

Census progress report – November 2008

GROS will shortly publish a ‘Government Statement’ that outlines the operational arrangements for the 2011 Census and sets out the questions which will be asked on the questionnaires together with background information on the decisions to include or exclude certain questions. This will be laid before the Scottish Parliament in early December and published at the same time on the GROS website (in both English and Gaelic).

The paper ‘Scotland’s Census 2011: Recommendations on Content’ will provide details of the work undertaken to develop the 2011 Census questionnaire for Scotland and will also be published on our website at the same time. It will provide information on the various factors that have been taken into account and also explain the extensive programme of consultation, research and testing spanning the last five years, including:

Consultation

- Formal consultation – including related consultation events
- Questionnaire specific consultation
- Consultation papers
- Topic-specific consultation
- Meetings with key users – including Scottish Government

Question testing

- Cognitive question testing
- 2006 Census Test and 2006 Census Test evaluation
- Postal tests
- Focus groups

Work to harmonise with England & Wales and Northern Ireland

This Government Statement is the first step in our legislative process, the next being preparation of the Order and Regulations that define in detail what questions will be asked in 2011 and how the end to end operation will be delivered. The Order and Regulations will be submitted to the Scottish Parliament in early 2010 for approval.

Preparations for the 2009 Rehearsal are at full throttle as we prepare to test as many of the systems, processes and operational aspects of our 2011 Census design as we can. The rehearsal will cover around 50,000 households in West Edinburgh and Harris/Lewis.

We are currently in the process of printing the myriad of documents required to deliver the enumeration stage of the rehearsal. This includes the census questionnaires, which will be ‘personalised’ with the addresses of each household in the rehearsal areas from the Royal Mail’s postcode address file (PAF) in January 2009, so that we have as up to date a list as possible ahead of enumeration.

Households will have the option to complete the questionnaire online (in English or Gaelic) and our internet solution is undergoing an intensive development and testing phase. This will go live in mid March 2009, to tie in with the timetable for our enumerators delivering a paper questionnaire to every household. Work continues also on the development and testing of both the paper data capture and coding solutions, which will kick in once the questionnaires arrive from the enumeration.

We are also in the midst of developing an in-house contact centre for the rehearsal, with a solution for 2011 being subject to procurement via OJEU after the Rehearsal. On the

Community Liaison front, we will incorporate BSL video clips relating to the household questionnaire in the Internet Public Assistance (online helpline) service. We have also scoped our rehearsal publicity tactics and have a new census logo.

We have started development of the Downstream Processing (DSP) system, the first step being the validation of data from the data capture and coding solution. This system will run the 'raw' data through a series of statistical processes to ensure that we can provide high quality, accurate statistics to census data users. The DSP system will be developed jointly by the 3 UK Census Offices under the guidance of a UK working group. A strategy for production and dissemination of the 2011 Census data is being developed by ONS on behalf of all 3 UK Census Offices and we will look at what that proposes before deciding how exactly we want to deliver data to our users, one option being to disseminate local area data via the SNS website.

To ensure we can take account of local issues as we plan and deliver the enumeration, each local authority has provided a Census Liaison Officer (CLO) to act as a key link with GROS. They will share their local knowledge with our field staff and provide information on:

- contacting minority groups;
- languages spoken in each local authority area;
- how to identify dangerous neighbourhoods;
- new housing developments;
- advertising temporary Census field staff posts; and
- how and where to promote the Census

GROS will appoint Census Regional Managers (CRMs) to coordinate the 2011 Census in 22 regions across Scotland. CRMs will be keen to work closely with CLOs and other council staff.

There are a range of facilities to help complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire can be completed in gaelic online. Translations of the questions are also available in Arabic, Cantonese, Bengali, Punjabi, Farsi, Turkish, Urdu, French, Polish, Hindi and Filipino and can be downloaded from the web site. Paper versions can also be obtained by contacting the Census Helpline (0845 603 1823, textphone on 0845 603 1824). Additional language support will also be available via this route.

People with a hearing impairment can access the Internet Public Assistance service, where we have translated the census questions into British Sign Language (BSL) on video. Large print questionnaires will also be available for people with visual impairment.