

Household Analysis Review Group (HARG)

Content of housing section in Scotland's Census 2021

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Background

This paper was written by Celia MacIntyre, who works on question development for Scotland's Census 2021. Celia would like to discuss plans for the housing and accommodation questions that will be asked in Scotland's Census 2021.

[Section 1](#) contains an extract from the original census topic consultation, which summarises National Records of Scotland's (NRS') initial views on the topics under consideration for collection in the Scotland's Census 2021. A consultation exercise was carried out on this, and [Section 2](#) contains a summary of the results of the consultation, including NRS' updated view on the topics under consideration, following the consultation.

NRS would welcome any further views on this.

Section 1: Extract from census topic consultation

The full [census topic consultation document](#) is available from the Scotland's Census website.

1. Topics under consideration for collection in Scotland's Census 2021

This section sets out the initial view of NRS on each of the topics currently under consideration for collection in Scotland's Census 2021. Each topic has been organised into a set of sub-topics and the initial view for that sub-topic is presented, using the classification system set out in the table below.

Initial view	Definition
Collect	Propose to include based on current understanding of user needs and quality considerations.
Further information required – existing topic/question ¹	Where further information is required for an existing census topic/question, based on quality considerations and/or to better understand user need for 2021.
Further information required – asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011	Where further information on user need is required for topics/questions not included in Scotland but asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011, to understand user need for 2021.
Further information required – not asked in 2011	Where further information on user need is required for topics/questions not included in any of the UK censuses in 2011, to understand user need for 2021.

Table 1 below provides a summary of NRS' initial views on the topics currently under consideration for collection in the Scotland's Census 2021.

Table 1: Summary of topic recommendations

Topic	Collect	Further information required – existing topic/question	Further information required – asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011	Further information required – not asked in 2011
Housing and accommodation	Accommodation type Self-contained accommodation Tenure and landlord (if renting)	Number of rooms Type of central heating Cars or vans	Number of bedrooms	
Basic demographics and household composition	Sex Age Marital or same-sex civil partnership status	Student status Household and family relationships	Second address	

Footnote

1) All questions which were new for the 2011 questionnaire have a status of 'further information required' to ensure the correct information is being gathered.

Migration	Country of birth Address one year ago	Date of arrival in the UK	Type of migration Citizenship	
Travel to work or place of study	Method of transport	Address of place of work Address of place of study		
Ethnicity and national identity	Ethnic group	National identity		
Language	Gaelic language	Scots language English language Other languages		
Religion	Religion			
Health and care	General health Long-term health problem or disability Unpaid care	Long-term health conditions		
Educational attainment	Qualifications held			
Labour force and socio-economic classification*	Economic activity Occupation Industry	Year last worked Supervisory status Hours worked	Voluntary and unpaid work	
Sexual orientation				Sexual orientation
Income				Income

*NRS intends to collect the range of information needed to derive National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SeC).

You can access a copy of the [2011 household questionnaire](#) via Scotland's Census website.

1.1 Housing and accommodation

Sub-topic	Initial view	Collected in 2011?	Comment
Accommodation type Self-contained accommodation	Collect	Yes	Provides housing stock information; including the number of household spaces within dwellings.
Number of rooms	Further information required – existing topic/question	Yes	Provides information on housing stock. Information on number of rooms is required by Eurostat in lieu of floor-space. Further information is required to better understand user need for 2021.
Type of central heating	Further information required – existing topic/question	Yes	Collected for the first time in 2011. The previous question (whether the accommodation had central heating or not) was changed to collect information on type of central heating, offering users additional insight on deprivation and fuel poverty. Further information is required to better understand user need for 2021.
Tenure and landlord (if renting)	Collect	Yes	Provides housing stock information and details on tenure.
Cars or vans	Further information required – existing topic/question	Yes	Provides information to inform traffic planning and historically has been used to provide a proxy measure for deprivation/affluence. Further information is required to better understand user need for 2021.
Number of bedrooms	Further information required – asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011	No	Please refer to section 4.4 for commentary.

Data from questions about **accommodation type** (collected since 2001), **self-containment** (collected since 1971) and **tenure** (collected since 1961) feed into the estimates of housing stock that are used for national and local government

planning purposes. Key household outputs of the census are based on responses to these questions. An increasing need for detailed information on housing (to monitor the effects of the UK Government's Welfare Reform programme) was highlighted by users via the Beyond 2011 consultation in 2013. Due to the known requirements, NRS intend to collect information on accommodation type, self-containment and tenure in 2021.

Information about **number of rooms** has been collected in Scotland since 1861² and provides information about household overcrowding and under-occupation. The question however is complex, requires detailed guidance and the Census Quality Survey (CQS) showed that it was poorly answered in comparison to other household questions, with an agreement rate of 88.6 per cent. This was however a significant improvement on the 2001 figure of 77.5 per cent.

A question on availability of **central heating** was asked in Scotland in 1991 and 2001. In 2011 the question was expanded to collect information on type of heating, since the question asking whether central heating was available or not was considered largely redundant. Information on type of central heating allows additional insight on deprivation and fuel poverty. Policies in place to promote the use of renewable heating technologies may also mean that census information would be beneficial to understanding the impact of these on the mix of central heating types in the future. NRS require further information to better understand user need for 2021.

A question about the number of **cars or vans** available for use by households has been asked in Scotland since 1971. This information has historically been used to provide a proxy measure of affluence / deprivation. It also assists central and local government with transport planning, but census data about the methods of travel to work and residence to workplace flows are likely to be more useful for these purposes. Hence, NRS require further information to understand whether there is a continuing requirement to collect information about the number of cars or vans available for use by households in the 2021 Census.

Footnote

2) Information on number of rooms with more than one window was collected in Scotland between 1861 and 1931. Number of rooms has been collected since 1951.

Section 2: Extract from final report on Scotland's Census 2021 topic consultation

[The full report on the Scotland's Census 2021 topic consultation](#) is available from the Scotland's Census website. It summarises the responses received to the consultation, and NRS' updated views on each topic.

'Scotland's Census 2021 – Topic Consultation' set out the initial view of NRS on each of the topics under consideration for collection in Scotland's Census 2021. The classification used to describe NRS' initial view is set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Classification used to describe NRS' initial view on topics

Initial view	Definition
Collect	Propose to include based on current understanding of user needs and quality considerations.
Further information required – existing topic/question ³	Where further information is required for an existing census topic/question, based on quality considerations and/or to better understand user need for 2021.
Further information required – asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011	Where further information on user need is required for topics/questions not included in Scotland but asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011, to understand user need for 2021.
Further information required – not asked in 2011	Where further information on user need is required for topics/questions not included in any of the UK censuses in 2011, to understand user need for 2021.

The classification system used to describe NRS' updated view is set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Classification used to describe NRS' updated view on topics

Updated view	Definition
Collect	Propose to include based on current understanding of user needs and quality considerations.
Further consideration required (asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011)	Where the evaluation process has identified user need, but further consideration of whether the topic or sub-topic should be recommended for inclusion in 2021 is required. Generally user need is not as strong as for existing topics.
Further work required (new topics)	Where the evaluation process has identified user need and/or operational requirements for a topic or sub-topic, but where further work is required to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the exact nature of user need, and/or • whether including a question in the census is the most appropriate way of collecting the information, and/or; • whether alternative methods of meeting the user need exist
Do not collect	Propose not to include based on current understanding of user needs and quality considerations.

Table 4 below provides a summary of NRS' updated view for each topic, based on the assessment of responses received to the consultation and consideration of NRS' operational requirements.

Footnote

3) All questions which were new for the 2011 questionnaire had a status of 'further information required' to ensure the correct information is being gathered.

Table 4: Summary of NRS' updated view on topics under consideration for collection in Scotland's Census 2021

Topic	Sub-topic	Initial view	Updated view
Housing	Accommodation type	Collect	Collect
	Self-contained accommodation	Collect	Collect
	Tenure and landlord (if renting)	Collect	Collect
	Number of rooms	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Type of central heating	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Cars or vans	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Number of bedrooms	Further information required – asked elsewhere in UK in 2011	Further consideration required
Basic demographics and household composition	Sex	Collect	Collect
	Age	Collect	Collect
	Marital or same-sex civil partnership status	Collect	Collect
	Student status	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Household and family relationships	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Second address	Further information required – asked elsewhere in UK in 2011	Further consideration required
Migration	Country of birth	Collect	Collect
	Address one year ago	Collect	Collect
	Date of arrival in the UK	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Type of migration - Intended length of stay in the UK	Further information required – asked elsewhere in UK in 2011	Further consideration required
	Type of migration - Reason for migration	Further information required – not asked in 2011	Further work required
	Citizenship	Further information required – asked elsewhere in UK in 2011	Further consideration required

Travel to work or place of study	Address of place of work	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Address of place of study	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Method of transport	Collect	Collect
Ethnicity and national identity	Ethnic group	Collect	Collect
	National identity	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
Language	Gaelic language	Collect	Collect
	Scots language	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	English language	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Other languages	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
Religion	Religion	Collect	Collect
Health and care	General health	Collect	Collect
	Long-term health problem or disability	Collect	Collect
	Long-term health conditions	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Unpaid care	Collect	Collect
Educational attainment	Qualifications held	Collect	Collect
Labour force and socio-economic classification	Economic activity	Collect	Collect
	Occupation	Collect	Collect
	National Statistics socio-economic classification (NS-SeC)	Collect (derive)	Collect (derive)
	Industry	Collect	Collect
	Year last worked	Further information required – existing topic / question ⁴	Collect
	Supervisory status	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Hours worked	Further information required – existing topic / question	Collect
	Voluntary and unpaid work	Further information required – asked	Further consideration

Footnote

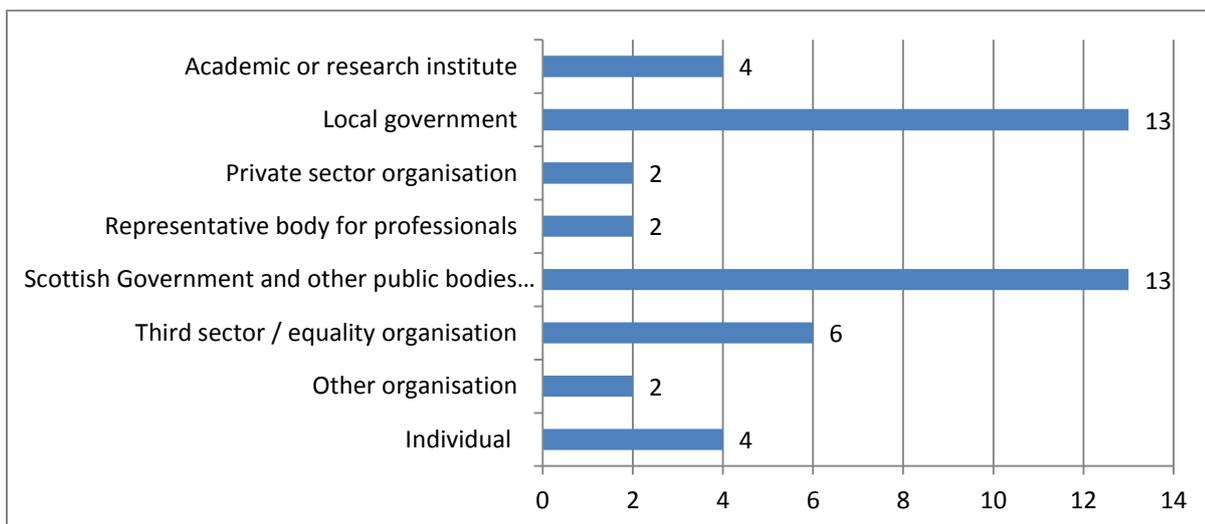
4) Text corrected following initial publication

		elsewhere in UK in 2011	required
Sexual orientation		Further information required – not asked in 2011	Further work required
Income		Further information required – not asked in 2011	Further work required
Additional topics			
Ex-Service community		N/A	Further work required
Gender identity		N/A	Further work required
Technology / digital		N/A	Do not collect

1.1 Housing and Accommodation

Sub-topic	Initial View	Updated View
Accommodation type	Collect	Collect
Self-contained accommodation	Collect	Collect
Tenure and landlord (if renting)	Collect	Collect
Number of rooms	Further information required – existing topic/question	Collect
Type of central heating	Further information required – existing topic/question	Collect
Cars or vans	Further information required – existing topic/question	Collect
Number of bedrooms	Further information required – asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011	Further consideration required

Chart 2: Housing and Accommodation – number of responses, by type and sector of organization



Information about accommodation type and self-contained accommodation, tenure and landlord (if renting) is extensively used by local authorities as input to local area profiles. The data are also used in the preparation of Housing Needs and Demand assessments and Local Housing Strategies, which are used by central government to inform resource allocation and are widely used in other sectors for equalities monitoring, targeting investment, and service planning and delivery. NRS propose to continue to collect information on accommodation type, self-contained accommodation and tenure and landlord in 2021.

Information about number of rooms is considered important by users across a range of sectors, to inform decision making on housing policy and strategy. It provides a measure of housing stock and dwelling size and is provided to Eurostat in lieu of data on floor-space. Together with the number and characteristics of people in each household, it has traditionally been used to estimate the level of overcrowding and under-occupancy, both of which have implications for planning future housing provision. Number of rooms has also been used in the derivation of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which is used to understand and tackle inequality. NRS therefore propose to continue to collect information on number of rooms in 2021.

Information on number of bedrooms was not collected in the census in Scotland in 2011, but was in England and Wales. Support has been received for the collection of information on number of bedrooms in Scotland in 2021, from users across a range of organisational sectors. Respondents indicated that it could be used to identify additional aspects of current housing supply and future requirements, and for monitoring housing policy, especially in relation to welfare reform. Some indicated that a count of bedrooms would be more useful and reliable in calculating overcrowding and/or under-occupancy, since the trend towards more open plan living means a count of number of rooms is less reliable nowadays. There was also support for collection on the grounds of introducing harmonisation with the rest of the UK. NRS will therefore give further consideration to whether to propose collecting information on number of bedrooms in 2021. In the context of minimising respondent burden, trade-offs may be required.

Respondents reported that having information on type of central heating is useful for a range of purposes, although a few suggested that a question on affordability of heating would be more useful. Data on type of central heating are used by local authorities to identify dependence on specific types of heating, particularly in rural areas. The information is also used in the analysis and monitoring of energy efficiency and fuel poverty and to inform where resources to support interventions with these should be prioritised. NRS therefore propose to continue to collect information on type of central heating in 2021.

Strong support was received for continuing to collect information on the number of cars and vans available for use by households. The data are widely used across central and local government and by public bodies to support transport modelling and policy monitoring. Several users noted that workplace flows and data on method of travel to work are not a substitute for this data. The information is also used in deprivation analysis and users expressed a need for data on car ownership to be available at small area level and associated with household size; hence the census is currently the only suitable source. With the growing use of car clubs, the suggestion was also made that access to these should be included in the definition of cars available for use by a household. NRS therefore propose to continue to collect information on the number of cars and vans available for use by households in 2021.

Respondents to the consultation highlighted information requirements for a range of additional housing and accommodation sub-topics. The majority of these requests were made for information to be collected on quality of accommodation, or house condition. Collection of information on lowest floor level was also requested, in relation to identifying flood risk. Other suggestions made for collecting data relating to accommodation included affordability of heating, renewable energy and length of time in a dwelling/household mobility. However there was insufficient user need identified to consider including these sub-topics in Scotland's Census 2021.