

RESPONDENT: 2880014732 – Tony Proctor
SECTOR: Unknown - Individual

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

For the usage I currently have, the information would have to be detailed (rather than statistical) and apply to every person - whether in isolated areas or not. Online methods will be cheaper but possibly more open to avoidance unless careful thought is given to it. Would every household be given the chance to select the online or paper route prior to census night?

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?

If medium or high, please give further information.

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?

If medium or high please give further information.

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

You have identified genealogical research (which by its nature requires detailed data) and sociological history (which is more analytical). However, the general class of 'local history', also referred to as micro-history, is not catered for. If the data is structured appropriately then it would be possible for later generations to reconstruct some of our local history from the census data. This is different from the history of a specific families since it includes all people and the place itself, and yet it isn't a mere statistical description either. In addition to the fields identified as valuable to genealogists, I would also include 'years married', 'children total', and 'children living' (similar to 1911). However, in order to better support micro-history, which is more about people, their lives, and their locality, it would be nice to allow the respondent to freely offer up informal details such as maiden names, names of deceased children, previous addresses/occupations/marriages, special roles within the community. etc. This might only be practical in the online census but it could be an optional "time capsule" contribution.

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?

Administrative sources are probably more useful from a statistical point of view. I cannot see certain data about individuals being preserved for 100 years and beyond (e.g. medical, tax). Also, the total volume of data would be enormous and so unlikely to be preserved in enough detail even when sensitivity wasn't so much of an issue. Data such as electoral registers and school administration records would be useful to genealogists, although the latter [the few that were preserved] have recently been put under the 100-year restriction which I believe is wrong.

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

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