

RESPONDENT: 2824122506 – Ali Negyal
SECTOR: Unknown - Individual

Q1 - What are your views of the different census approaches described in the consultation document?

The current system may be expensive, but it is successful, with a long proven track record. A great historical resource would be lost if we discontinued the current census scheme. From my work in local government, I am aware that many existing administrative records quickly go out of date - moving to an administrative exercise rather than a census will invariably entail loss of data quality. It will be difficult - if not impossible - to correct for this, given the variability of data capture systems and quality checking procedures across different departments and services. Bear in mind that individuals have the option of non-disclosure with many services (e.g. people need not register with a GP) and that duplication is not uncommon (e.g. people with second homes).

Q2 - Please specify any significant uses of population and housing statistics that we have not already identified.

Planning for homelessness provision.

Q3 - Please specify any significant additional benefits of population and housing statistics that we have not already identified.

Q4 - What would the impact be if the most detailed statistics for very small geographic areas and small population groups were no longer available? High, medium, low or no impact?

High

If medium or high, please give further information.

Very small minorities will lose out on focused service provision. Consider the impact of this in a borough such as Tower Hamlets. Targeted service provision is a lifeline to isolated communities where English is not spoken as a first language, or indeed fluently. Small communities can often have different health vulnerabilities, due to genetic variability. I would expect medical research to advance on this front in a matter of decades, if not years.

Q5 - What would the additional benefit be if more frequent (i.e. annual) statistics about population characteristics were available for areas like local authorities and electoral wards? High, medium, low or no additional benefit?

High

If medium or high please give further information.

Health benefits (see previous section), community cohesion service provision and planning.

Q6 - Please specify any significant uses of census information for historical research that we have not already identified.

Multivariate statistical analysis (analysing data among many dimensions to identify interesting correlations that would not otherwise emerge), e.g. using the software package SIMCA-P.

Q7 - What advantages or disadvantages for genealogical or historical research can you see from a move to a solution based on archiving administrative data sources?

I see none. Self-disclosure on a census form is unparalleled in data quality. Why seek to piece together data from a secondary source (e.g. the records my NHS nurse holds on me) rather than directly from me? My NHS surgery told me in a letter in 2011 that I was of Bengali origin - this was news to me! (I have no Bengali ancestry). My brother's NHS surgery informed him in writing that I had deceased - again this was plainly wrong, and bewildering. I can give numerous examples of information mismanagement just from my immediate family.

Q8 - What are your views of the risks of each census approach and how they might be managed?

The risk with the current census approach is that people do not understand its importance, so they need to be chased up to complete it, which is expensive. This can be improved with better publicity information. I am a literate and educated person (two degrees from Cambridge), yet I found the Census publicity material turgid, lifeless and inaccessible. The proposed alternative version will cause mistrust among citizens. I do not expect my data held by Council Tax officers, say, to be analysed in a systematic way to draw inferences about how my life is arranged, when I can plainly give this information myself, accurately, as the system presently stands.

Q9 - Are there any other issues that you believe we should be taking into account?