitoring

The first strand of activity helps to ensure that the programme objectives are met and ultimately delivers the best possible benefits of the 2011 Census in England and Wales. The second helps to make sure that the benefits are realised by working with census users in the public, private and voluntary sectors to encourage the exploitation of census results. The third is about cataloguing the uses of the results, preparing case studies and aiming to place an economic value on the range of uses of data, in liaison with users.

#### **Benefit realisation quantification and monitoring**

At the end of the programme we will want to show that the benefits have been realised to the extent that the original business case set out. This means aiming to place an economic value on the range of uses of data. We will also be looking at other indicators that demonstrate the outputs are perceived as positive by stakeholders such as, user satisfaction surveys, media coverage, hits on websites and page impressions.

Work is needed to track the benefits to make sure they are realised. This requires us to identify benefit realisation owners across the user community and look to persuade them to provide evidence of the way they use the data, key dates on which it must be available etc that helps us quantify the benefit.

The business case primarily focused on the benefits of using the outputs for resource allocation by Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) and Department for Health (DH). We have had encouraging early discussions with the DCLG and DH to work in partnership to quantify the benefit of using census data. Further work is required to identify when census data are needed across departments for resource allocation.

Work is also being planned to address the quantification of uses of the census that have not been quantified previously.

## **5. Spring Roadshows**

ONS are running a series of roadshows throughout England and Wales, to bring stakeholders and user up to date on both the 2011 Census and plans for the dissemination of the census outputs.

The response has been fantastic and we are exploring the possibility of running a further event in London.