



## CENSUS ADVISORY GROUP

AG (07) 09

### 2011 CENSUS OUTPUT USER CONSULTATION: UPDATE

#### Introduction

- 1 In line with the 2011 Census Outputs User Consultation Strategy presented to Census Advisory Groups last year (AG(06)13), initial output research and consultation is focusing on users' high level requirements for both tabular output and micro-data samples. (Research on the detail of output products and services is timetabled to commence from summer 2008 onward).
- 2 As far as possible a UK approach is being taken to understanding users' high level output requirements with ONS, GROS and NISRA working collaboratively on different aspects of the planned output user consultation programme. This includes meeting regularly to share planned activities and best practice.
- 3 **Advisory Groups members are invited to note progress to date.**

#### User interviews and on-line survey

- 4 Census user communities are diverse and vary considerably in the detail and complexity of their output product and dissemination requirements. In order to further understanding of census user requirements and employment of census outputs, interviews have been conducted with a sample of 38 users drawn from the ONS Census Customer Services database. The sample was designed to include customers from across user communities including representatives from central and local government, the health service, commercial organisations and businesses, the academic and education community, and media.
- 5 The interviews were held with users at their workplace, using a combination of directed discussions and observation. They will help to provide an understanding of user requirements based on how users actually access and use census products in their work situation.
- 6 A small number of focus groups are also planned to explore the use of the Census and the requirements of community/voluntary groups and the general public.

- 7 Initial analysis of interview materials is currently being conducted. The results will feed into an on-line survey which will be used to test and quality assure themes emerging from the interviews with a much wider user base.
- 8 ONS, GROS and NISRA are collaborating in the design of the on-line survey and it will be possible to look separately at requirements of users of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Census data as well as affording an opportunity for a UK perspective.
- 9 Findings from the above research activities will also be analysed for common themes in order to reveal clusters of needs, uses and expertise both within and across sectors of users. These clusters will form the basis for the development of Census user types or personas which will aid output design.
- 10 The on-line survey is timetabled to commence in December 2007 and run for 12 weeks.
- 11 Census Advisory Group members and other users will be alerted to the survey via Census News and by an email shot to all known users using a combination UK Census Offices databases and an alerts on the Census Offices' web pages. Survey results will be reported to the Advisory Groups in the spring 2008 and personas presented for quality assurance by users.

### **Samples of Anonymised Records (SARs)**

- 12 A 2011 Census Microdata Strategy Working Group (CMSWG) was convened in May 2007. The group is responsible for determining the strategy for specification and production of microdata products from the 2011 Census. This includes sample specifications, production, licensing, access and dissemination arrangements.
- 13 Membership of CMSWG includes representatives from the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) at the University of Manchester (who manage the user interface for the licensed SARs products) and from GROS and NISRA.
- 14 CCSR have recently undertaken an on-line survey via their SARs webpage to explore users' high level requirements for 2011 Census microdata samples (and further user consultations on the details of the samples will be undertaken at a later date). Views were sought from both those who have used SARs in the past and those who may consider doing so in the future.
- 15 Initial survey findings will be presented at the next meeting of the SARs User Forum which will take place on 12th November 2007 at the Royal Statistical Society in London. The meeting is open to all interested parties. See (<http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/sars/events/>)

- 16 The survey findings will be discussed and taken forward at the next meeting of the CMSWG planned for late November 2007.

### **Census output geography**

- 17 Following consultation on the NS small area geography policy, a position of a high degree of stability both at the OA and SOA level has been adopted (see also the Highlight Report AG(07)06).
- 18 Although the primary geographical focus for 2011 Census output will be the OA hierarchy, 'best-fit' ward data will be produced as a minimum to meet user requirements. A decision to produce actual ward counts from 2011 Census data would impact on other areas of National Statistics, and work is currently being undertaken across relevant areas to investigate the feasibility, costs and benefits of producing ward level outputs before coming to a policy decision. There are also processing and Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) considerations which are being built into methodological and development work.
- 19 As stated in the geography consultation report, no decision has yet been made on the place of communal establishments in NS and Census outputs. Also there are currently no plans to establish business or workplace OAs. Views and evidence from the geography consultation exercise will be fed into development of Census output policy in these areas. (A copy of the consultation report can be downloaded at [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/Small\\_Area\\_Geography\\_Policy.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/Small_Area_Geography_Policy.asp))

### **Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC)**

- 20 A separate paper detailing progress on the development of the SDC strategy for 2011 Census outputs and arrangements for user consultation and feedback is being presented to Census Advisory Groups (see AG(07)10).

### **Further engagement with users**

- 21 ONS is continuing to explore options to establish forums to enable representatives from a cross-section of user communities to provide strategic guidance and feedback about output plans and development. These may include setting up an Internet community of practice.
- 22 User requirements gathered in the activities described above will feed into the development of the overall output strategy (including product development, SDC, methodology and dissemination model). However, factors such as conflicting user requirements, resource constraints, technical feasibility and disclosure control considerations will impact on the extent to which identified user requirements may be met.

### **ONS, Census Outputs, October 2007**