

RESPONDENT: 2965325453 – D B Rayner
SECTOR: Unknown - Individual

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

The decennial census should be retained but with fewer questions: - Fewer questions and fewer pages will probably improve response rate, particularly online (the online 2011 census was a daunting prospect). - Increase the publicity, encouragement and support for online completion (and tell people that it can be done in stages if they prefer). - Make sure that forms and web pages are really accessible - ensure that all the questions are in black text on white and keep the 73 shades of green (or whatever) a narrow header/footer and that there is a small range of alternative formats available. - As in 2011, some other language formats are important but don't go overboard - having lots of different languages on the first page or covering letter can be very confusing for some people. - Emphasise and re-emphasise confidentiality. An increasing number of people are unwilling to reveal personal or employment details due to being in complicated relationships; they need reassurance that individual data is secure for 100 years. Large annual compulsory surveys: - Likely to increase public resistance towards 'big brother'. - May cause response rates to fall further. - Relatively small year-on-year changes may lead to local/national government or the media over-reacting, especially on immigration/ethnicity-related issues

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

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.

Likely to lead to some groups becoming even more excluded from society than now.

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?

Medium

If medium or high please give further information.

Could lead to more rapid response to changing population demographic (maternity/child care, schools, elder care, etc) BUT could also lead to national/local government being driven by a spiral of changing data: more administration, unnecessary (or inappropriate) changes to provision, and poor value for the tax-payer

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

Purely statistical data will not tell the story of our shared past: - Looking at individuals, family groups and neighbours reveals much about society and a location in time - The effect of some legislative changes can only be properly understood by looking at what happens to individuals; this helps to inform the development of future policy - For people distanced from their families (family breakdown, adoption, desertion, etc) census information helps them to come to terms with who they are and to pass that on to future generations

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?

Ready access to broad-brush impressions of certain localities, age groups, ethnic groups etc

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

see previous responses

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