

## Scotland's Census 2021 – Update for PAMS May 2018

Work continues at pace towards Scotland's Census 2021 and our Census Rehearsal day in October 2019.

### Question development

Following on from an earlier consultation in 2015 on the topics to be asked in 2021, we have continued to work on new and amended questions. We have held [a number of events](#) with a range of users and interest groups to understand their data needs and to ensure that the questions are asked in the most appropriate way to meet these needs and we have published a number of topic reports and question design criteria on [Scotland's Census website](#).

We have carried out a [programme of question testing](#) exploring, amongst other things, the public acceptability of some potentially sensitive questions. We have carried out question testing on a variety of topics such as sexual orientation, trans status, gender identity, passport held and testing around a British Sign Language question. A review of existing questions is also underway, intended to improve data quality and ease responding. These include health & care as well as ethnicity and religion.

Building on our engagement with stakeholders and the results from the question testing, further analysis is underway in the build-up to recommending questions for Scottish Ministers later this year.

### Outputs and Dissemination

As well as understanding what data users need from the Census, we have been working with them to understand how they will want to access the 2021 data. We held a number of interactive events to allow people to experiment with different output approaches and ways of ensuring that we keep data confidential. The feedback from these events fed directly into our draft ['Scotland's Census 2021 Outputs Strategy'](#) which was published in January 2018. Over the last few months we have also held three stakeholder events which highlighted the proposed changes to outputs for 2021, including proposals for how we might output religion, ethnic group and language variables. The write up from these events will be published on our website shortly.

### How we are delivering Scotland's 2021 Census

Scotland's Census 2021 will be delivered in partnership with a range of suppliers providing various products, services and support. The first two contracts to deliver the online census tool and to provide the overall operational system for managing the census were awarded to CACI in February 2018. We have continued to engage with potential suppliers to help us develop our approach for procuring the many other systems and services which are required for the Census. This will continue into 2018/19 when we expect the majority of contracts to be awarded.

### Use of Administrative Data

Looking to 2021 and beyond, we are keen to expand the use that we make of administrative data in the collection, production and quality assurance of population statistics. Throughout 2017/18, we have been working with a number of public sector bodies to agree access to a

range of datasets, for example, information on students in higher education, in order to establish how these data can improve both current and future population estimates. We have been working very closely with colleagues in the Office for National Statistics and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to develop methods for this work and to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. We are aiming to publish our research and first set of population estimates using these methods for discussion later this year. We understand that the use and linking of administrative data in the production of statistics does raise questions around privacy and ethics so we have been engaging with privacy groups and members of the public, as well as with the Scottish Information Commissioner to ensure that we understand and are addressing any concerns.

### **Contact us / Get involved**

Details of events and workshops we have planned are available on our Scotland's Census website. We always welcome feedback on the work we have taken forward so far, please email us at: [scotlandscensus@nrscotland.gov.uk](mailto:scotlandscensus@nrscotland.gov.uk) with feedback, queries or comments.

To stay in touch we recommend that you subscribe to [Scotland's Census Mailchimp newsletter](#) (links direct to an external website) to keep up to date with all the latest updates from Scotland's Census 2021.

Esta Clark

Scotland's Census 2021 Programme

National Records of Scotland

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