

REVISIONS TO THE MID-2001 POPULATION ESTIMATES: IMPACT ON THE 2001 CENSUS AND THE PLANNING FOR 2011

Summary

- 1 ONS published, on 26 September, revisions to the mid-year population estimates for 2001 for local authorities in England and Wales, together with the mid-year estimates for 2002. Details can be found at:
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/methodology_by_theme/revisions_to_population_estimates/default.asp
- 2 The 2001 population estimate for England and Wales has been revised upwards by an amount which is less than 0.4 per cent of the overall population. Evidence from a variety of research sources indicated a shortfall of this size in the previously estimated mid-2001 population.

Key points

- 3 It is standard statistical practice for ONS to revise previously published figures once new information becomes available, **but Advisory Group members are asked to note the key points about the latest estimates:**
 - Both 2001 and 2002 mid-year population estimates are based upon the best available evidence and current understanding of the population.
 - The revisions to the 2001 mid-year population estimates reflect the analysis of further evidence which has identified a need for an upward adjustment of 193,000, mainly men in the 25-34 age group.
 - This revision does not undermine the Census results. The 2001 Census remains a rich and uniquely valuable source of information about the population of England and Wales at a snapshot date, and provides the most detailed information available at the local and national level.
- 4 However, users should be aware that the matching studies, currently being undertaken for Manchester and Westminster, are still in progress, and the results of these will be made publicly available in due course. Until the outcome of these reviews are known ONS cannot preclude further adjustments to the population estimates for some areas.
- 5 If the study shows that the Census has missed a substantial number of households so as to affect the population estimates, ONS will take the following action:

- Make an adjustment to the mid-year population estimate for Manchester and/or Westminster; and
- Identify other areas where such underenumeration may have occurred and investigate accordingly, and make further revisions for other authorities if they are necessary. This work will be carried out in Spring 2004.

Impact on the 2001 Census results and planning for 2011

- 6 ONS do not intend to adjust the published 2001 Census figures, and these should continue to be used for any detailed analysis that cannot be performed using the mid-year estimates.
- 7 In the meantime it is clear that significant changes are taking place in society which affect the measurement of population change. People are increasingly mobile, both within the UK and internationally and as a result the population is changing much more rapidly than in the past. Additionally, the population structures in which we live are increasingly fluid and complex. Increasing numbers reside at more than one address and geographic area - or even country, and are members of more than one household or family.
- 8 With such mobility and rapid change it is becoming increasingly difficult to count and also to define who should be counted, and ONS have been conducting a number of on-going studies aimed at improving understanding of the population and demographic analysis of England and Wales.
- 9 The Report *A Demographics Statistics Service for the 21st Century* highlights how ONS will continue to address the challenges of measuring an increasingly mobile and complex population. This work is part of a wider and longer-term programme of review of population statistics which includes the National Statistics Quality Review of International Migration.
- 10 The Report looks at who is using population statistics - in their widest sense - and for what purpose, and sets out plans to develop and enhance the range of available statistics. It can be found on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/Methodology_by_theme/downloads/Demographic_Statistics_Service.pdf
- 11 The proposed design for a 2011 Census will, in particular, address the need to improve the understanding of coverage and to provide outputs on multiple population bases (see discussion paper 'The 2011 Census: A proposed design for England and Wales').

Action

- 12 **Advisory Group members are asked to note the extent of the revisions to the mid-2001 population estimates and the key consequences.**

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