

## Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

### Scotland's Census 2021 - Programme update

The programme continues to gain momentum, with the procurement activity, question testing and data collection planning all progressing well. The resource levels continue to grow with many permanent or interim posts filled since the last PAMS meeting. There remains a challenge in some specialist areas which we are addressing.

#### Procurements

A great deal of the capability needed to conduct the 2021 Census requires to be bought in. A programme of procurement has been drawn up and the best routes to market for specific products or bundles of products are being determined. The first two major procurements to go through the Open Journal of the European Union (OJEU) process are the Online Collection Instrument (OCI) and the Data Collection Operational Management System + Integration Services (DCOMS). They are both at the evaluation stages with award dates expected in December and January, respectively. It is likely further OJEU's will be required and that several lots will either go through this process or be taken from frameworks. This work is assisted by an ever-growing understanding of our underlying architecture and an expanding business analysis function who have been working with all teams to develop their business processes and the requirements that come from them.

#### Question Development

Along with delivery of the OCI, the questions and questionnaires project are delivering the proposed question set to be recommended to parliament. The planned round of cognitive testing is complete. This covered new questions, and questions where redesign is being considered either to improve data quality, or to take advantage of the opportunities provided by digital first delivery. The results of the cognitive testing have informed the quantitative testing, which will go live on the 15<sup>th</sup> November. The final reports are due at end March 2018, and this, combined with continued engagement with stakeholders, and the development work on-going within ONS and NISRA, will inform question proposals.

Significant stakeholder engagement has been conducted with interest groups in relation to questions around Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Trans status, Income, Marital Status, Passports Held, language skills and proficiency including BSL, ex-service personnel, Health & Care, Qualifications held, as well as Ethnicity and Religion. The team is also working collaboratively with colleagues from NISRA & ONS to ensure appropriate harmonisation on topics and questions where possible. A fuller update will be provided at the meeting.

## Data Collection

DCOMS will sit at the heart of the census operation ensuring up-to-date status is understood for each household, communal establishment and also where people have requested an individual questionnaire. A number of viable bids have been received and these are being evaluated. The project has recently had a favourable review from the ARDC-S Public Panel on out-sourcing the follow-up Field force and the programme board is to consider this in due course. A scheduler and workload manager will direct the field force effort to most efficiently target response rates using a number of business rules. The details for these services are currently being reviewed to determine the best way to meet the business requirements.

## Statistical Data Processing

The Online Collection Instrument (OCI) will capture the bulk of responses and conduct a significant level of coding. However, the process for capturing data from the paper responses and varying level of manual coding are currently being considered. It is likely these will form part of a bundle of services that will need close integration to the OCI. An assessment of the statistical tools/software that will allow the team to iteratively design and test estimation & adjustment and edit & imputation methods is being undertaken. We are contributing to edit and imputation methodology across the UK. Planning for the Census Coverage Survey and Census Quality Survey is also underway as is the design of a metadata capture and storage methodology to allow this data to be proactively published alongside 2021 outputs. Discussions are underway about the variable life cycles within the programme as a whole and how outputs can be coherently generated from the questionnaires i.e. through question journey workshops.

## Statistical Disclosure Control and 2021 Outputs

An options appraisal on the use of an existing outputs mechanism verses the development of a new bespoke system is underway. A data user/stakeholder event was held to review potential enhancements to the system currently in use which received positive feedback. The team also continues to engage with colleagues from ONS and NISRA on disclosure control methods.

## Admin Data

A number of data sharing agreements have been signed or are in the process of signing with various providers. Positive feedback from the Public panel around the nature and direction of the project. The project has approached a number of privacy groups to share the intended direction of the Admin Data strand of the programme. More information is included in the separate agenda item for the PAMS meeting.

**Action: PAMS are asked to note the update and to feedback any thoughts about the content or on how we are engaging to understand user needs.**

## NRS Scotland's Census 2021

**2 November 2017**