

# Field Operation

September 2011

# What did we set out to achieve?

---

- A national operation
- But one that could be optimised locally



# Building from 2001

---

- Lessons from 2001 informed design of 2011
  - Postal operations
  - Recruitment, training and payroll
  - Inequitable work loads for field staff
  - Little management information
  - Large variability in response rates



# Main innovations for 2011

---

- Address register
- Posted out questionnaires
- Questionnaire tracking
- Dedicated staff
- Flexible field force
- Internet completion
- Outsourced recruitment, payroll and training



# Dedicated Staff

---

- Separate roles
  - Liaison and engagement:
    - area managers, community advisors
  - Census operation
    - area managers, coordinators, special enumerators, collectors
  - CCS
    - regional managers, team managers, interviewers
  - Non-Compliance
    - coordinators, non-compliance officers, non-compliance assistants
- Focus on follow-up

# How many collectors and where?

---

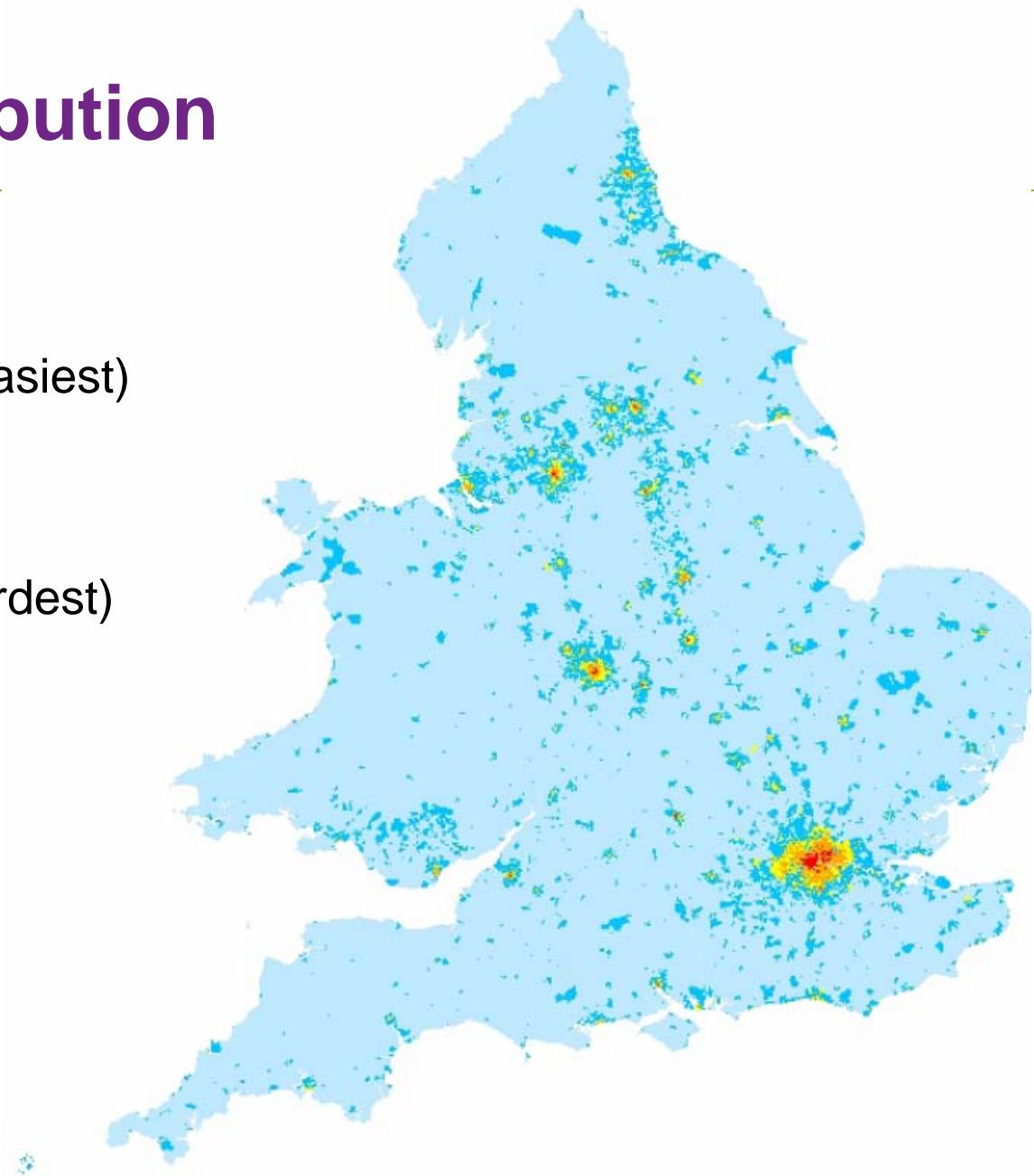
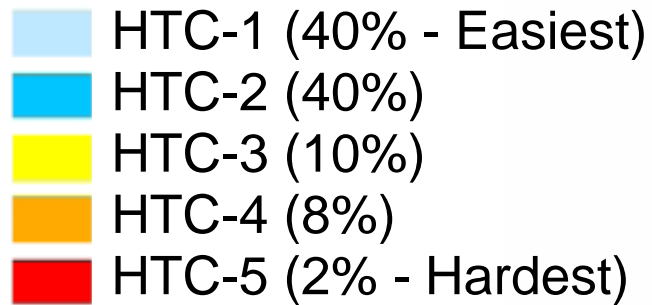
- Field workload allocation model
  - Determined the amount of follow up to achieve minimum return rate thresholds
- Numerous drivers but three main ones:
  - Rate of return without intervention
    - how likely it is that a household in a given area will respond before follow up starts (day 10)
  - Success at follow up
    - how successful each attempt at follow up will be
  - Number of attempts
    - how long each visit takes

# Hard to Count Index

---

- How likely it is that a household in a given area will respond
- Based on current values of factors associated with poor response in 2001
  - ethnicity, unemployment, age, housing density
- Five categories
  - HTC 1: most likely to respond
  - HTC 5: least likely to respond

# HTC Distribution





# Staff Numbers

---

- Cautious approach
  - Under estimated the day 10 return rate
  - Over estimated number of staff needed
    - by 10% in HTC5
    - by 5% in HTC4
  - Under estimated number of visits probable per hour
  - Over estimated the detrimental impact of post out
  - Made no allowance for impact of
    - media/ advertising
    - community support



# Overall Staff Numbers

---

- About 35,000 staff for main operation
  - Almost 29,000 field staff just for follow up
- Over five million hours of staff time altogether
  - Almost three times as many hours dedicated to follow-up compared to 2001
- Nearly 5,000 staff for the CCS



# Staff Allocation

- More staff allocated to areas where poorer response more likely
- Staff were team based
  - Enabled flexible deployment by their manager



# Recruitment (1)

---

- Over 2,000,000 visits to [www.censusjobs.co.uk](http://www.censusjobs.co.uk)
- 350,000 applications for jobs
- 70,000 job offers made
  - References sought
  - DS checks requested
- 4,000 training events
  - Role specific classroom training & E-learning

# Recruitment (2)

---

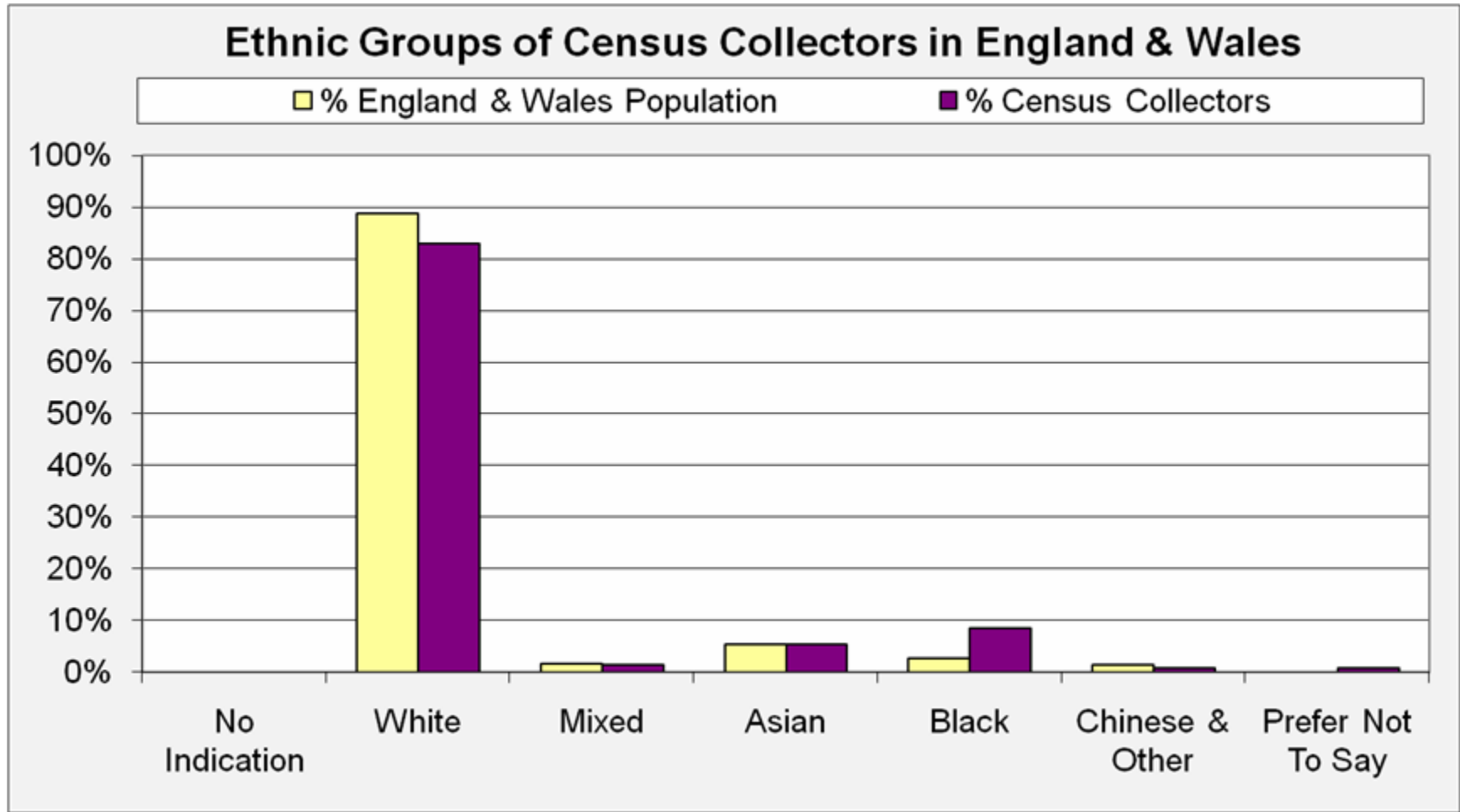
- Lower than expected numbers of collectors in some areas
  - ... over-estimated the number of staff needed in most areas
- What we did
  - Continued recruitment
  - Allocated staff additional hours
  - AM moved staff
    - Some areas had too many staff
      - good return rate and over-recruitment
  - Sent targeted reminder letters
  - Provided support to coordinators from HQ
  - Converted SEs to collectors

# Recruitment (3)

---

- Aimed to get local staff representative of local communities
- Captured details of languages spoken other than English
- Achieved good diversity ...

# Good Ethnic Diversity



# Delivery – Post Out

---

- About 25.4 million questionnaires delivered
  - Started three weeks before census day
  - Delivered in just over five days
  - ... much quicker than expected
- UAA – undelivered as addressed
  - About 450,000 returned as UAAs
  - Checking was one of the main functions of early collectors
    - carried out by other staff where recruited numbers of these staff were less than expected



# Delivery – Hand Delivery

---

- Hand delivery
  - To specific population groups and communal establishments
    - eg, gypsy and travellers, homeless
    - eg, universities, prisons, care homes, hospitals, etc
  - By special enumerators
  - Started three weeks before census day
  - 1.7m i-questionnaires delivered altogether
    - to almost 85,000 CEs

# Collection

- Post Back
  - First questionnaires received on 7 March
  - Up to 40 vehicles delivered to UKDC every day
- Internet
  - About 16% of total returns



# Follow up (1)

- Day 10 returns much better than expected
  - Expected 69%
  - Actual 76%
- QT identified addresses from which no response had been received

Every questionnaire had a unique id number and bar code



Household Questionnaire  
England  
Office for National Statistics

THE OCCUPIER  
LITTLE COTTAGE  
11 RAINY ROAD  
LITTLE VILLAGE  
NEWTOWN  
XX1 1YY

0159810301460269

**Return to:**  
FREEPOST 2011 Census,  
Processing Centre, UK

**Complete online**  
[www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)  
Your personal internet access code is:

QQAA QQBB QQCC QQDD QQEE

OR fill in this paper questionnaire and post it back using the pre-paid envelope supplied.

If your address is incorrect or missing, enter your correct address here:

A message to everyone - act now  
Everyone should be included in the census - all people, households and overnight visitors.  
It is used to help plan and fund services for your community - services like transport, education and health.

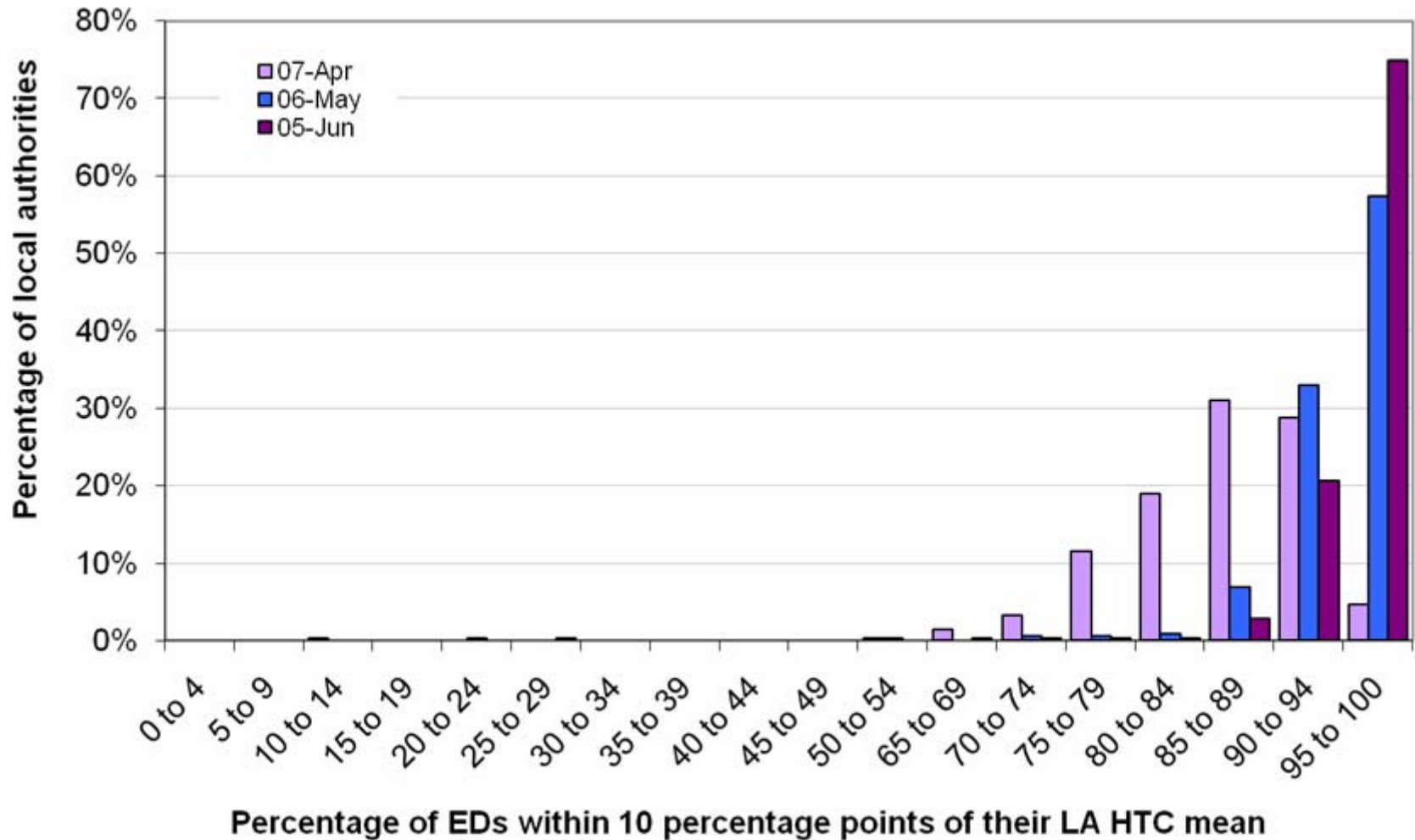
Postcode

# Follow up (2)

---

- Two phases
  - Phase 1 – focused on poorest responding areas
    - Staff targeted within a coordinator area
    - Work loads generated by the QT system
    - Designed to increase returns and reduce variability
  - Phase 2 – ensured every single non-responding address was followed up
    - ... often many times to support and encourage completion

# Reduced return rate variability



# Follow up (3)

---

- ‘Dummy’ forms
  - Ensure that the status of every address on the address register is recorded
  - Poor completion in 2001
  - Put much earlier in process
    - To improve level of completion



# How we also encouraged ...

---

- **Census help-line**
  - Total of 1.6 million calls
- **Web 'self-help' site**
  - 1.5 million visits
- **Language lines**
  - 32,969 calls to language helplines
  - 7,294 calls to interpretation services
- **Community engagement**
  - National and local activity
- **High profile advertising and media campaign**
  - National, local and minority foci

# Actions to Improve Response (1)

---

- Reminder letters
  - Over 3.5 million letters
    - delivered between 30 March and 5 May
    - multiple letters to some areas with increasing message strength
  - Targeted at specific areas
    - those with the lowest return rates
    - ... but also sent to areas where initial levels of recruitment were lower than expected
    - to manage variability within an LA



# Actions to Improve Response (2)

---

- Targeted letters
  - Indications are that this worked
    - return rates increased by up to 4% in targeted areas
      - ... *not all may be attributed to the letters*
  - Impact of letters is also reflected in the profile of requests for additional questionnaires and supporting documentation

# Actions to Improve Response (3)

- Extension to advertising in poorer responding areas
  - S and W Wales, NW England, London
- Enhanced media activity
- Extension to 'purple bus' tour



# Actions to Improve Response (4)

---

- Extended follow-up activity
  - Identified areas where further follow-up would be useful
    - Extended by 2 days
    - Extended in 116 LAs
  - Criteria driven to try to ensure the Census targets were achieved

# Local Challenges

---

- Some completely unique to one area, others localised but seen in different places, e.g.
  - Large numbers of access-controlled buildings
  - Areas of densely populated Jewish communities
  - Large numbers of caravan parks, holiday and second homes
- Addressed using different measures, e.g.
  - Area Manager LA and community engagement
  - Maximising field staff “skills” and working patterns
  - Completion events

# Universities

---

- Considered very challenging
  - Students historically difficult to count
  - Term time known to be problematic
    - Some finished weeks before census day and not returning until after follow-up has finished
  - Disparate and complex nature of living accommodation
  - Difficult to track the questionnaires in large, complex halls

# Universities

---

- 2009 rehearsal
  - Just 5% returns from one of the universities in rehearsal
  - Major re-work of processes and procedures



# Universities

---

- 8 universities finishing before 18 March
  - Separate enumeration process
  - Agreed locally by AM with university
- Process to track questionnaires was designed and implemented



# Universities

---

- Some problems encountered
  - Duplicate i-forms and H forms
    - These have mostly been retrieved and deactivated
    - Internal QA will also carry out adjustments
  - Initially low return rates
    - Boosted by completion events
    - Extension to SE period for some universities
- Early return rate indications are encouraging





# CCS

---

- Similar approach to 2001
  - Because it worked well
- But ...
  - Stratified the sample using the HTC categories
    - greater sample in those areas where response expected to be poorest
  - Process to allocate additional sample in areas where response below that expected
    - almost 400 extra postcodes
    - almost 6,000 addresses

# CCS

---

- National CCS response rate about 90%
  - Equivalent to 2001
- Significant achievement
  - Voluntary survey
  - 'Harder' sample than in 2001
  - Increased public apathy (falling response rates to ONS social surveys)

# CCS Non-Response Actions

---

- Targeted letters
  - About 1,500 letters sent
- Telephone capture
  - Offered in 71 workloads
    - specific areas where contact was the problem
- Extension to survey period
  - First extension in 360 workloads – 86 LAs
  - Second extension in 243 workloads – 80 LAs
  - Third extension in 66 workloads – 14 LAs
    - extended in these areas by just over 2 weeks

# CCS Non-Response Actions

---

- Post back questionnaire
  - Maintained timing within process despite extension
    - retain processing window
  - Expected about 5,000
    - in line with 2001 returns
  - Received over 18,000
    - added 3% to response rates overall
    - ... only just made the processing cut-off deadline

# So did it work?

---

- Confident we've hit the '94% national response rate' target
- Confident we've hit the 'over 80% in every LA' target
- Confident less than 10% of LAs below 90% response rate
- Inner London boroughs 5 to 15 percentage points better than 2001
- Confident that the voluntary CCS has 90% response rate
- A great platform for the quality assurance phase

# Questions

---

