

RESPONDENT: 2834445253 – Francis O'Reilly
SECTOR: Unknown - Individual

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

An online census seriously discriminates against those who are not computer-literate or do not have access to computers. A census based on administrative data is bound to be unreliable. Not clear how large annual surveys could be compulsory.

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.

Apart from academic research and the maintenance of local archives, it is important to have local statistics for local planning.

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.

It would clearly enable local authorities to monitor changes and plan with greater precision, eg with respect to school places, housing, community affairs.

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

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?

The benefit would be obvious to researchers but it depends on the manner of archiving...whether just online or also in hard copy where all scholars can access them.

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

As said, an online census does not give a complete view of the whole population, only those with online access. There are always risks of people's personal data online being hacked into and damaged. This will make many people reluctant to use this system. As far as the use of existing administrative data is concerned, this would seem to be non-invasive, as most people would be unaware of their data being accessed, but the scope for error is enormous as data from various admin bodies is shared and amalgamated. It is also compounding errors that are already in the system, including obsolete and patchy information.

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

issues of cost of the exercise