

Background

1. Households in the selected enumeration districts in Carmarthenshire will receive both the Welsh and English language versions of the Census Test questionnaire.
2. The Test questionnaire includes new questions and new instructions and guidance on completing the form. As these questions and instructions were developed in English before being translated into Welsh, it was essential to quality assure the Welsh questionnaires.

Quality Assurance Process

3. In order to quality assure the Welsh questionnaire, a group of Welsh statisticians and professional translators agreed to form part of this process. The Quality Assurance group included representatives from the Assembly's Statistical Directorate, the Assembly's Translation Unit (second stage only), the Welsh Language Board and the Data Unit.
4. The main aims of the group were to:
 - ensure consistency with the 2001 wording where possible
 - ensure consistency of style and terminology
 - ensure that the Welsh was an accurate reflection of the English
 - ensure that the text was as clear as possible
5. The first draft of the English Test questionnaire was translated by ONS contractors in Summer 2006. The QA group reviewed the translation and agreed on suggested changes to the questionnaire (for example use English acronyms for lesser-known qualifications eg 'GNVQ lefel 1' rather than 'CGCC lefel 1').
6. ONS methodologists cognitively tested the Welsh questionnaire by carrying out in-depth interviews with Welsh speakers. Although of very limited scale, this process was useful as no previous testing had been done on the Welsh questions and instructions, and the process identified some difficulties in the text and errors. The interviewees were also asked for their opinion on some of the changes suggested by the QA group, and it was reassuring to learn that the respondents agreed with those changes.
7. In October 2006, the English version of the test questionnaire was revised, and the final version translated by the same external contractors. Again, the QA group reviewed the draft translation before agreeing on suggested amendments. The QA groups were also given the opportunity of checking the questionnaire in its final format.

Problems and Issues

8. Amendments were still being made to the English version after it was sent to the translators. This caused some confusion with different versions. However, this was inevitable, as it was essential to begin work on translating and quality assuring the Welsh at an early stage in order to identify any problems and to allow for cognitive testing.
9. As part of the cognitive testing of the Welsh questionnaire only two Welsh speaking respondents were interviewed, and a Welsh learner carried out the interviews in English. Discussions are currently taking place between WAG and ONS about the possibility of seconding an Assembly Welsh-speaking researcher to ONS to undertake work on the development and testing of new questions over the next year or so (subject to funding).

Future Plans

10. The Census Director met with officials of the Welsh Language Board last year, who preferred the option of a bilingual form. No decision has yet been taken for the 2011 Census questionnaire, but ONS are working on the assumption of distributing both a Welsh and English form to each household. ONS are investigating the costs and benefits of a bilingual form. A decision is likely to be made some time in Summer 2007.