

The Census and Future Provision of Population Statistics in England and Wales: Report on the Public Consultation

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Executive summary

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has conducted a review of the census and the future provision of population statistics in England and Wales. The last part of this process was a major public consultation, which proposed two approaches to census taking in England and Wales in future:

- once a decade, like that conducted in 2011, but primarily online
- using existing government data and compulsory annual surveys

Both approaches would provide statistics about the size of the population, nationally and for local authorities. A census using existing data and surveys would provide more frequent statistics about the main characteristics of the population, while an online census would provide more detailed statistics once a decade.

The consultation ran for 12 weeks from 23 September to 13 December 2013. There were over 700 responses to the consultation, 444 from individuals and 271 from organisations. More than 500 people attended events held in support of the consultation. ONS would like to thank users for the evident time and care given to their responses.

A list of all the organisations and individuals who responded to the consultation is provided at Appendix B, and the responses to the [consultation are published online](#). Many organisational responses included collated responses from several bodies or individuals.

Whilst respondents varied in their views, there were some consistent key messages. In particular:

- there was continuing demand from government, local authorities, public bodies, business, the voluntary sector and individual citizens for detailed information about small areas and small populations offered by the decennial census, whether online or paper-based;
- there was a strong concern that the proposed use of an annual survey of 4 per cent of households (to support the use of existing administrative data) would not meet these needs, nor deliver the required small area and small population statistics offered by the decennial census;
- the more frequent statistics that could be provided between censuses by the use of administrative data and annual surveys would be welcomed, but not at the expense of the detailed statistics;
- whilst the methods using administrative data and surveys show considerable potential, there was concern that these were not yet mature enough to replace the decennial census;
- many respondents proposed a hybrid approach, making the best of both approaches, with an online census in 2021 enhanced by administrative data and household surveys.

This consultation report outlines the main points raised, illustrated by quotes from respondents. A brief summary of the main points is provided below.

Quality of statistical outputs

- The potential for increased frequency of outputs from the administrative data and surveys approach was welcomed by many respondents. On a scale of 'low', 'medium' or 'high', 75 per cent of organisations and 51 per cent of individuals responding rated the benefits of more frequent statistics as high or medium.
- Other positive aspects of the administrative data and surveys approach identified by respondents included the potential for increased accuracy of annual population estimates, more detailed annual statistics and its potential to mitigate the impact of falling response rates to censuses and surveys.
- However the increased frequency would not compensate for the loss of small population and small area data traditionally provided by the decennial census. Over 80 per cent of organisations and over 60 per cent of individuals stated that the loss of small area data would have a high impact on their work.
- There was strong concern expressed that the proposed 4 per cent survey would not meet user needs for data about very small areas and populations.
- Other statistical quality issues raised in support of the online census approach included the continuity of the 200 year time series of census population statistics and the related ability to track changes in society through time on a consistent and comparable basis.
- Some concerns were expressed about the timeliness of census outputs, in particular that the first outputs are not published for more than a year after census day and the most detailed outputs take two to three years.

The feasibility and costs of the online and administrative data approaches

- There was general recognition that ONS is experienced in decennial census operations and that ONS is capable of managing the transition to a predominantly online census. Around 90 per cent of respondents made comments supportive of an online census.
- Many respondents were concerned about digital exclusion and the potentially disproportionate impact upon vulnerable members of the population. They feared that an online platform could exclude specific groups in the population who have lower rates of internet use, including elderly, disabled or rural residents, and those for whom English is not their first language.
- Many respondents were concerned that the primary purpose of the collection of administrative data is not the production of statistics but the delivery of services, and that the inaccuracy of, or policy changes in the collection of, data might impact on the quality of statistics. Respondents questioned whether ONS would have sufficient influence over the collection of the appropriate data from sources such as HM Revenue & Customs and the National Health Service.
- Some respondents questioned whether ONS had the expertise and experience to implement a swift transition to the use of an administrative data approach. Some doubted whether the claimed cost benefits of the administrative data and surveys approach would be borne out in practice and doubted whether it would represent value for money. Some

respondents even predicted that the final costs could be higher than calculated, given the tendency of large public IT projects to overspend.

- The requirement for new legislation in order to gain access to other administrative sources and to conduct compulsory surveys was emphasised by some.
- Some respondents were concerned about the lack of a population register or a personal identity number scheme which they believed was a necessary requirement for linking administrative datasets. In their view, the administrative data and surveys approach would be unlikely to succeed without a population register or identity scheme.

Privacy, security, burden and public acceptability

- While a minority were concerned about the 'burden' of the decennial census for householders, most respondents did not regard the census as a problem. Some respondents expressed concern about hacking of an online census solution. However it is interesting to note that fewer than six percent of respondents mentioned privacy or security in relation to the decennial census.
- 13 per cent of respondents mentioned privacy or security in relation to the administrative data and surveys approach.
- Some questioned whether it was appropriate or legal¹ to re-use data for statistical purposes when it had been collected for other purposes. Some were concerned that the quality of information provided to administrative sources might be diminished as a result of wider re-use.

Equalities requirements

- Respondents emphasised that adopting the online decennial census approach would mean that socio-demographic statistics about small areas and small populations would continue to be available, thus enabling the identification of vulnerable and minority groups. This was seen as being particularly important for equalities monitoring and to enable organisations to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force in April 2011 as a result of the Equality Act 2010. Most respondents were not convinced that the administrative data and surveys approach would meet these needs.

Longitudinal Study and Samples of Anonymised Records

- The ONS Longitudinal Study (LS) contains linked census data for one per cent of the population of England and Wales. Information from the 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 Censuses has been linked across censuses as well as information on events such as births, deaths and cancer registrations. The resulting anonymised dataset is used extensively for research, under carefully controlled access conditions. ONS also publishes small samples of anonymised records (SARs) for use by approved researchers.
- The specific use of record level census data for the purposes of the LS and in the SARs was raised by a number of specialist users. The main concern was that a move away from

¹ Specific provisions in the Data Protection Act 1998 enable the use of data for statistical and research purposes. Provisions in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 enable ONS to access administrative sources for statistical and research purposes, provide protections of confidentiality and punishments for any breach.

a decennial census would result in a loss of record level data, and that the LS in particular would not be maintained to the required quality. For some users the LS and the SARS are vital to their research and subsequent decisions, including research into life expectancy and related policies such as pensions and the pension age.

Wales

- A number of respondents were interested in issues specific to Wales. In particular, those interested in the Welsh language were keen to have small area data on Welsh language ability in order to understand where the language was being spoken and by how many people.
- Other issues raised include the fact that Wales has smaller populations in local authorities than England, and many very rural, sparsely populated areas. Small area statistics to capture the specific needs of these areas were seen as crucial and a decennial census was preferred by many respondents from Wales.
- There were also particular concerns about digital exclusion in Wales and the need to ensure that all population groups could respond, including those in areas with lower broadband access,

Family history and historical research

- Almost half of the respondents to the consultation make use of census data for family history purposes. The census was described as being a legacy for family researchers, providing an entire snapshot of the British population.
- A small number did not support any change to the way the Census is carried out, but the majority believed that an online Census would provide the required genealogical information.
- Many family history users expressed little or no support for moving solely to the administrative data and surveys approach. Others could see some worth in administrative data, but only if it was available to future historians alongside information collected by a decennial census.

Change and Risk

- Over 90 per cent of respondents were positive about change on ease-of-use, technological and economic grounds. The potential value of both approaches was acknowledged.
- The rationale for moving to an online decennial census was understood and generally supported. There was also support and understanding for the increasing use of administrative data.
- Most respondents supported developing the administrative data and surveys approach as having potential to improve annual population estimates between censuses. However, they felt that there was insufficient time to implement it for 2021, and the risks of doing so were too great, notably those relating to statistical quality and the lack of reliable benchmarks.
- Around a third of respondents suggested adopting a hybrid approach in 2021, proposing various combinations of the two approaches. It was recognised that, whilst combining the two approaches would increase the cost in the short term, it would facilitate the further development of the administrative data and surveys approach and allow for more informed consideration of the above approach in the coming years.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Every ten years, for over 200 years, every household in England and Wales has been required to respond to the census. The census provides information on housing and population that central and local government need to plan and run public services such as health and education. The data are also widely used by academics, businesses, voluntary organisations and the public. The 2011 Census provided population statistics that will be used for the next decade by planners, policy makers and researchers across the public and private sectors.

'Data on the population is used to ensure that we build our schools where they are required by our children, that hospitals are equipped to deliver the services that we need, that transport links reflect the journeys we undertake. With good data we can get these things right (and can hold people to account should things go wrong). Without it children are left without school places, patients do not get the care they need and we sit frustrated on trains and motorways. It matters to all of us.'

The Royal Statistical Society

The ONS Beyond 2011 Programme reviewed public requirements for population statistics and how they might best be met in future. Improvements in technology and in government data sources offer the opportunity to modernise the census, or to develop an alternative approach based on re-using administrative data which is already held within government.

A number of approaches were considered, and assessed against a set of evaluation criteria including statistical quality, cost, technical and legal feasibility, public acceptability and public burden. This work resulted in two potential approaches for census taking in future:

- once a decade, like that conducted in 2011, but primarily online;
- using existing government data and compulsory annual surveys.

This report presents a summary of the responses received to the public consultation 'The Census and Future Provision of Population Statistics in England and Wales' run by the Office for National Statistics. The consultation ran for a 12 week period from 23 September to 13 December 2013. The [consultation document and supporting documents](#) are as follows:

- The Census and Future Provision of Population Statistics in England and Wales
- Summary of the uses of census information, September 2013
- Summary of the benefits of census information, September 2013

1.2 Scope

The consultation was available online, and views could be submitted through an online questionnaire. Welsh language versions of the consultation and the questionnaire were available. The consultation was supported by over thirty public events and targeted discussions with a wide range of users. Details of the events can be found in Appendix C.

This was the second ONS public consultation on the Beyond 2011 Programme. The first, run in 2011, focused primarily on user requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics, including their frequency, accuracy and geography. The responses to the consultation helped steer subsequent research undertaken by the Programme.

The second consultation described the two potential approaches, their strengths and weaknesses and the different types of information they could provide. The public were invited to respond with their views on the two approaches outlined in the consultation document and in particular to offer views on:

- the impact of losing statistics for small geographical areas and small population groups;
- the potential benefits of having more frequent statistics about population characteristics;
- how archiving administrative sources could impact historical and genealogical research; and
- the risks associated with both approaches and how they might be managed.

Appendix A provides a list of the questions asked. For ease of reference, the views expressed by respondents are grouped by the key topics raised rather than in question order. In some instances this summary reports on the weight of views expressed by respondents.

ONS welcomes the quality and quantity of the responses received, and many are quoted in the course of this report. The list of all respondents is published at Appendix A and their submissions are available online except where a prior request of confidentiality has been received.

2 Respondent analysis

There were 715 responses to the consultation, of which 657 were submitted online, and 58 were submitted via email or letter. A list of the organisations and individuals who responded to the consultation is provided in Appendix B, and all responses are published online alongside this report². More than 500 people attended around 30 public events and meetings held during the consultation period. Appendix C contains a full list of these events.

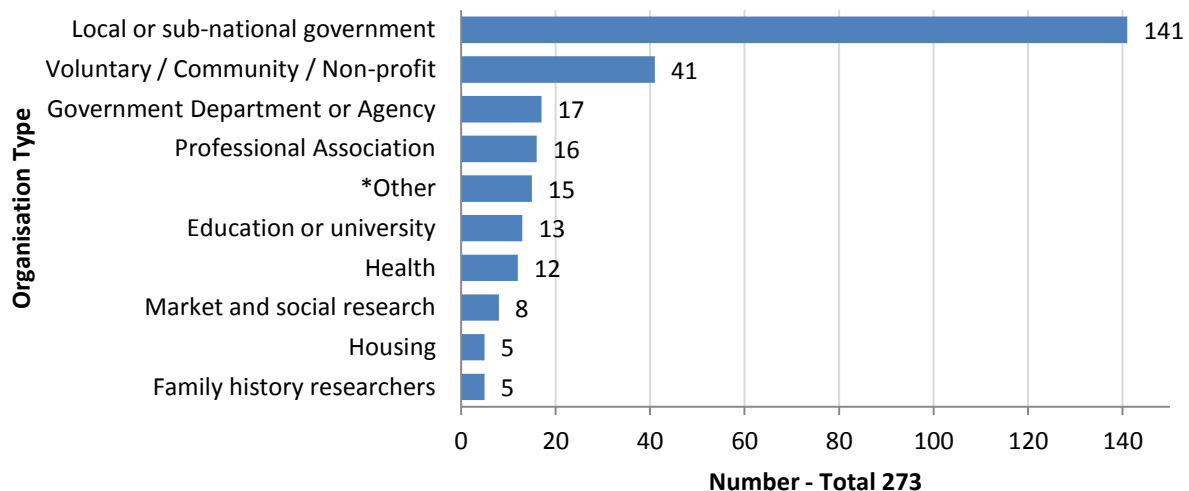
2.1 Respondents

The consultation received responses from individuals (444) and on behalf of organisations (273). It is important to note that many organisational responses included collated responses from several bodies or individuals. For example:

- The Demographic User Group responded on behalf of its members including companies such as Barclays, the Co-operative, Boots and John Lewis.
- The Local Government Association provided a response. The Association of North East Councils response covered twelve local authorities based in the North East of England.

Figure 1 shows the number of respondents self-identifying for each organisational category (a total of 273). The majority of organisational responses were from local or sub-national government and voluntary, community and non-profit organisations.

Figure 1 - Number of responses by type of organisation



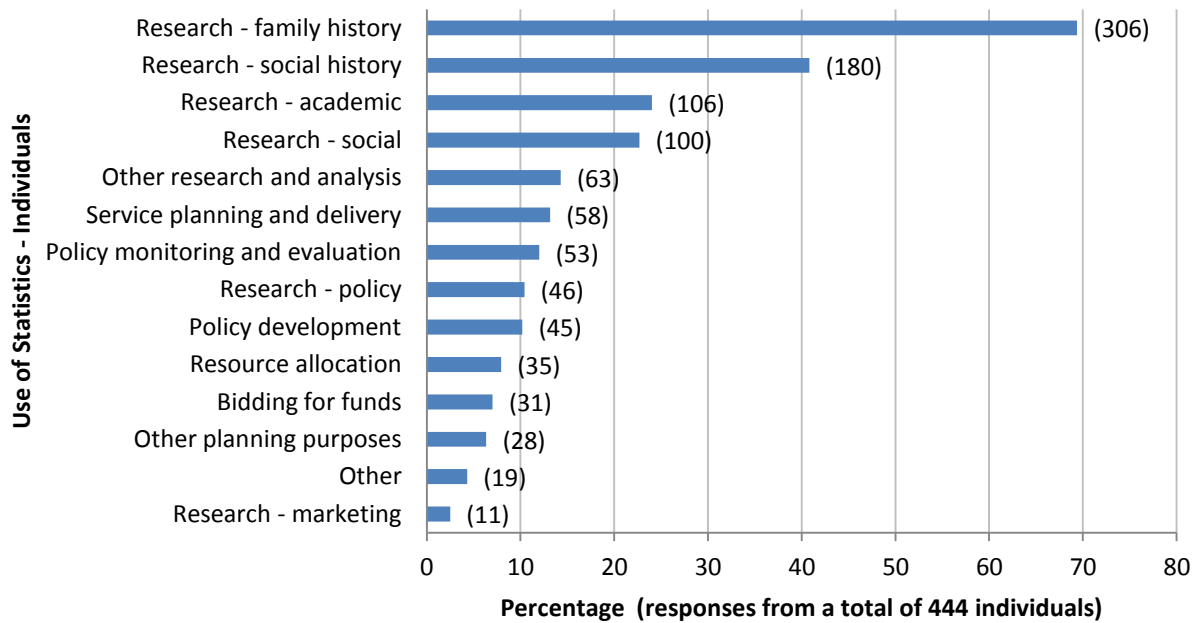
* Organisations listed as other include transport organisations, think tanks, consultancies, the emergency services and media.

2.2 Data use

Respondents were asked for what purposes they use census statistics or census responses. As shown in Figure 2, individuals largely use the data for research purposes. The most common use is for family history research (69 per cent) followed by social history research (41 per cent). It should be noted that the top two uses reported by individuals were the bottom two reported by organisations.

² Apart from those who specifically requested that their response not be made public.

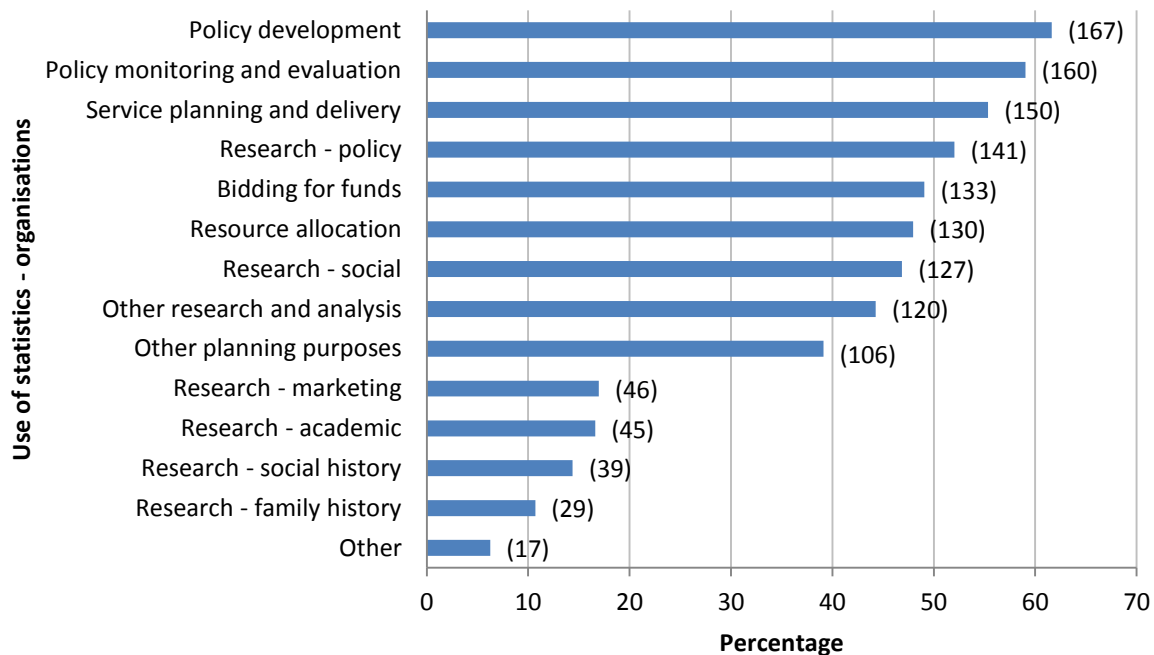
Figure 2: Main uses of population and housing statistics by percentage¹ of individual respondents



¹Percentages do not sum to 100 because many respondents indicated that they use the data for more than one reason.

In contrast, as shown in Figure 3, 62 per cent of organisations use the data for policy development and 59 per cent use it for policy monitoring and evaluation. Other common uses which organisations make of the data include service planning and delivery (55 per cent), policy research (52 per cent) and bidding for funds (49 per cent). Only 11 per cent of respondent organisations use the data for family history research.

Figure 3: Main uses of population and housing statistics by percentage¹ of respondent organisations



¹Percentages do not sum to 100 because many respondents indicated that they use the data for more than one reason
 'Other' organisations include transport organisations, think tanks, consultancies, the emergency services and media

2.3 Data use by respondent type

Over 70 per cent of local or sub-national government organisations use census data for policy development and evaluation and for social research. Over half (56 per cent) of the government agencies use the data for policy development and policy and social research. As expected, respondents from education and university organisations mainly use the data for academic research (61 per cent).

While there were a range of views expressed in response to the consultation, these were not driven by the sector of the respondent (except for genealogists, who have a strong desire to maintain a paper or online census). Differences of view reflected differing uses within all sectors. Appendix D provides a summary breakdown of uses of population and household statistics by sector.

3 Quality of statistical outputs

Most respondents focused their responses on the quality of statistical outputs and in particular the importance of statistics for small geographic areas, small population groups, and the frequency of provision. In particular, the Localism Agenda has driven the importance of data for very small areas. This section presents the views expressed on these issues for each of the two approaches. It also presents views given in relation to continuity, comparability and timeliness.

3.1 Statistics on small areas and small population groups

The provision of consistent and comparable statistics for small area data, including for Output Areas and Super Output Areas³, was an issue of over-riding concern for very many respondents. Government and other organisations providing services at a local level, strongly emphasised the importance of small area data and detailed cross-tabulated outputs for efficient planning and resource allocation.

'We sometimes have very small pockets of [housing] stock and even LSOA level can be a challenge at times. OA would be ideal for all data to go down to. We have really started to use data to drive strategic decision making and especially when looking at community investment... Even using estimates at the lower geographies would be very dangerous when making key decisions on investment and services.'

Knightstone Community Housing

'[OA/LSOA level] information is highly valuable for local authorities... Without the low area level data provided by a target 100% sample, basic information which is crucial for population projections, school roll planning, resource allocation and negotiations with developers would not be available.'

London Borough of Hackney

Access to small area data has become increasingly important with the introduction of recent public sector reforms, such as the Localism Agenda.

'...we have a greater imperative to use such data because of a number of recent public sector reforms - the Localism Act 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework, welfare reforms, and the transfer of public health responsibilities.'

Warwickshire Observatory

Reference was made to the use of OA data as 'building blocks' to aggregate census data up to bespoke geographical areas.

³ **OA – Output Area** – Groups of postcodes with a total population between 100 and 625 people, average 300. OAs are used across the UK as the base unit of census output.

LSOA – Lower Layer Super Output Area – Total population between 1,000 and 3,000 people, average 1,600. Each LSOA is made up of a number of OAs.

MSOA – Middle Layer Super Output Area – Total population between 5,000 and 15,000 people, average 7,800. Each MSOA is made up of a number of LSOAs. These are similar in size to an average electoral ward – although there is much more variability in the size of electoral wards.

LA – Local Authority – Total population between 2,000 and one million people, average 160,000. Each LA is made up of a number of MSOAs.

'Population change within Peak District National Park is very slight, decreasing by less than 32 people between Census 2001 and Census 2011. It is our view that the once a decade online option will provide the small area and exact fit data required to monitor population and housing in the Peak District National Park accurately. This option also allows us to monitor change and compare data with the Census 2001 & 2011.'

Peak District National Park Authority

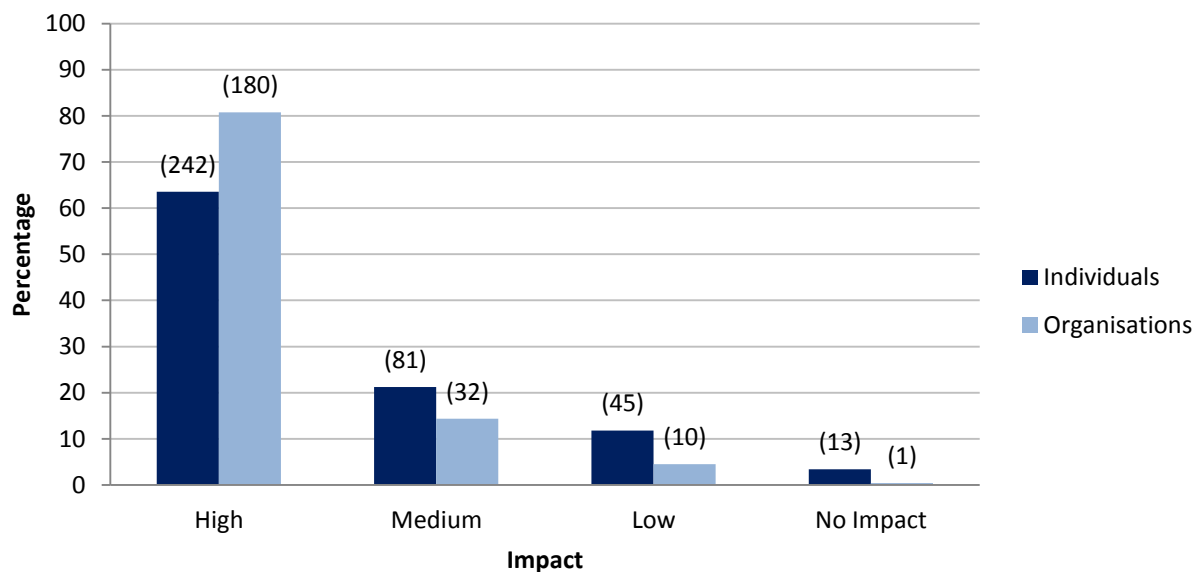
Many also noted that the depth and breadth of socio-demographic variables included in the census will not be available from other sources.

'We rely on the rich set of statistics at a small geographical area, i.e. output areas, for our products and services that we build from Census data. We need the rich set of variables it provides, particularly in relation to social characteristics....These types of variables are not available from any other source. This is particularly the case with cross-tabulated variables like age by sex by social grade. These are key to our business and clients....The Census provides as complete an understanding of the population as you can get.'

Beacon Dodsworth (GIS and marketing analysis consultants)

Respondents were asked what impact the loss of small area data would have on themselves or their organisation, the overall results are shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: The impact of the loss of small area data on individuals and organisations



A total of 604 respondents (381 individuals and 223 organisations) chose to answer this question, with 80 per cent of organisations and 63 per cent of individuals rating the impact as high.

Those from the housing, health and government sectors were less likely to rate the impact as high than other organisations.

Respondents explained how the loss of this information would adversely impact their work. Whilst the specific requirements vary, overall concerns related to being able to effectively plan and target resources and services to the public.

'The loss of data for populations and subgroups in small areas like LSOAs would be a significant backwards step and we believe the 4 per cent annual survey would be an inadequate alternative. The ability to access reliable statistics on population and attributes, including drill-down to sub-groups based on age, ethnicity or socio-economic groups is important for the effective monitoring of population health and its determinants; important for informing policy in improving public health and important for informing need-based service provision across the public sector.'

Public Health Wales NHS Trust

'Removal of these levels would greatly reduce our knowledge of these areas. Lower super output area data highlighted the current level and growth of unpaid carers for example. This enables our authority to prioritise and target support in particular areas of need. Parish councils are increasingly self-determining, therefore understanding demography, housing need, number of households or further evidence for their vital neighbourhood plans, [if these levels were removed] would greatly diminish. Their ability to self-govern would be significantly weakened.'

Chichester Borough Council

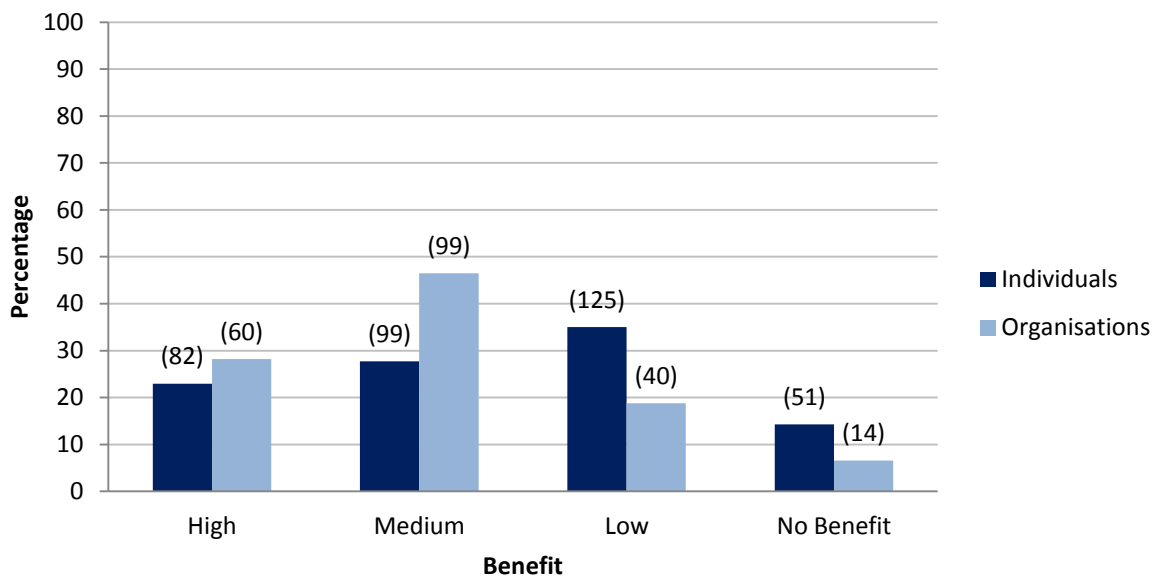
'A census that fails to provide robust attribute data for small areas is not worth carrying out. (By small area we mean Output Area and not the crude Lower Super Output Area, which are of no use to practical business users)...Given the breadth of organisations that utilise small area data derived from the census and the high probability that alternatives would produce weaker investment decisions we believe there is likely to be a negative effect on the UK economy.'

CACI Ltd (Marketing and Information Systems Consultancy)

3.2 Frequency

Given that one of the disadvantages of a decennial census is the infrequency of outputs, the potential for increased frequency of outputs from an administrative and survey approach was welcomed. Respondents were asked to rate the benefit that they would get from more frequent outputs and a total of 570 respondents (356 individuals and 214 organisations) chose to answer the question. Figure 5 below demonstrates that organisations were most likely to answer that there would be a medium benefit while individuals were most likely to say that there would be low benefit from more frequent information. Nevertheless more respondents of both types identified high or medium benefit than low or none. Most individual respondents are interested mainly in census data for historical research, where frequency is less relevant.

Figure 5: The perceived benefit of more frequent data to individuals and organisations



Those from the housing, market and social research, professional associations and other sectors were most likely to say there was a high benefit from more frequent data. Those from health, Government agency, education or university, voluntary community or non-profit and local sub-national government were most likely to say there was a medium benefit. Family history researchers saw low or no benefit to more frequent data.

Respondents explained that more frequent data would potentially enable more effective identification of trends and shifts in the population. These benefits were often expressed with reference to the increase in population experienced between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses and the rapid increases in diversity in some areas.

'There would be additional benefit to us from being able to identify city-level trends earlier. For example, our simulations of survey outputs suggest that we would have been able to identify the trend in the non-UK born population earlier than the Census allowed. This is a key trend of the last decade which has driven dramatic population change in some parts of the city, something we have only fully understood following the release of 2011 Census results.'

Oxford City Council

The ability to identify population changes more rapidly was seen as potentially valuable in enabling more efficient planning and delivery of services.

'The main positive aspect to option 2 [administrative data and surveys approach] is the speed that data is released. This will give organisations the opportunity to more quickly respond to population

changes when planning initiatives for the futureThe environment we live in is changing rapidly, and we feel the Census needs to evolve to reflect these changes. By releasing results more frequently we will be able to build a clearer picture of the environment in which we operate, and make changes to our services to reflect these.'

Greenfields Community Housing

'...the 10 year gap between each Census is no longer practical for local authorities. Having additional information (if accurate) on population figures and characteristics would enable local authorities to evidence social changes much quicker which would enable us to react to social changes and adjust our services accordingly. This will also allow us to allocate our resources more effectively.'

Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Council

Despite general support for the increased frequency of outputs delivered by an administrative and survey approach, there were a number of caveats, the most commonly expressed being that increased frequency would not compensate for the loss of small area data.

'Weighing up the benefit of accurate data at a local level once a decade or more frequent but less accurate data; we would strongly suggest that accuracy, transparency and comparability should overrule frequency. '

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

'Administrative sources are promising, particularly the prospect of more timely data and ONS's research in this area to date is encouraging; but we do not yet think that there is sufficient evidence that the benefits of wholesale adoption of this method in 2021 will outweigh the loss to councils in terms of the breadth and quality of outputs. '

Local Government Association

3.3 Other statistical quality issues

Other statistical quality issues raised in relation to the online census approach included the continuity of the data and the related ability to reliably track changes over time.

'The collection of consistent and statistically evaluated questions is also an important consideration as it ensures we are comparing like with like over time – and when there have been changes they are clear to see; The resulting mass of small area data on this comparable nature that comes out of the census is invaluable for looking at both small geographies and small population groups, and importantly their characteristics, which would otherwise be hidden. '

Hampshire County Council

However, serious challenges were made to the timeliness of current census outputs and a corresponding suggestion that moving to an online census approach could improve timeliness.

'The census option's obvious weakness is that it is out-of-date before it is published - even if a fully online census can deliver outputs in a timelier manner, it will still be looking back at an ever-distancing point in time. '

London Borough of Camden

Other advantages of the administrative option identified by respondents included the increased accuracy of inter-censal population estimates and its value in the long term in reducing reliance on falling response rates in censuses and surveys.

'The admin/ survey option is obviously the way forward in the long term due to cost pressures and the need to reuse expensively collated material; falling response rates to censuses and surveys; improvements to data gathering, analysis and presentation; and need for regularly updated statistics or on new topics as issues present themselves.'

Suffolk County Council (with Babergh/ Mid Suffolk District Councils, West Suffolk District Council)

4 The feasibility of the online and administrative data approaches

This section of the report presents views upon operational issues and the impact such issues could have upon statistical quality.

4.1 Online census approach

Respondents were generally supportive of the principle of moving to an online census.

'... there's also a certain degree of inevitability about the move towards a more web-based Census. Due to more people's increasing acceptance of technology in everyday life, the proportion of on-line responses would naturally increase over ten years previously.'

City and County of Swansea

However, whilst moving to an online census was widely supported in principle, there were a number of practical concerns about digital exclusion. It was stressed that those who are digitally excluded tend to be those who are also socially and economically excluded from society. Some respondents appeared to be unaware that the census always provides information and assistance for vulnerable citizens and those who need support, and would continue to do so in the online environment. This would include paper questionnaires for those needing one.

'...the loss of a paper based census method assumes that all those participating have internet access and the skills to participate online. This ignores the fact that digital exclusion is an ongoing problem. It is estimated that there are 10 million adults in the UK who do not use or have access to computers and the internet (Race Online, 2010). Many within this group are also likely to face social exclusion and economic deprivation.'

The British Sociological Association

'...according to ONS 2012 data, 7.1 million adults (15%) in the UK have never used the internet... The move to an online-only census risks leaving the elderly, rural, disabled and those on low incomes disenfranchised.'

Equality and Human Rights Commission

'Our research has shown that homeless people often have poor IT skills, and some have limited literacy and numeracy. In addition, because of the environment of much supported accommodation for homeless people, it can be difficult to access computers even for those who have the skills needed. It is important that any changes to the census do not exclude those who find online forms difficult to manage.'

Homeless Link

Some thought that even greater support would need to be provided for the online option than the traditional paper based census because some citizens would be unlikely to respond online, particularly new migrants. It would not be so much a matter of digital access, although some households would not have the IT equipment and skills, as of digital capability and volition.

'[The main risks for the on-line Census are]: Resistance to responding on-line and consequent need for much greater support, follow-up and provision of alternative methods. Such resistance may occur disproportionately among older people, people with learning difficulties, recent migrants with insecure immigration statuses. The much greater demand on resources may result in some groups not receiving appropriate support and therefore unable to complete an on-line response.'

Discrimination Law Association

As a result of digital exclusion, respondents felt that the census response rates could be jeopardised, and this in turn would impact negatively upon the costs of data collection, the quality of outputs and subsequent decisions based on the data.

'This would mean that citizens who are less likely to be online such as the elderly, rural, disabled and people on low incomes - may not actually complete the 2021 census. This puts at risk the integrity of the data that will be collected. In turn this puts at risk the services which are provided by both central and local government that rely on census data to provide accurate levels of funding and service provision.'

Keep Me Posted (partnership of charities, interest groups and business in favour of consumer choice in business to consumer communications.)

4.2 Administrative data and surveys approach

Operational concerns relating to the administrative data and surveys approach included the quality of administrative data and also whether changes to administrative systems would mean the data stopped being available, or was less complete. Concerns were also raised about whether ONS had enough of the right skills, and the requirement for legislation. The fact that the primary purpose of administrative data sources is unrelated to the production of statistics was a major concern.

'The primary function of administrative datasets are not the collection of population statistics...Administrative sources are only as good as the record management systems in place at their source organisation, which will generally not have been designed to answer census questions. Will the administrative sources have opportunities to adjust their data collections to answer census questions more accurately?'

Public Health England

This led to concerns over the level of accuracy of the information held on administrative data sources, resulting from inconsistent quality of data input, members of the public giving incorrect information or choosing not to register their details.

'Consistency would be required in a survey/administrative data option in the measurement or collection of data on ethnicity. Currently a number of approaches are used which differ from the standard census self-identification question. For example, in the school census, school staff often complete the ethnicity question on behalf of the pupils.'

ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity

Another issue raised is the consistency and need for continued access to administrative data sources over time and the impact that policy changes could have on the continuity and comparability of statistical outputs. A number of respondents specifically referred to the recent changes to Child Benefit.

'...Child Benefit records would be considered an important source of information for the census under the administrative data option, but recent changes to policy now mean it is no longer a universal benefit for all children, and its coverage of new born babies and parents of young children will be reduced in the future. This policy change reduces its potential benefit to the census and would impact on the quality of data it could provide.'

Local Government Data Unit, Wales

'In the event that non-fixed data sources are used to piece together a national picture then there is again an enhanced risk that the coherence of data series will be broken. This is exemplified by recent changes to child benefit which have seen around 1.2 million families removed from this dataset (700,000 completely, the remainder partially). This would render this type of record as meaningless in compiling local population counts of younger people now that wealthier families are no longer eligible.'

Durham County Council

Some concern was expressed that ONS lacks the required expertise and experience to implement an administrative data approach effectively by 2021. In addition, questions were raised over the amount of power and influence that ONS could exert over the suppliers of administrative data sources such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the National Health Service.

'Large government IT projects have a history of failing to deliver what was expected of them both in terms of budget and timescales. Whilst previous examples do not necessarily mean that future projects will suffer the same problems, it doesn't seem unreasonable to expect unforeseen problems to occur. The census is much too important a resource to experiment with, especially if it might take 'a number of decades'

Devon County Council

'... I think ONS is being naïve if it thinks that its needs, and those of researchers in the distant future, will over-ride the operational requirements of other government bodies. '

University of Essex

'The ONS is unlikely to be able to dictate to such large and powerful organisations as the NHS and the HMRC how they collect their data, so there is no assurance that the data derived from these agencies will be consistent from year to year. '

Royal Historical Society, Economic History Society, Social History Society

There was also the suggestion of the need for organisational and capability development within ONS to support the new approach.

'This would also be a new skill set for ONS. We suggest that the Government establishes within the remit of the ONS or as a separate organisation the Office of Administrative Data. There is a need to ensure central responsibility for the quality and stability of administrative data. This is a different set of skills and responsibilities to those that the ONS currently holds.'

Local Area Research and Intelligence Association

The cost of the approach was raised, with some respondents having concerns that the administrative and surveys option would not represent value for money and predicting that the final costs would be higher than calculated.

'To provide any meaningful useful data by survey methods, it is clear that a much bigger sample is essential, probably of the order of a 10% sample. This would undoubtedly put costs up even further, and would present most of the difficulties of performing a decennial Census. Thus it is clear that the alternative method would provide very much inferior value for money as whilst costs may be slightly less, the utility it provides is immensely smaller than the Census, and to increase the utility of the surveys would cost as much as doing the full census. '

Tees Valley Unlimited - Representing the Unitary Authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees

'Certainly in terms of the research areas in which I work, the marginal cost saving predicted by using this option (30p/person/year) does not warrant the significant reduction in data quality and availability.'

Dr Benedict W Wheeler

Others felt that the potential cost saving from a census using administrative data was insignificant compared to the value of what would be lost, and that this might increase costs for local government.

'Whilst in these austere times we recognise the value of saving money by utilising the second option of a more frequent census based on the re-use of existing administrative data we simply feel the loss of lower geographical (lower layer super output area, etc) data plus the potential loss of detailed data for a number of topics plus the loss of a high degree of continuity with the data provided by previous censuses would be highly detrimental to planning service provision.'

London Borough of Redbridge

'London Councils does not agree with ONS's valuation of census outputs compared to administrative data and annual surveys. The £5 million additional benefit nationally from the more granular traditional

census approach represents a minimal individual local authority benefit. London Councils believes this benefit to be much greater and indeed as mentioned the cost of commissioning this level of data would be much higher for local government as a result of not having this information. This would be an additional cost local government would face as a result. There would be a clear loss of economy of scale in moving from a national to individual local authority production of granular population information. ‘

London Councils

The requirement for new legislation in order to implement the administrative data and surveys approach was raised. The consultation document explained that legislation would be required for improved data sharing within government for statistics and research and also to enable mandatory household surveys. A key concern was that the required legislation was not yet in place, and that it was by no means guaranteed to either be passed or to work effectively in practice.

‘...implementation would involve greater legislative change, which cannot be assured....It is expected to rely on an annual survey for socio-economic characteristics, and whilst recognising that the proposed survey will be compulsory, the legislation and implementation to ensure that the compulsory survey works is untested and thus presents challenges. ‘

Research Councils UK with the Economic and Social Research Council

‘...the administrative data approach would require primary legislation. This would require cross-party support as well as appropriate time for proper scrutiny of draft legislation. Without these essential conditions, concern arises that any legislation might end up with watered down proposals, weakening the proposed replacement arrangements even further. And even with such high level political support, there may be UK legal, EU legal or sheer operational and cost reasons why the needs of individual departments could not easily and economically be fitted into a common purpose.’

Royal Town Planning Institute

A further issue was the lack of a population register in the UK. Many respondents noted that a population register was a common feature of countries which had made the move to the use of administrative data and believed that it was essential to linking administrative datasets. Many felt that, without this being in place, the administrative data and surveys approach would be unlikely to succeed.

‘In the absence of an accompanying proposal for a Population Register to replace the census, the Consultation document’s second option of moving to exclusive reliance on administrative and social survey statistics has no precedent in the practice of any other country....if the political obstacles to creating a PR [Population Register] system are judged to be too great, then it needs to be acknowledged that the option of patching together administrative and social survey data is simply unworkable... ‘

History and Policy

‘Finally, the consultation document states that a population register is a common and essential feature in all countries that directly estimate population through administrative data. The consultation does not suggest that introducing such a register is being considered, and while the public and political appetite for such an approach remains limited, it is hard to see how the ONS can be confident that an administrative data led approach can be successful without this core component’

Southwark Council

5 Privacy, confidentiality and public acceptability

Privacy and confidentiality concerns were raised in relation to both approaches. For the online approach these related mainly to online security and the burden of completion imposed on householders. The concerns relating to the administrative data and surveys approach were focused on the public acceptability of reusing personal data collected initially for administrative purposes and the public burden of annual mandatory surveys.

5.1 Online census approach

The majority of the privacy and public acceptability concerns about the online approach were raised by respondents replying to the Consultation as individuals. They expressed concerns about online security and the potential for hacking and identity theft.

'It doesn't take into account the general feeling that anything sent electronically is [not] safe. We hear daily of data being compromised and the DPA [Data Protection Act] doesn't go far enough to protect our data. There would also be the possibility of hackers getting access to the server this is hosted on and causing widespread panic and theft of identities.'

Rob Burns

The online census approach would ask the public for more information than the administrative data and surveys approach. Some individuals think that census questions are intrusive and burdensome.

'Census once a decade.... suited most people I know but some did feel it was a bit big brotherish.'

Gerry Norvill

'Another consideration is that filling out census returns is a burden on individual citizens.'

David F Guyton

However, most respondents who commented on burden did not feel that the decennial census posed a significant burden on the public.

'We all fill in forms; far more intrusive forms and far longer forms all day every day. We are used to it. It is not a burden, it is not intrusive and it does not threaten our privacy....'

Jonathan Frayne

'The argument of page 8 of the consultation document that: the census imposes a burden on all households because every household is required to respond appears to be looking for a problem that doesn't exist. Other than questions relating to the household as a whole, each person only has to fill in four pages of questions. This is reduced still further by only showing people relevant questions, as happened with the online version of the form in 2011.'

Devon County Council

It was also felt that some groups in society would feel more vulnerable to having their privacy invaded due to lack of experience using the internet, or would be less likely to complete the Census online due to fear and distrust of technology.

'The risks of moving to a greater reliance on online completion of a decennial Census is the sub-groups that would be missed, by definition, and public suspicion of electronic data collection. This route would need very careful campaigns to influence public opinion and very careful understanding of who would be missed...'

Gillian Parker

5.2 Administrative data and surveys approach

Issues relating to privacy were raised in relation to the administrative data and surveys approach by 13 per cent of respondents (18 per cent of organisations and 10 per cent of individuals). The

importance of explicit consent by the individual for the use of his or her administrative data was highlighted by some individual respondents.

'There are major privacy concerns on using what you term as administrative data. This is personal data and explicit permission should be sought for any use other than the original purpose, and that does not include opting out presumption as a method of getting that permission.'

David Hamilton

'Are administrative sources permitted to contribute their records to others in government without an individual's consent? Does government have the right to pass data from its departments to the census for non-administrative purposes? The European Commission is currently in the process of reviewing the general EU legal framework on the protection of personal data; as part of this the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party is examining the processing of personal data and privacy. Can ONS guarantee that the NHS patient register will always be legally available to use for calculating population estimates?'

Public Health England

Fears were expressed that ONS would disclose the data to be used for other purposes. There were also concerns that people will lose sight of which organisations are holding data about them.

'There is fundamental and systemic risk with the proposed data sharing, in that use could go beyond what the public are willing to support ... It should not be possible for any party to become aware that an individual seems to be using an alias for the use of two different services, and take actions on that basis ... It must not be an option for the unrestricted sharing of data across Whitehall for reasons that are not the production of Statistics to be laid before Parliament.'

Sam Smith, Beyond 2011 Privacy Advisory Group

'Administrative data collection in the first instance sounds better however you will be using data that we have agreed to be stored and we believe will not be passed to any third party. ... I do not know how much of my information with government bodies is being used for other reasons than I agreed to when I placed them on file. Again this leaves open the chances of our data being stolen and used for illegal purposes.'

Rob Burns

'Extension of permission for the ONS to access personal data from various Government Departments is also very worrying. We are at this moment being assured by you that it will be protected and unidentifiable, but just look at our medical records, which we were assured would not be disclosed to anyone else. They are now going to go on sale to the highest bidder, and will include our personal NHS numbers.'

Shelagh Biddlestone

Some respondents expressed a concern that the public will give false information to the owners of administrative data sources, or not respond to surveys, because they think that the Government is going to access their data for other purposes.

'A certain proportion of the population will resent and resist the drawing together of all their 'admin' data into a centralised single source, regardless of any assurances that it will be used only for the purpose of census. Will this lead to more resistance to the various admin data requests? Will (some) people start to deliberately obfuscate their official data to stop 'big brother' knowing all about them? Different versions of names, different forms of addresses, minor acts of 'unprovable' data vandalism that will not only make the agglomeration of data for census less easy/accurate, but also potentially reduce the accuracy of the source admin datasets, and consequently their suitability for their primary purposes.'

Steve Barnard

'There would need to be a considerable amount of work required to explain the changes and reasons ... to the public in order to obtain informed consent for the extended use of personal data outside of the

purposes for which it is collected. This could lead to more individuals withdrawing consent for currently collected data. ‘

South West Public Health Registrars

A few respondents commented negatively on the acceptability of annual surveys of part of the population. It was felt that because it was partial rather than comprehensive, some might be less likely to respond.

‘Although the census is often claimed to be a burden on people, the fact that it affects everyone at the same time just once a decade effectively helps to make it more acceptable. Moving to a compulsory annual sample survey, where ONS estimate that approximately 50% of the population will be sampled in a ten year period, may have the effect of making people feel singled out (which in fact they will be!) and less inclined to respond if not everyone on their street is being asked the same questions either on-line or on the doorstep ‘

Bristol City Council

‘There is a substantial difference in public perception between a one-off data collection every 10 years that affects everybody and which nearly everyone can see the benefits of as a public good, and an exercise that only affects part of the population over time and which might not be so easily accepted. And making an annual survey compulsory in this context might have undesirable effects on response to all the other important surveys that ONS/GSS carries out. ‘

Professor Ian Plewis

6 Equality

Traditionally statistics drawn from the census have been used to measure and monitor inequalities, including of race, faith, gender, age and disability. The consultation elicited some strong views about the merits of the two approaches and there was a clear preference for equalities monitoring for continuing with a decennial census, albeit online. There were some warnings about the risks of moving solely to a combination of administrative data and surveys.

6.1 Online census approach

Respondents emphasised that the online approach would mean that socio-demographic statistics about small areas and small populations would continue to be available, thus enabling the identification of vulnerable and minority groups.

'The census is the only source of data that identifies all groups within our population, however small they may be. Often small groups, who have different characteristics to the population majority in that area, such as certain ethnic groups, those from overseas countries, those residing in small pockets of deprivation, residents of urban areas where putative environmental factors play a role in incidence or severity of disease, have different health needs. Without the census to identify these small groups, health services or interventions may not be identified, planned nor provided in adequate numbers and locations.'
Public Health England

'We believe that [the online approach] would provide organisations such as ours with the only feasible means of gathering statistics. This was proven with the 2011 Census with the addition of the 'Arab' category under the ethnic profile, also the questions of 'Identity'; 'Nationality'; 'Languages spoken'. These are not available in any 'Administrative' format.'

National Association of British Arabs

Being able to accurately identify these groups is important for equalities testing in government policy development, monitoring the equality impact of new policies and services and enabling public sector organisations to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).

'The equality duty requires equality considerations to be reflected in policy and the delivery of services and for these issues to be kept under review. All public authorities, therefore, require robust population and housing statistics at local geographical levels, and for it to be disaggregated by equality grounds, to provide evidence for policy making and to assess the impact of their policies in order to fulfil their obligations under the statutory equality duty.'

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

'As a public body the Council has a duty to monitor and report on equality information in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. As part of this the Council undertakes equalities monitoring, equality analysis assessments and service planning in an effort to eliminate discrimination, promote participation, empower residents and promote community harmony. Without the data that the Census is able to provide, these efforts would be hampered.'

London Borough of Lewisham

6.2 Administrative data and surveys approach

In contrast to the online census approach, many respondents raised concerns that the administrative data and surveys approach would not meet their needs for the statistics required to identify minority groups and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. There were concerns raised that traditionally hard-to-count or vulnerable groups of the population would neither be represented on administrative data sources nor identified by the 4 per cent survey.

'A recognised defect of past censuses is the under-counting of certain groups. We do not believe that a move to reliance on administrative data and periodic 4% surveys will avoid this problem; in fact from the list of potential administrative data sources, we believe that there are likely to be significant data gaps for a greater number of groups, for example, migrants and asylum seekers, many of whom do not feature on HMRC, DWP or NHS records, unemployed young adults without permanent homes, for disabled people whose living and care arrangements are irregular, partially or wholly itinerant Gypsies and Travellers, people moving in and out of prison or non-permanent residents of other forms of communal accommodation.'

Discrimination Law Association

*'The consultation described different survey approaches for those living in 'communal establishments' such as university halls of residence and military bases. It would be important that other types of communal living - particularly supported accommodation or hostels for homeless people - were considered and included in the census. There would also need to be provision made for those people with no housing (even temporary housing) and who are sleeping rough. As homeless people often experience multiple exclusions, it is important that the census does not continue to exclude them from public data ...'*⁴

Homeless Link

Some respondents stated that the administrative data approach will not capture attributes which are required in order to advocate for smaller or vulnerable groups.

'Small surveys can provide good data on large groups of the population, but become inadequate for smaller subsets, especially when they are not uniformly geographically spread. This will remain the case even if the first sample size in 2021 is increased to 10%.'

The Muslim Council of Britain

'We also describe below significant concerns over the loss of detailed Census attribute information under the administrative data and survey option. Whilst the Census attribute information does become out of date over a decade it is of immense value in a number of areas. It is used as part of resource allocation, for local planning, for measuring deprivation, and specifically in Wales to assess the state of the Welsh Language. Users have expressed the availability of local census data as deriving public good which it is difficult to quantify but nevertheless should not be ignored.'

Welsh Government

'ONS has not demonstrated how the survey/administrative option would provide attribute data that is comparable to that currently provided by the census ...'

ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity

Some respondents feared that, without census data, small population groups could miss out on the resources that they require and unmet needs could be missed.

'We are deeply concerned that the changes proposed appear to lead to a reduction in the data available on populations and needs for each protected characteristic (equality) group. It is imperative that accurate data is available on populations. This data is often used by public sector and third sector organisations to identify unmet needs and inequalities on an LSOA level and to plan actions to address inequality and to promote equality.'

Diverse Cymru

'Current information about the admin data approach suggests such small groups would not render themselves to be counted adequately before we gain at least 3 years of compulsory survey data. Even then the confidence intervals for these estimates would be 12% or more, meaning they may not be

⁴ It should be noted that the 2011 Census did include extensive special arrangements to ensure the collection of information about communal establishments, homeless people and vulnerable groups. Similar arrangements are sure to be required whatever the approach adopted in the future.

very reliable. Such estimates may also lead to understanding differences between smaller groups [becoming] very difficult, leading to an artificial homogenisation of population.'

London Borough of Ealing

Again, many organisations highlighted that the lack of information on small population groups would mean that they would be unable to meet their equality duties.

'The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people with 'protected characteristics', which includes ethnic groups. The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 also says that public authorities must assess how policies and programmes can affect ethnic minorities, and take remedial action where any potential for "adverse differential impact" on ethnic minority communities is identified. If we can't accurately identify minorities how can we assess policies?'

Public Health England

'The Commission is concerned that this sample size will not be adequate to support many analyses relating to small population groups, so a larger sample would be preferred, and that insufficient thought has so far been put into capturing a representative sample of the whole population, especially that part outside of the household population. '

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

The lack of small area data information from the administrative data source option causes councils and other planners to be concerned that they will not be able to detect inequalities between and within geographical areas, i.e. there might be one rich area and one poor area balanced out within a larger area, with the plight of the poor small area being obscured. There is also a concern that statistics for sparsely populated rural areas will reduce in quality.

'... Kensington and Chelsea is the second most densely populated borough in England and Wales with approximately 159,000 residents in 12km². There is a perception that the borough is uniformly affluent, but this is not the case as Kensington and Chelsea is an area where the most affluent live alongside the least affluent. This means that data aggregated to ward or MSOA level presents a smoothed picture that obscures the pockets of deprivation which are among the most deprived in England and Wales.'

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

'While the administrative data / sample survey option would provide small population data for the majority of the country, the sample size for small population groups in very rural areas such as North Yorkshire would prevent the release of detailed statistics across a wide spectrum of detailed census statistics. This would put sparsely populated rural areas at a severe disadvantage to more urban authorities in terms of data availability.'

North Yorkshire County Council

'There is value that only a census can provide: in particular the ability to gain data at a very local level and to cross reference findings. We do not believe that the ability to cross tabulate data will be in place by 2021[under the proposed administrative data and surveys option]. We could therefore lose sight of very small communities and groups of people within local places. This would make it harder to deal with issues of inequality and could leave the most hard to reach further excluded from our society. '

Local Area Research and Intelligence Association

7 The Longitudinal Study, Samples of Anonymised Records and 'interaction' data

The Longitudinal Study (LS) was set up in the 1970s to meet the need for better data on fertility and for mortality rates by occupation. The original 1 per cent sample from the 1971 Census is updated at subsequent censuses, by taking people with the same four dates of birth in each year and linking them individually across the censuses⁵.

The Samples of Anonymised Records (SARs) are samples of individual records covering the full range of census topics including housing, education, health, transport, employment, ethnicity and religion. SARs have been produced from the 1991 and 2001 censuses and will be drawn from the 2011 census. They contain a separate record for each individual, but identifying information has been removed to protect confidentiality. The SARs datasets are similar to data from a survey, albeit with a much larger sample size thus permitting analysis of small sub-groups and small geographic levels⁶.

A number of specialist users contrasted the implications for the two approaches and expressed particular concerns about relying on an administrative data and surveys approach.

7.1 Use of LS, SARs and interaction data for research

Respondents began by describing how valuable the LS, the SARs and other products that draw upon record level census data, are to their research.

'[the LS] has often been referred to as an international 'gold standard' of longitudinal data sets. In contrast to cohort studies (which typically follow, over time, a sample of all persons born in a particular year, and are themselves a valuable resource), the LS is a continuously-refreshed sample of people of all ages and characteristics ...'

The Centre for Longitudinal Study Information and User Support (CeLSIUS)

'The survey/administrative option will mean the end of exceptionally valuable census datasets including the Samples of Anonymised Records, the Longitudinal Study and the Interaction data. These datasets are unmatched by any other available in the UK and their sample sizes make them uniquely appropriate for the study of ethnicity.'

ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity

'Members of the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) investigate a wide range of topics centred on the themes of social dynamics and social inequality. In particular we are concerned with how class, gender, ethnicity and ageing affect issues such as employment, education, social mobility, health and wellbeing, community cohesion, and social and civic participation. Much of the work conducted is taken up by the media as well as public and NGO agencies and has had a strong impact on policy discussions. CCSR members use a variety of Census products in this work including published tables, SARs, interaction/flow data and longitudinal data [and so would be concerned at the possibility of their loss].'

Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR)

⁵ For more information see: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/longitudinal-study/index.html>

⁶ For more information see: <http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/sars/>

7.2 Loss of record level and interaction data

The main concern for respondents who discussed the LS and SARs was that if there was a move away from a decennial census, there would be a loss of record level data to enable longitudinal research. Others were concerned about loss of 'interaction' data such as travel-to-work data traditionally produced from the census.

'... the ONS Longitudinal Study ... is a unique longitudinal record of how since 1971 we have moved from the end of the post-war settlement, through de-industrialisation and the feminisation of the workforce to globalisation. '

Imperial College London

'It would no longer be possible, in the absence of reliable population estimates, to determine how representative of the population the LS was. However, since the LS up to 2011 was to a high degree representative of the population, LS data could be used to assess the extent of non-coverage of the population by future substitutes for the census. This use would of course be time-limited as the LS would be presumed to have become increasingly less representative.'

The Centre for Longitudinal Study Information and User Support (CeLSIUS)

'Crucially, a move to an Admin+Survey census would not allow the production of a longitudinal data product comparable to the present census Longitudinal Studies that have proved so important for understanding health and economic outcomes across the life course. A further loss would be the interaction datasets, as no proposal is made for the production of these which currently describe internal migration flows and journeys to work - for which a relatively small area geographical base is essential for any research which hopes to understand interaction patterns.'

Research Councils UK with the Economic and Social Research Council

8 Wales

The census covers England and Wales and there were particular issues of language and rural living in Wales addressed by Welsh respondents.

8.1 Welsh language

Retaining the ability to understand the use of the Welsh language was the main concern expressed in relation to Wales.

'Small area statistics relating to Welsh are vital for an understanding of the changing position of Welsh as a communal language. ...Loss of the only source of geographically detailed information about the whole population's Welsh skills would remove by far the largest part of the evidence base for the development and evaluation of policies for the Welsh language relating to geographically defined communities.'

Welsh Language Commissioner

'Statistics on the Welsh language and people's Welsh language proficiency are very important as they enable us to analyse the position of the Welsh language across Wales and in great detail in our communities.'

Welsh Language Society

'As a body representing both England and Wales we are especially concerned about reliable information on the attributes of minorities and on Welsh language The examples used are based on an "average" local authority 160,000 - far bigger than those which have a higher percentage of Welsh speakers.'

The Royal Town Planning Institute

8.2 Remote regions in Wales

Wales has smaller local authorities than England and many very rural, sparsely populated areas. Welsh respondents stated their requirement for small area statistics to capture the specific needs of these areas.

'Welsh local authority populations are generally smaller than in England. The average population of a local authority in Wales is 140,000, and seven local authorities have a population of less than 100,000. The administrative data option requires the use of aggregated data for population characteristics because of the small sample size of its population survey. This aggregated data will be less effective in Wales than in England, because of the size of our population areas, and margins of error will be larger. These larger margins of error, especially for characteristics occurring at a low rate in a population, will make the identification of trends difficult.'

Local Government Data Unit Wales

'These small area data are used in two main ways: 1) as small areas per se e.g. in designing small area bids for ECO energy schemes where criteria specify areas up to 500 households and most are far lower; 2) as building blocks to create larger 'real world' areas such as local housing markets or labour market areas. In rural areas these are best defined using LSOA units (our experience is that larger MSOA areas do not fit well with natural catchment areas). Without these small area data we would have problems with analysing local circumstances and making a consider[ed] policy response.'

Ceredigion County Council

'The loss of the OA statistics would have a particular effect on sparsely populated rural areas in particular. Accurate statistics are needed in order to plan policies effectively, e.g. education, health, policing, housing, business support... The lack of OA statistics will make it difficult for Community Councils to measure the numbers within minority groups (ethnic, health problems, economically disadvantaged etc) in their communities and to assess their needs properly.'

One Voice Wales

8.3 Deprivation and digital exclusion

Welsh service providers described their need for small area data to help them to identify issues relating to deprivation and health inequalities, and were concerned about the potential impact of digital exclusion on an online census.

'Public Health Wales believes that a universal Census should be undertaken in 2021. The loss of detailed multivariate data with the ability to drill-down to small area level together with the loss of the Census as a source of high quality data for triangulation purposes would be detrimental to public health intelligence and its ability to monitor population health and determinants at small area level.'

Public Health Wales NHS Trust

'Whilst the internet Census questionnaire was seemingly a success in 2011 moving to an online focus carries with it important risks in relation to digital inclusion in Wales. A higher proportion of households in Wales are digitally excluded than many areas in England. Whilst as a Government we are clearly keen to develop digital services online for citizens and look at the efficiency savings that can be made, we also want to ensure that those in most need are not excluded. It may be just these groups that we need information about in order to target resources and services effectively to support the most vulnerable in our communities. We welcome the commitment that other means of response would be possible, although the lack of detail means at this stage this will remain a concern.'

Welsh Government

9 Family history and historical research

Many people use the historical census data for genealogical and family history purposes while others use it for social history research.

This section summarises the responses received from those individuals and organisations whose primary interest is in using historical, record level census returns released after 100 years for the purposes of family history and social history research. 70 per cent of those who responded as individuals use census data for family history and 11 per cent responding on behalf of organisations.

9.1 The value of the decennial census

Many respondents stressed the importance of the census as a snapshot of the British population, and an irreplaceable source of information about family history and communities.

'History shows that the decennial census is a fundamental democratic institution, valued as such by citizens in all their diversity, in their relations to each other and to the state; it is not simply an information gathering device for statisticians.'

History and Policy (A collaborative group of scholars at University of Cambridge and King's College London)

'Unless there is to be a 100% population register, which appears to be unlikely, it is essential that a 100% census continues to take place at least as often as every 10 years. This is the only way to ensure that it is fully representative of all sections of the population and can be an effective basis for a comprehensive record of the population for future family history and other research.'

Federation of Family History Societies

9.2 Attitude to change

Many individual respondents opposed any notion of ending the current decennial census and a few went further and opposed moving to an online census.

'The 1851-1911 Census provided lots of information much of which is vital for historical research, a hobby that has been booming for at least 50 years and is still growing, providing countless hours of pleasure and peace of mind that cannot be measured in financial terms or by the questions in this survey. Please restore the questions asked in the 1851-2011 Census in future decennial censuses. How else will future family historians be able to establish the place of birth for the thousands of people in their study?'

Trevor William Rix

'Important social and family history will be lost at a stroke. How can a government department now, in the early 21st century, decide to deny all this rich information to researchers in the future? If previous generations had done this for the sole sake of cost-cutting, our generation would not have such a tremendous source of social and family history available to them. Please continue with the Census as it was in 2011.'

Josephine Doe

However, most family historians accepted that the online census approach would provide the information they required.

'I am in favour of the continued use [of] a census once a decade. In the short-term I believe this approach would continue to produce rich, quality data on individuals and their families. As more responses are completed online, I think the costs per household would reduce. In the long-term, this

rich, quality data would continue to be an invaluable resource to researchers of both family and social history. ‘

Jackie Atkinson

‘However, I am strongly in favour of a continuation of the existing system online, every ten years. Since the first useable census in 1841, a vivid and generally accurate snapshot of England has been produced, that has provided detailed information for historians in many ways that the original census writers could not have anticipated. It has been not only a source of vital information at the time, but essential social history that has enabled later historians to interpret the past with a degree of confidence and factual accuracy. ‘

Gillian Wood

9.3 Administrative data and family history research

Most family historians did not support the administrative data and surveys approach because they did not think that it offered any opportunities to future historians.

‘In no terms can we see how annually collected data from administrative areas could possibly meet the level of historical and personal detail now seen from the progressive enhancement evident in the 1901 and even better 1911 data. This Family History Group’s collective experience tells us that the accuracy of administrative data is ever questionable: especially from a family and local history point of view. By its very nature data that was created by the householder must be more accurate and up to date. For the benefit of future family historians we implore you to continue the [decennial] census.’

Family History Society of Cheshire

‘We could not support a census based on administrative data....an administrative census can only be as accurate as the date of the compilation of its various components, which may all have differing relevant date accuracy thus rendering such a census meaningless. For example, the NHS data base has the age of X as Y, while the DWP has his/her age as W - which is correct? The place of birth could only be established from GRO records, which unless each birth certificate is individually scanned could only give, from the indices, the place of registration, and none of that would cover those born and registered outside the UK. ‘

Pontefract and District Family History Society

However, others could see potential benefits from the extra information provided by administrative data as long as it was a supplement to, not a substitute for, the decennial census.

‘Clearly the more information on individuals which is accessible and indexed thoroughly the better. Genealogists and historians are trying to bring a picture to life of the focus of their research. If the focus is an individual a rounded picture will only come from multiple sources. Similarly if the approach is towards a specific social group the range of comprehensive information will assist enormously.’

Hazel Dakers

‘There are significant advantages for the genealogical researcher ... in being able to use data which has been provided directly by an individual themselves. This can allow important insights into family circumstances and relationships. Although administrative data sources are also important, where discrepancies are found it is helpful to be able to compare and contrast data recorded by third parties with data provided by the subject. We have a duty to future populations to maintain a rich and varied resource about the present.’

Wealden District Council

10 Change and risk

This section summarises respondents' views on change, the associated risks and the best way forward.

10.1 The need for change

Despite resistance by a small minority, over 90 per cent of respondents were positive towards a change in approach, understanding this requirement within the context of broad societal shifts such as rapid population change, increasing digitisation and austerity.

'More regular local statistics are needed to govern the UK in the 21st Century....While indicating benefit from more frequent statistics, the administrative data and attributes survey option does not provide more than age-sex structure or univariate characteristics for local areas, while the Census option provides the detail but not the frequency desired.'

Beyond 2011 Independent Working Group

10.2 Support for change to an online census

Nine out of ten respondents were positive about moving to an online census.

'The ONS proposals for a census conducted online shows that census arrangements are responding to advances in technology and should become cheaper to organise and deliver as new methods bed in. Importantly ONS have commented that the 2011 online census responses were of good quality.'

Public Health England

'We acknowledge fully that technology makes possible a move to more efficient delivery of a census, and therefore support the proposal of using an online methodology as the primary mode of completion. This reflects the relative success of the online method in London in 2011 (a 21 per cent response rate was recorded in the capital, compared with 16 per cent nationally), as well as the advances in technology and projected take up of it between now and the next Census.'

Greater London Authority

10.3 Support for increased use of administrative data

Similarly four out of five respondents were positive about the principle of using administrative data and surveys.

'The work the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has done to date on the use of administrative data and the promise of further developments show significant potential in terms of the population count. It is clear that as a Government Statistical Service (GSS) we need to be making more use of administrative data to develop systems that reduce the burden on households and enable us to develop a richer and more timely evidence base.'

Welsh Government

'Northamptonshire County Council recognises the need to modernise the Census process using all available technology and thus acknowledges the long term (post 2021) potential of aligning Government departmental administrative databases with the Census statistical requirements. It is believed that these sources will eventually improve the current gap in accurate socio-demographic information which occurs towards the end of a Census period.'

Northamptonshire County Council

'The ONS has shown, in a relatively short space of time, that administrative sources have a real potential to be used to produce more timely population statistics.'

Public Health England

10.4 Risks of changing too quickly

Whilst the majority of respondents could see value in further developing the administrative data and surveys approach, many felt that the risks of implementing an untested approach in time for the 2021 Census were too great.

'To embark on [the administrative data and surveys option] now would seem incredibly risky and we follow the view from Professor Skinner's report that currently there is not sufficient evidence that the proposals are deliverable. We are concerned that the administrative approach would not allow analysis to the low geographical levels which are essential for many aspects of our work.'

Dorset County Council

'Our biggest concern in the use of the Admin Data and Annual Survey option is that despite all the research carried by the ONS during the Beyond 2011 Project, the methodology is still untried compared to that used for a traditional census which has been improved again and again over the years. Although the research has shown promise (and hopefully will lend itself to other improvements in population estimates) and despite the fact that some elements are similar to those used in a traditional census, we have yet to be convinced that making a wholesale change in the way the census is carried out is the correct decision.'

Hertfordshire County Council

'The proposed new approach based on administrative data shows great potential but it is unproven, and insufficient evidence is provided to generate confidence that statistics derived from such an approach would be capable of meeting similar standards to those currently available from the census.'

Higher Education Statistics Agency

Many respondents were positive about the work undertaken by the Beyond 2011 Programme to date. However a change to the approach could not be introduced until ONS had produced evidence that the alternative could meet user needs, especially for information on very small areas and small population groups. Nor was everyone convinced that adopting the administrative data and surveys approach would actually save the public purse.

'We agree with Professor Skinner's conclusions from his independent review of the proposed methodology behind the proposals for a system based on administrative data. He notes that whilst the analysis undertaken by ONS to date was well conducted and useful, it falls short of evidence and other preconditions to make such a radical transformation a reality.'

Regional Studies Association

'In spite of very good research so far, there is much about admin data that has not been proven, so it is far from a replacement for the census. The accuracy that has been demonstrated so far is inadequate and it is not sound in all cases to improve it by combining years. Also, there seems to be no real material difference in cost between the two methods described and, thus the argument to change on cost grounds is weak.'

Katalysis Limited

The potential consequences of implementing an untested method were flagged, in particular risks relating to statistical quality and the lack of a reliable benchmark.

'It is unclear what will be used to "sense-check" the estimates from administrative data sources and annual rolling sample surveys. Without a decennial Census to act as a benchmark, it will be difficult to evaluate the accuracy of annual estimates. Without comparing the differing proposed methodologies, it is too early to say whether the proposed approach of relying on administrative sources will provide fit for purpose population estimates.'

Manchester City Council

Many respondents argued that any transition to an annual census based on administrative data and surveys would require a long-term transition. Some said that this should include some element of 'dual-running' of both methods as took place in Scandinavian countries over a number of decades and is now being planned in New Zealand. This would ensure that the alternative approach is producing reliable data before any change is introduced.

'A change of this magnitude risks being rushed through in such a manner as to cause damage to evidence-based policy making. If it can be proved through pilot processes undertaken around the time of the 2021 Census that alternative mechanisms will be as good as the Census then a further discussion could be held. But to make these changes in advance of 2021 is misguided.'

Royal Town Planning Institute

'Other countries that have moved away from conventional census enumeration have done so by making a long-term, planned transition which has ensured that reliable data are available to users under the new system before the previous approach is fully dismantled.'

Research Councils UK with the Economic and Social Research Council

'It would be a very high risk to plan to use this method for 2021; however, we believe that work should continue to develop this approach. The use of administrative data could, in due course, provide a viable alternative to the 'traditional' census; but this would not be possible (we believe) on the timescale required for 2021. So ONS should continue to develop this approach while Option A [online census] is implemented for 2021.'

Association of Census Distributors

'Several countries contemplating moving away from census-based population data collection have planned to run any new approach alongside a conventional census for at least one iteration. We would strongly urge a similar approach in the UK, were any decision to be made to abandon the Census in the long term. An immediate change to a new approach in 2021 would be extremely detrimental, and as such is too risky to contemplate.'

The British Academy

10.5 Options for 'dual running'

'Dual running' was not consulted on directly, but it was raised by almost a third of respondents, and particularly in responses from many organisations. Indeed, many suggested that it would be unwise, risky or reckless to abandon the decennial census, whether online or paper-based, before the administrative data and surveys approach had been fully tested.

'The precautionary principle suggests that this new approach should be fully developed, tested and proven before the "once a decade" approach is abandoned. I suggest that both approaches should be run in parallel over the next decade and that a post-2021 comparative evaluation should form the basis of a decision on which approach to adopt from then on.'

Professor Peter Lynn

'We would hope that the ONS still has flexibility to consider variants or hybrids of the options proposed and that other potential outcomes have not been ruled out....In summary, we would urge the ONS to explore other alternative solutions that represent the best features of Options A [online census] and B [admin + surveys].'

Institute and Faculty of Actuaries

'If as it stands this option was agreed upon by Parliament as the preferred approach then London Councils believes that a 'dual running' approach to the next census should be undertaken. It would be necessary for an online census with 100% population coverage to be run concurrently, to enable any meaningful population statistics to be produced. This would help mitigate uncertainty around implementation of new methods and new approaches as well as development of new computer system.'

London Councils

'Overall (the) two alternatives (admin data vs. Census) should not be viewed as either/or choices but should be combined. It would make much sense to expand the use of administrative data in census estimates. As the consultation document makes clear, this will take many years to develop. We should drive this development forward but we would be nervous about committing at this point to abandon the traditional census. The new system essentially needs to be brought up to speed before we can decide whether a traditional census has become redundant. Being able to compare the results from administrative data to an actual census will also be the only way to really judge the reliability and comparability of the data generated by a greater reliance on administrative data.'

Centre for Economic Performance

10.6 'Dual running' as a transition to an administrative data based approach

Some respondents felt that adopting a hybrid approach in 2021 should be viewed as being part of a long-term transition from a more traditional census-taking approach to one based predominantly on administrative data.

'... a more phased transition would be strongly advised and welcomed, as it would permit the implementation of administratively based systems before removing the census option, and enable a full evaluation of step changes in key variables which will inevitably result from use of different measurement systems.'

Research Councils UK with the Economic and Social Research Council

'...BSPS encourages the continuation, and indeed intensification, of this work through to 2021 so as to provide the best possible evidence base on which to then make a decision on the need for a full census subsequently, with the hope that an annual updating of census-type data could be possible in 2022 onwards.'

British Society for Population Studies

10.7 'Dual running' as a permanent solution

Many respondents saw adopting some type of hybrid approach for 2021 as a permanent solution rather than as part of a transition; advocating the continuation of an (online) decennial census approach supplemented by the increased use of administrative data and surveys.

'We can....see the potential benefits in extending the use of admin data to supplement census data in-between 10 year collections. Therefore we support the further testing of administrative data with a view to using it to enhance information collected through a (largely) online Census but not to replace it.'

Social Research Association

'Both approaches contain useful elements. Ideally, our preference would be for elements of both options to be combined to enable more up to date and trending data to be provided from the annual administrative data option whilst also benefiting from the detail possible at and below ward level through the online census once a decade. We suggest that the costs and benefits of a combined approach should be considered.'

Wealdon District Council

'From SAHSU's perspective, an optimal solution would be a combination of the two approaches described by ONS: the continuation of a census once a decade to secure a reliable base of small area data and in addition the use of administrative data and/or surveys to update and expand the mid-year population estimates (e.g. by releasing more population characteristics such as ethnicity at the small area level).'

Small Area Health Statistics Unit

It was recognised that combining the two approaches would increase the cost. However, the additional cost was considered by many respondents to represent good value for money.

'We recognise the extra cost entailed, but ... such an approach could be regarded as providing savings in the future for a little extra investment now.'

Local Government Association

Respondents called for ONS to continue developing the use of administrative data for the production of population statistics regardless of the final decision, expressing appreciation for the potential benefits the new approaches could bring to the system.

'ONS (should) continue to explore the use of administrative data held by Government and other agencies to produce statistics on the size and basic demographic characteristics of the population on a regular and on-going basis...[and that] ONS pursues research into further possibilities for using administrative data to obtain statistics on other detailed attributes and characteristics of the population, particularly, but not exclusively, those which may not be available through a Census.'

Greater London Authority

'As it stands, the current emphasis in Alternative B on sample surveys offers little to users for whom OA-level statistics are the top priority. We hope, therefore, that ONS will continue its excellent work to develop the administrative data options swiftly. We hope that advances in this area would reduce the need for the expensive sample surveys.'

Demographic User Group

'We do not consider that the administrative model is incapable of delivering data at the levels of spatial and socioeconomic detail required for research, but there lacks detail with regards to these issues. Nevertheless, the ESRC does recognise the huge opportunities of using administrative data and has recently invested over £30m in administrative data research infrastructure, which in time will complement the development of the Admin + Survey option.'

Research Councils UK with the Economic and Social Research Council

'The work that the Office for National Statistics has undertaken in developing the administrative data option has shown that it is possible to update some population statistics more regularly by using administrative data. We would therefore welcome greater use of administrative data, provided that this is not at the expense of small area data which is vital to the voluntary sector and local communities.'

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action

In particular, the methods being developed were seen as having potential to improve the Mid-Year Population Estimates.

'The current methodology for estimating populations in the inter-censal periods however do not work for LBHF, and are not an accurate reflection of our population. We would encourage a mechanism where administrative data is considered in these situations and estimates are revised.'

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

'MRS and the CGG would encourage and welcome continued research and development of the use of administrative data in addition to the Option A [online census] Census. This has the potential to significantly improve population estimates, and possibly other demographic estimates, in intercensal periods.'

The Market Research Society (MRS) and the MRS Census & Geodemographics Group (CGG)

'However, as administrative data is already used to verify existing Census data and to help calculate ONS mid-year population estimates there is no reason why the administrative approach suggested could not be applied to some extent to improve population estimates, perhaps with a single mid-decade sample survey to verify population estimates.'

Association of North East Councils

10.8 Suggestions for future work

Several respondents made suggestions for further work and called for more dialogue with ONS whichever approach was adopted.

'We have read the methodological report by Skinner, Hollis and Murphy (2013) and agree with their view that if this option is adopted, a substantial programme of methodological research should be

undertaken to assess whether the increase in online responses relative to 2011 are associated with changes in measurement error and non-response bias'

Social Research Association

'We would like to press for significant efforts [to] be devoted to improving the quality of admin data which we know to be often incomplete and full of inaccuracies. Staff who collect admin data will need to understand the importance of accuracy and have adequate time to do careful data entry. ONS will need to be able to check for the integrity and completeness of admin data used for Census purposes and take steps to ensure it is fit for purpose'

Social Research Association

'It may well be appropriate for London to have a separate approach to reflect the inherent difficulties in accurately estimating its population. London local government would welcome the opportunity to explore this and work with ONS in understanding the issues and improving both census processes and population statistics for the capital. The current lack of any recognition of London's specific needs in the proposed approaches combined with scant recognition of the important role local authorities already play in census taking is of concern and needs addressing.'

London Councils

'We are particularly keen that ONS develops a methodology that allows local areas to provide useful data to fine tune the findings. This may only be available in some areas and not others but could provide a degree of granularity needed in certain areas. We are concerned if the ONS is setting a bar that only enables national datasets to be used in the same way everywhere. There are areas where more detailed datasets would be relevant but would not have to be used or available elsewhere. We would welcome a dialogue with the ONS on how best to reflect local circumstances and to bring in the expertise of our members on their local areas.'

Local Area Research and Intelligence Association

'There is far greater potential for the generation of social characteristics from administrative data sources than has yet been explored. While legislation is not in place to ensure the quality of attribute statistics from administrative data, it would not be proper to rely on them, and they are not part of the current proposals. But their exploitation should be a priority within the future of official statistics.'

Beyond 2011 Independent Working Group

Appendix A: Consultation questions

The consultation document and online questionnaire contained the following questions:

Q1: What are your views of the different census approaches described in this document?

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?

Q4.1: 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 impact?

Q5.1: 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.

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?

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

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

Respondents provided their answers in various ways on the questionnaire – sometimes cross referencing or providing their full response within a single question. We have categorised and coded responses, as far as possible, to reflect our understanding of what was intended by each respondent – independent of the question a view was recorded against.

Appendix B: List of respondents

Responses were received from the following organisations and individuals.

Respondents who asked for their responses not to be published are indicated with *. The published response is an automatic extract from our online system so formats vary but should reflect the response made. Where respondents provided their comments in a way other than via the online system (for example by email) these have been entered by ONS to try and reflect the views expressed.

No organisation or affiliation is provided where respondents have chosen to respond as individuals. Addresses are excluded throughout. There were several anonymous individual responses.

Organisational responses

Academy of Medical Sciences	Brent Council
Academy of Social Sciences	Bridgend County Borough Council
Age UK Isle of Wight	Bridgend Local Service Board
Archbishops' Council, Church of England	Bristol City Council
Arts Council England	British Academy
Association of North East Councils	British Association for Local History
Aylesbury Vale District Council	British Society for Population Studies
Bank of England *	Brize Norton Parish Council
Barnsley MBC	CACI Limited
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Bath and North East Somerset Council	Calderdale Family History Society
Beacon Dodsworth	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Becontree Heath Islamic Society (DCM) Limited	Callcredit Information Group
Berkshire Association of Local Councils	Cambridge City Council
Berkshire Family History Society	Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge
Bewnans Kernow	Cambridgeshire County Council
Beyond 2011 Independent Working Group	Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Birmingham City Council	Cardiff Council, Children's Services
Black Country Consortium	Carmarthenshire County Council
Blackpool Council	Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Central Government Joint Response *
Borough of Poole	Centre for Economic Performance
Bournemouth Borough Council	
Bracknell Forest Council	

Ceredigion County Council	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Chartered Institute of Housing	East Sussex County Council
Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils	Electoral Commission
Cheshire East Council	Enfield Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council	English Heritage
Chichester District Council	Equality and Diversity Forum
Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils	Equality and Human Rights Commission
City and County of Swansea	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
City of London Corporation	Economic and Social Research Council Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity
City of York Council	Essex County Council
Colchester Borough Council	European Institute for Urban Affairs
Community Council for Berkshire	Faculty of Public Health
Computer Group, Family History Society of Cheshire	Family History Society of Cheshire
Cornwall Council	Federation of Family History Societies
Coventry City Council	Fellside Team of Parishes
Cumbria Association of Local Councils	First Group plc (UK Bus Division)
Cumbria County Council	Forest of Dean District Council
Cumbria Rural Housing Trust	Gateshead Council
Curry Mallet Parish Council	Gavurin Ltd
Dartmouth Town Council	GfK
Data Analysis Service for Oxfordshire's five District Councils	Gosport Borough Council
Demographic User Group	Government Actuary's Department *
Devon County Council	Greater London Authority
Discrimination Law Association	Greenfields Community Housing
Diverse Cymru	Guide Dogs for the Blind
Dorset County Council	Gwynedd Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	HACT (the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust)
Durham County Council	Hampshire County Council
East Lindsey District Council	Health and Social Care Information Centre

Health Statistics User Group (HSUG)	Livewire - A Community Interest Company
Healthwatch	Livewire Culture and Leisure Trust
HEAR Network	Local Area Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA)
Hertfordshire County Council	Local Government Association
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales	Local Government Data Unit Wales
Higher Education Statistics Agency	London Borough of Bexley
History and Policy	London Borough of Camden
Homeless Link	London Borough of Ealing
Homes and Communities Agency	London Borough of Hackney
Housing Statistics Network	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Housing Vision	London Borough of Haringey
Huntingdonshire District Council	London Borough of Harrow
Hywell Dda Health Board	London Borough of Lambeth
IAITH Cyf.	London Borough of Lewisham
Imperial College London	London Borough of Newham
Information Commissioner's Office	London Borough of Redbridge
Institute and Faculty of Actuaries	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Institute for Jewish Policy Research	London Councils
International Longevity Centre - UK	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Irish in Britain	Lost Cousins Limited
JICPOPS (Joint Industry Committee for Population Standards)	Manchester City Council
Katalysis Limited	Melton Borough Council
Keep Me Posted	Menter Bro Dinefwr
Kingston Borough Council	Merseytravel (Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive)
Kirklees Council	Metropolitan Police Service
Kirtlington Parish Council	Middlesbrough Council
Knightstone Housing	Migration Advisory Committee
Knowledge Perspectives Limited	Milton Keynes Council
Leeds Federated Housing Association	Muslim Council of Britain
Lincolnshire County Council	

National Centre Social Research	Peak District National Park Authority
National Association of British Arabs	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Small Charities Coalition	Pembrokeshire County Council
National Readership Survey	Pontefract and District Family History Society
Natural Resources Wales	Portsmouth City Council
NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action)	Powys County Council
New Economy	Public Health
New Forest District Council	Public Health England
New Forest National Park Authority	Public Health Wales NHS Trust
Newark and Sherwood District Council	Quod
Newcastle City Council	RAC Foundation
Norfolk County Council	Race for Opportunity
North Yorkshire County Council	Radian
Northamptonshire County Council	RAJAR Limited (Radio Joint Audience Research)
Northumberland County Council	Redbridge Council for Voluntary Service
Norwich City Council	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Nottingham City Council	Regional Studies Association
Office for National Statistics - Classifications and Harmonisation Unit	Research Councils UK / Economic and Social Research Council
Office for National Statistics Geography	Research Service, National Assembly for Wales
Oldham Council	Rochford District Council
One Voice Wales	Route Research Limited
Open Data Institute	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Open Data User Group (ODUG)	Royal Geographic Society with IBG
Opinion Research Services	Royal Historical Society, Economic History Society, Social History Society
Oxford City Council	Royal Town Planning Institute
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	RSMB Limited
Oxfordshire County Council	Royal Statistical Society
Papplewick Parish Council	Runnymede Borough Council
Parish Council of Bootle, Cumbria	Runnymede Trust

Rural Services Network	The British Sociological Association
Rushmoor Borough Council	The Centre for Longitudinal Study Information and User Support (CeLSIUS)
Savills Residential Research	The Debating Group
Scottish Directors of Public Health	The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	The Lesbian & Gay Foundation
Shelter	The Market Research Society (MRS) and the MRS Census & Geodemographics Group (CGG)
Shropshire Council	The National Archives
Sikh Council UK	Torfaen County Borough Council
Small Area Health Statistics Unit (SAHSU)	University of Essex
Snowdonia National Park Authority	Wallasey Group, Family History Society of Cheshire
Social Research Association	Warwickshire Observatory
Somerset County Council (Somerset Intelligence)	Wealden District Council
South West Public Health Registrars	Welsh Government
South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue	Welsh Language Commissioner
Southampton City Council	Welsh Language Society
Southend Borough Council	West of England Public Health Intelligence Group on behalf of the Directors of Public Health in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset
Southwark Council	Westminster City Council
Stafford Borough Council	Wiltshire Council
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Wolverhampton City Council
Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils	Wookey Parish Council
Suffolk County Council (with Babergh/ Mid Suffolk District Councils, West Suffolk District Council)	Worcester City Council
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service	Yorkshire Local Councils Associations
Sunderland City Council	Your Aussie Ancestry
Tees Valley Unlimited - Representing the Unitary Authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees	
Teignbridge District Council	
Tendring District Council	
The Association of Census Distributors	
The British Library	

Individual responses

Adair, Barbara	Bates, Jim	Buller, Marian
Ahrens, Susan	Beesley, Brian	Burns, Rob
Akehurst, MML	Beilby, J	Burrows, Julia
Aldred, Rachel	Belch, Jill	Burwell, Dr Andrew David Martin
Allan, Charles	Bellamy, Ms JM	Callister, Denise
Allan, George	Bennett, John C	Campbell, Ken
Allen, Chris	Bennett, Maureen	Campbell, Samantha
Allen, Mrs C	Bevington, Shirley	Canney, James
Allen, Nick	Bibby, John	Carey-Clinch, Craig
Allen, Wendy J	Biddlestone, Shelagh	Carter, S
Allgood, Andrea	Bines, Natahca	Chadwick, Michael
Allin, Paul	Biscoe, James	Chapman, Bill
Andersen, Margaret	Black, John	Cheshire, James
Ansell, George	Blewett, Matt	Clements, Jonathan
Ashley-Edden, L	Bollada, Alison	Coblenz, Martyn
Aspden, George	Bolt, S	Coleman, David
Aston, Mr J	Bowers, Grace	Cook, Terence
Atherton, Eileen	Bowstead, Janet	Cornell, Nicole
Atherton, Iain	Boyce, David	Cowan, Robert
Atherton, Roger	Boyles, Richard H	Cowlard, Dr Keith
Atkinson, Jackie	Bramley, Mike	Cozens, Harriet
Avery, Don R	Brammer, Christopher R	Crossley, Joseph
Bailey, Karla	Brass, John	Crowther, Julian
Bailey, Roger	Brett, Sue	Cunningham, Christine
Baker, Martin	Brierley, Anne	Cunningham, Frances
Banks, Janice	Brierley, Peter	Curtis, Professor Sarah
Barker, JC	Brimelow, Alan	Dakers, Hazel
Barker, S	Brock, James	Dansey, T
Barnard, Steve	Broomfield, David	Darby, Nell
	Brough, Lesley	Darnborough, Jennifer
	Browning, Roger	

Darville, Sue	Evans, Hilary	Green, Michael
David, Jonathan	Eveleigh, Paul	Green, Ray
Davidson, Lee	Eyre, Elizabeth	Grey, Philip
Davis, Frances	Faife	Griffin, Laurence
Davis, Jocelyn	Faulder, David	Griffiths, Karen
Dawson, Dr John	Faulkner, Gemma	Groom, David
Day, Dr Abby	Featherstone, William P	Gussefeld, G
Day, Ian	Flecknoe, Kerry	Guyton, David F
De Hoxar, David	Floyde, David	Hague, Barbara
De Mercado, Roger	Forbes, Hilary	Haim, Marion
Deacon, Dr Bernard	Foster, Nick	Hallam, Trevor
Deacon, Stephen	Fox, Peter S.	Hamilton, David
Dedden, Lindsey	France, Anthony	Hammersley, Martin
Denney, John	Frayne, Jonathan	Harding, Ellen E
Depledge, Ian	Gainsborough, Peter	Harding, Roger
Derrick, Gwyn	Gaskell, Jeremy James	Hargrave, Nina
Dixon, Jane	Gay, Clifton	Harrold, Dauna
Dobson, Tom	George, Dudley	Harrop, M
Doe, Josephine	Gerlach, Justin	Hauley, Linda J
Doherty, M	Gerlach, Tom	Haunton, Melinda
Doran, Victoria	Giacomin, Audrey	Hawkins, Dennis
Downing, Mr	Gibbons, Susan	Heath, Daisy
Duckworth, S	Gibbs, Graham R	Heseltine, Patricia
Duxbury, M	Gibson, George	Hessey, Charles
Eales, Kevin	Gill, Roger	Higgs, Edward
Ebbitt, Najah	Glover, Ian	Hill, Christine
Elliott, Kathleen	Goldblatt, Peter	Hill, David
Erickson, Denis	Goodier, Mrs Joyce	Hird, Russell
Evans, Eirian	Goodyear, Barbara	Hockey, Martin
Evans, Elizabeth	Govind, Vinesh	Hoffman, Michael
Evans, GB	Gray, Sharon	Hoffman, Rosemary

Hollands, Mr TT	Kereve-Clarke, Jonathan	Mason, Sandra
Holmes, JE	Kerr, Euphemia Veronica	McIlvrde, Julia
Holmes, Julyan	Kersley, Arlene	McPhail, Sean
Hooker, Ian	King, Geoffrey	McSweeney, Chris
Horn, Les	King, Sarah	Mead, Barbara
Horton, Mrs J	Kirkby, Terry	Mead, Mrs Elisabeth
Houlden, G	Knight, Jack	Meadows, Roger Michael
Howard, Mary	Knox, Susan	Meghriche, Carol
Howard-Smith, Tim	Laidlaw, Jean	Melville, A
Howe, Veronica	Langston, Frances	Merricks, Peter
Howlett, Michael	Lawley, Derek	Meyer, Michal
Hughes, Frederick	Lennon, Mrs Barbara Ann	Miller, Ida
Hunt, AD	Lindon, John	Monk, Judith
Hurford, Anne	Lindsay, Jane	Moon, Graham
Hurwood, Duncan	Lloyd, Chris	Moore, C
Illingworth, Anne	Lockwood, S	Moore, Susan
Irving, Jim	Lockyer, Caroline	Morris, Mr AM
Janet	Long, Timo	Morris, Professor RJ
Jarrett, Brian	Lowe, Tim	Morse-Brown, Sy
Jeens, Ian WB	Luppi, G	Mueller, Andreas
Jefferies, Michael	Lynn, Professor Peter	Muntz, Margaret J
Jenkin, Loveday	MacNab, Peter	Murcott, Anne
Jenkin, Peter	Maguire, Maeve	Murray, Emily
Johnson, Professor Ian M	Mallory, Robert	Murray, Ian
Johnson, Steve	Malone, Ken	Mykhnenko, Dr Vlad
Jones, Pat	Marriott, Mayo	Neave, A
Jordan, Gary	Marshall, Dr Christopher E	Negyal, Ali
Kassman, Jenny	Martineau, Victorine	Newton Webb, Philip
Keik, Peter	Mary	Nicholls, Nigel
Kelly, Andrew	Mason, Eric	Nixon, Linda
Kemp, Ken	Mason, John	Norris, Jackie M

Norvill, Gerry	Pryor, Henry	Sarodia, Noor-ul-Hassan
O'Reilly, Francis	Purves, E	Saunders, Alison
Oliver, Julian	Quinn, Mary	Saunders, Ben
Outhred, Stuart	Race, Louise	Sharpe, KD
Owen, David	Rajput, Owais	Sharples, Mrs Catharine
Owen, Godfrey	Ramon, Anne	Shaw, Noel
Owen, Richard	Rayner, DB	Shaw, RS
P C	Rees, Philip	Shearson, Derek
Page, Eleanor	Rendall, Deborah	Shepard, Jane
Geoffrey Palmer, Geoffrey	Rhys, Arfon	Shepherd, Colin
Paranandi, Caroline	Rhys, Mirain	Shirley
Parker, Brian	Riley, Mrs Enid	Short, Adam
Parker, Gillian	Riley, Raymond	Simons, Graham
Parr, Gwen	Rippin, Keith	Simons, Nick
Parsons, Janet	Rix, Trevor William	Sloane, Professor Peter J
Patterson, Dr Stephen	Roberts, Donald	Sloggett, Andy
Pearce, Pearce	Roberts, Gloria	Smith, Gillian
Pearson, Mrs Janet	Roberts, Jan	Smith, L
Pelican, John	Roberts, Megan	Smith, Louisa
Phillips, Margaret	Roberts, Virginia	Smith, Mrs Gillian
Plewis, Ian	Robinson, Joshua	Smith, Sam
Potter, Lesley	Robson, John	Smith, Wendy
Potter, Marigold	Rodd, Barbara Mehew	Spigel, Ben
Poulson, Carole	Rowntree, Phyllis	Standing, AR
Powell, Gary	Rudge, Bob	Stanford, Michael
Powell, Jackie	Ryan, June	Staughton, June
Powell, Keith	S K	Staveley, Ken
Preece, Pauline	Sadler, Michael	Stephenson, Ian
Prieto-Alhambra, Dr Daniel	Sage, Richard	Stephenson, John
Proctor, Tony	Mrs Sampson, Mrs	Steward, Susan
Prosser, Jennifer	Sandison, Julia	Stocks, Pamela

Strank, S	Walker, David	Windeatt, Norma
Styles, Alan	Ward, Annastasia	Winkle, Andrea
Sutcliffe, Mary	Ward, Peter	Womble, Colin
Sutton, John	Warner, Pelham	Wood, Gillian
Swain, Carys	Waterson, David	Wood, Veronica
Swarbrick, Andy	Waterworth, Sandra	Woodcock, Anne
Taubman, Kate	Webster, Dr David	Woodhouse, Ron
Taylor, Sue	Wells, Christine	Woods, John
Taylor Willson, Tim	Wells, Georgina	Worcester, John
Thacker, Bill	Wells, Stephen C	Wright, Gail
Thompson, Kate	Wheeler, Dr Benedict W	Wright, Rachel
Thompson, Stephen	Whitehead, Andrew	Wright, Stephen
Thorpe, Janet	Whitewood-Moores, Zac	Wyatt-Lowe, County Councillor William
Tobin, Liz	Wiles, John	Xun, Wei
Trevethan, Mark	Wilks, John Charles	Yewlett, Chris
Tucker, David	Williams, John	Zaba, Basia
Turner, Carl	Williams, John Howard	Zell, Michael
Upstone, Nigel	Willis, Norman	Zorn, Joan
Varty, Caryl Prior	Willoughby, Pat	
Vaughan, Alison	Wilson, Ben	17 Anonymous Individuals

Appendix C: Consultation events and meetings

The following table records public events or meetings at which presentations were provided during the consultation period. Our main public consultation events are highlighted.

More than 500 people attended public meetings or presentations – and other meetings brought the total to over 850.

Event or meeting	Date	Approximate number of attendees
Demographics User Group - Members Meeting	20/09/13	20
Beyond 2011 media launch event	23/09/13	7
London consultation launch event	23/09/13	45
Manchester consultation launch event	25/09/13	50
Census Users Research Conference (ESRC sponsored)	27/09/13	110
Commercial users benefits meeting	03/10/13	5
Interdepartmental Strategy Group (Central Government Reps)	03/10/13	12
Cardiff consultation launch event	08/10/13	45
Members of Welsh Assembly briefing	09/10/13	-
Academy of Social Sciences	09/10/13	15
Statistics Suppliers and Users Group (StatSUG)	10/10/13	15
CLIP (Population Stats Group)	16/10/13	15
User Advisory Group (genealogy) - National Archive	17/10/13	45
Royal Geographic Society: Future of Small Area Population Statistics	21/10/13	140
Market Research Society & Census Geographics User Group	22/10/13	8
DWP analysts & statisticians	23/10/13	12
Meeting of London Chief Executives – Steering Group	05/11/13	10
Social Research Association	07/11/13	25
UK Data Forum	08/11/13	40
Health/Public Health England/HSCIC video meeting	08/11/14	12
Equality and Diversity Forum	13/11/14	20
London consultation closing event	22/11/13	90
Academy of Social Sciences	25/11/14	12
International Longevity Centre UK	25/11/14	40
British Academy	25/11/14	12
Manchester consultation closing event	27/11/13	50
London Finance Advisory Committee	02/12/13	10
Equality Impact Assessment review meeting	11/12/13	20

Separate discussions or briefings were also held with privacy groups, the Society of London Treasurers, a group of Members of Parliament and their researchers, and Welsh Assembly Members.

Appendix D: Types of use by sector

Table 1– Use of population and housing statistics by type of respondent

	Individuals	Percentages ¹			
		Govt. agency	Education or University	Local or sub-national govt.	Organisations Voluntary, community or non profit
Policy development	10	53	28	77	61
Policy monitoring and evaluation	12	47	22	71	61
Research – academic	24	20	61	6	29
Research - family history	69	7	22	7	16
Research – marketing	2	20	0	16	16
Research – policy	10	53	33	60	55
Research – social	23	53	33	50	55
Research - social history	41	20	28	10	22
Resource allocation	8	33	0	66	31
Service planning and delivery	13	27	0	75	41
Bidding for funds	7	13	11	69	47
Other planning purposes	6	7	0	58	24
Other research and analysis	14	27	22	52	35
Use not indicated	3	33	17	17	8
Totals	242	413	277	634	501

¹Percentages do not sum to 100 because many respondents indicated that they use the data for more than one reason.