

Beyond 2011

**Stakeholder Engagement - Equalities Findings
2013**

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Equalities Stakeholder Engagement Events and Meetings

1. Introduction

National Records of Scotland (NRS) has been running a series of stakeholder engagement sessions and meetings with representatives from a range of organisations to discuss the equalities aspect of the Beyond 2011 programme. Comments relating to equalities from the non equalities specific Beyond 2011 stakeholder engagement sessions have also been included to help build a comprehensive picture. These discussions preceded a formal consultation to gather user needs which was launched in March 2013.

Delegates were invited to discuss how they currently use census information and how any changes could affect their work. The delegates included a range of public bodies and equality groups. The comments from the discussion are included in this document.

Many of the delegates were from public bodies and their current use of census information was related to the public sector Equality Duty, which states that no one should be denied opportunities because of their race or ethnicity, their disability, their gender or sexual orientation, their age or religion. Therefore it is important that any requirements by our users are recorded.

1.1 Public sector Equality Duty

In order to comply with the specific duties within the [public sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the [Equality Act 2010](#) both PDF documents available on the Press for Change website) some public bodies currently rely on information derived from the census. The public sector Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.

The Equality Duty is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations. The specific duties require public bodies to publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

The information they publish must show that they had due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The following characteristics are protected characteristics, outlined in the Act:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

1.2 Single Outcome Agreements

Considerations of equalities characteristics are specifically important for Local Authorities (LAs) when producing and maintaining [Single Outcome Agreements](#) (SOAs). SOAs set out how Community Planning departments in councils will contribute to the [Scottish Government's National Outcomes](#) (further information available on the Scottish Government website). The purpose of a SOA is to identify areas for improvement and deliver better outcomes for the people of Scotland as well as individual Local Authorities. The concordat set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local governments. In coming to this arrangement, national and local government share a commitment to equality and legal duties and are subject to the same legal requirements in relation to equalities.

In order to fulfil these specific duties and SOAs some public bodies currently use data from the census as relevant evidence. The equalities information derived from the census is outlined below.

1.3 Equalities information

The 2001 Census covered the following 'protected characteristics'¹:

- Age
- Disability (a question on general health and whether or not have long term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work)
- Marriage
- Race (question refers to ethnic group)
- Religion or belief (one question on religion belong to and a second on the religion an individual was brought up in)
- Sex

Footnote

1) Copies of the [2001 Census questionnaire](#) and the [2011 Census](#) can be found on the National Records of Scotland website.

A list of the relevant equality questions are included in [Appendix A](#). The 2011 Census extended the disability question to include information on the nature of the condition and a question about the ability to understand and speak British Sign Language (BSL). The marriage question was also extended to include civil partnerships.

Information provided in returned census forms² are analysed and aggregate statistics are derived. Aggregate statistics are a collection of summary counts of the numbers of people, families or households resident in specific geographical areas possessing particular characteristics, or combinations of characteristics drawn from the themes of population, including the outlined protected characteristics, work, and housing, for example. The aggregate statistics (relating to the protected characteristics) are available at a range of different geographies from census outputs areas to a national level. Information at record level in the form of Sample of Anonymised Records (SARS) is also available³.

2. Uses of the census

2.1 Service planning

In order to comply with the public sector Equality Duty and SOAs, aggregate statistics derived from the census are used by public bodies to help them to plan policies and services which are efficient and effective.

‘We use the census as the basis for designing our policies for equality and diversity at LA level and understanding the population we deliver services to. The census allows comparing the population profile between LA and from there define how local policies should differ.’

‘Census data allows understanding of the needs of the different equality groups and is used to collect evidence to propose new services.’

Information from the census is also used to help identify those equality groups that are most in need of assistance, ensuring resources are effectively deployed in the right area. Some delegates argued that this is becoming increasingly important as demographic and social changes will entail an increase in the demand for public services, which will also be intensified and prolonged by the economic climate.

‘Due to cuts in budgets the college has to make sure that they reach deprived areas and pin point down to post code and output areas.’

2.2 Monitoring outcomes

The census currently provides LAs and NHS Boards with baseline information on protected characteristics. Statistics from the census are used to monitor the equality outcomes across a range of services.

Footnotes

2) Adjustments are made in the datasets and outputs for people and households who may have been missed out and not been recorded on a form, or may have been counted more than once by being recorded on more than one form. Some records are also swapped for disclosure reasons.

3) More information about the methodologies around Census 2011 can be found on the [Scotland's Census](#) website

‘Census data is used as a benchmark to assess the outcome with regards equality group’s policies.’

Other public bodies also monitor equality outcomes for their services in order to assess the equality of opportunity to participate in services and events.

‘We collect the participation in cultural events from different organizations and compare it with the population proportion for those groups, to understand what groups are not being involved in the same proportion. The council has specific objectives in terms of the ratios of participation from the different groups.’

2.3 Unique Estimates

Many delegates stressed the importance of the census as being the only source of equality information, particularly relating to ethnicity.

‘The census is the only source of information on ethnicity. We are required to provide information and compare ethnic minority groups’

‘For us ethnicity information from the census is very important and you can’t get it from other sources.’

‘Only the census captures equalities data.’

‘We rely on the census heavily for information on ethnic groups to understand service needs and initiatives.’

‘Census has data on ethnicity which would otherwise be hard to obtain.’

Equality statistics derived from the census are available at a range of different geographies from data zones to a national level. This aspect of the statistics was considered very important by a number of delegates to allow effective planning and targeting of resources.

‘No other survey or data source gives the data on a lower geographic level other than the census.’

Census data was considered the most accurate data source by many delegates. The accuracy of the data was related to the legal requirement to take part in the census by a delegate:

‘Because the census is a legal requirement it gives more reliable data.’

A number of the delegates also stated that they were looking forward to the full release of the 2011 Census data, particularly to review the data from the new question on disability.

‘We need census data to understand how many people will have needs in terms of learning disabilities and carers. We are very interested in seeing the results from the 2011 Census on this.’

2.4 Policy development

A number of delegates across the different groups also raised the issue that it is the perceived authority and trust in the accuracy of the census that is important to their work, particularly in relation to justifying planning and policy decisions.

‘When plans and policies are developed people object. If we don’t have the data we cannot defend and justify what we are doing.’

Some delegates from equality groups also said that the census is a vital source of evidence, which can be used to influence organisations and to lobby.

‘The census is critical for identifying need and for ensuring people can speak with confidence in arguments when trying to influence organisations.’

‘For equality groups covered by the census the outputs provide evidence to lobby the UK government for disability issues.’

3. Limitations to the census

3.1 Frequency

A number of delegates were critical of the 10 year frequency of the census. They felt that the census does not adequately capture changes in society and population figures at the current frequency.

‘10 year frequency is far from ideal as the population, particularly in Edinburgh, has changed dramatically since 2001, even in the period from 2011 – 2013 there has been significant changes, particularly in the Eastern European community. There is likely to be more Romanian migrants to the city this year so even the 2011 results will not accurately reflect the city’s population.’

‘The 10 year cycle of the census makes it very difficult to know what the ethnic profile of Scotland is. Scotland may not have been particularly diverse in the 1990s but it is now due to the dispersion programme of asylum seekers and other government initiatives.’

As the 2001 Census data is now out-of-date many delegates were waiting for the more up-to-date 2011 Census data to be released before using census data in their analyses.

‘Government based equality outcome agreements can no longer be based upon Census 2001 statistics as they are irrelevant and out of date.’

‘The delay in 2011 census is causing problems to teams working with minority groups as the numbers from 2001 are clearly out of date.’

‘The crux of the issue is how to collect equality information that is timely and accurate [...] the 2011 delay is very frustrating as you can’t predict changes [...] it is hard to make a case for a particular cause if you don’t have accurate figures [...] its difficult to argue your corner.’

3.2 Question design and definitions

As referred to in the introduction, the census requires individuals to complete a selection of equality questions using pre-determined classifications, which some delegates have argued not to be appropriate or understood by all individuals. This is considered to be a problem, in general, with survey methodology when asking survey respondents to classify their identity, which many feel to be very complex and subjective.

‘We all have multiple characteristics and information can be diluted by the census rather than capturing its richness. You need to try and balance rigor against fluidity.’

‘You have to be careful if you adopt a targeted approach to data collection because if you go looking for people then you’ll find them so who are you missing along the way?’

Although extensive research, consultation and question testing is carried out on the ethnicity question in intra-census years to ensure it reflects changes in society, it was not possible to reach agreement with all equality groups about the categories included and the structure of the question⁴. Some delegates disagreed strongly with the implied definition of ethnicity relating to skin colour and the structuring of the ethnicity question⁵.

‘The problem is that it mixes up ethnicity with pigmentation. If you are going to ask about pigmentation then just do it.’

The sensitivity of an individual attributing themselves to a certain category can also be influenced by specific histories and politics, such as the historical sensitivities surrounding Jewish people being identified by the state. This can lead to Jewish people not identifying themselves as Jewish in the religion question in the census, although there was a general call by Jewish Board of Deputies to ‘tick the Jewish box’.

‘Because of the holocaust and other incidents older generations do not like disclosing their religion to official bodies. ‘

Footnotes

- 4) The [2011 Census Recommendation Paper](#) (available on the NRS website) outlines the reasons for the design and inclusion of certain questions.
- 5) In a paper outlining the prioritisation tool that was created to decide which ethnic groups to include as tick-boxes and which to use write-in spaces (also used by NRS), ONS stated the ethnic group question was never ‘intended to establish the “ethnic” composition of the population as it might be understood by sociologists, anthropologists and historians,’ rather, to ‘capture in a common sense or pragmatic way the categories of person that were likely to be victims of “racial” discrimination’ (Moore and Hickman 2007).

3.3 Lack of data on some protected characteristics and subgroups

There are several factors that NRS considered when developing the questionnaire for the 2011 Census. These factors apply both when deciding how many pages to include in the questionnaire, which questions to ask, and how many tick-box response options to include for each question. They apply to all questions, not just those relating to equality groups. The various factors include the impact on respondents (including the acceptability of questions and respondent burden); operational considerations (cost of printing, delivery and collection and processing); and time (for delivery, collection and for processing). All of these factors are dependent on the length of the questionnaire and the questions asked. A few stakeholders expressed their frustration that the reason given for not including more equalities categories was the lack of space on the census form to include this extra information.

‘The argument for not including the question is that there is not enough room in the census.’

‘We are repeatedly told that the box is not big enough.’

The coverage of the protected characteristics was also discussed by delegates and that in some cases there was little to no information collected for the characteristics.

‘We would like to have accurate statistics [on deaf sub-groups]. We have lobbied and campaigned for this. When we campaign for other issues we are asked for the numbers. We can only ever give rough figures.’

‘To us it doesn’t matter which way you gather information if we can access trusted evidence we will be on our way to getting true equality. The biggest barrier that we have is that we cannot get the numbers.’

A question on sexual orientation was not included in the 2001 or 2011 censuses due to concerns about individual privacy and public acceptability of including a question in a compulsory household survey and the quality of the resulting data. Prior to the 2011 Census NRS conducted a small scale postal survey as a first step to understand public attitudes to a sexual orientation question and the feasibility of mounting the question in a census. Census style forms were sent to a geographically representative random sample of Scottish households. In this test the percentage of respondents who did not provide useful data was around 31%. As this outweighs the percentage of respondents who declared a non heterosexual sexual orientation, the survey results called into question the accuracy of data gathered by such a question and hence the utility of any such data. Although sexual orientation questions have been included in some of the large social surveys, including the Scottish Health Survey, and Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, some delegates believed that the number of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people are believed to be under-reported:

‘Whilst [our] estimate is 6-8% of the population in Scotland is LGBT, this reduces to 2% from employee records, and down to 0.8% in the large social surveys which ask a sexual orientation question.’

One delegate explained that not having detailed enough statistics limits the evaluation of their services.

‘It would be interesting to know how many people would benefit from using [the service] I don’t know how many people use it, who doesn’t have access to it, which people are waiting for equipment or which people have unused equipment. We need data to help improve outcomes. We need evidence to be able to say who it is benefiting from it and allocate properly our budget.’

A number of delegates discussed how the absence of data collection can reinforce feelings of disadvantage and being invisible to the rest of society.

‘Although it can be difficult to capture information on non-settlement gypsy/travellers, they can take offence at being overlooked and excluded.’⁶

‘Right now the biggest issue is that we are invisible. Companies and others do not think about deaf blind people. Our place in society is not reflected in statistics.’⁷

The misunderstanding that the number of deaf blind people cannot be calculated in the census highlights the need for education on the potential uses of the census data. User education will be an ongoing body of work throughout 2013 and beyond.

3.4 Statistical disclosure

A delegate outlined the issue of statistical disclosure control to equality subgroups. Statistical Disclosure Risk (SDR) is assessed when statistics are published, based on information provided in confidence, that might allow an intruder to uncover the identity or attributes of a statistical unit (e.g. an individual, household, or business unit)⁸. The UK 2011 Census Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) policy position is based on the principle of protecting confidentiality set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice which includes the guarantee that ‘no statistics will be produced that are likely to identify an individual unless specifically agreed with them’.

In a Census context, where thousands of tables are generated from one database, the risk of attribute disclosure occurring can be addressed by introducing uncertainty about the true value of small cells. For the 2011 Census the following suite of methods will be used, including:

Footnotes

- 6) There has been a programme of liaison to target groups traditionally poorly enumerated in the census, with the aim of improving response rates from these groups. In the 2006 test a well-developed community liaison network was put in place which engaged the appropriate Scottish Government agencies, the local authorities, ethnic communities and organisations representing groups such as asylum seekers who were known to be housed in the test area at the time. Frequent contact with the gypsy/traveller community was a strong feature of this network.
- 7) The 2011 census included a question on long term conditions with the options of ‘Deafness or partial hearing loss’ and ‘Blindness or partial sight loss’. Cross tabulating the responses to the question will allow for the number of deaf blind individuals to be calculated. There was also a question on the ability to ‘understand’ ‘speak’ ‘read’ and ‘write’ English, Scottish Gaelic and Scots. A further question on language other than English at home was also asked with the options for ‘English only’ ‘Yes, British Sign Language’ and ‘Yes, other’ with the option to write in other language. Questions about ability to read and write English should provide useful information on deaf sub-groups when combined with the question on language and other questions in the census.
- 8) More information on the reasons for potential disclosure and methods to prevent it can be found on the [Scottish Government](#) website.

- modifying some of the data before the statistics are released through ‘record swapping’, where records with similar characteristics are swapped with a record from another geographic area.
- Where the number of people or households in a geographic area falls below a minimum threshold, the statistical output - except for basic headcounts - will be amalgamated with that for a sufficiently large enough neighbouring area;
- Restricting the number of output categories into which a variable may be classified, such as aggregated age groups;

For some more detailed tables, where the impact of disclosure control on the usefulness of the data is too great, special access arrangements will be put in place for approved researchers, as defined in the Statistics and Registration Service Act. A consequence of disclosure control methods is that the detail about very small groups can be lost from publications⁹. A delegate stated that minority groups are more likely to ‘slip through’ and not be included in outputs at the lower geographical levels.

4. Alternative sources used

Delegates were asked about other data sources used in their work. A wide range of large scale surveys and administrative sources were used.

4.1 Surveys

Across the events and meetings, delegates were asked about any other surveys they possibly used to gather equalities information. The delegates listed a number of large social surveys such as the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) and the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS), the Annual Population Survey (APS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, many delegates felt that the sample size of these surveys was not considered large enough to derive any accurate equality findings and the lack of data at lower geographical levels limited the use of the surveys.

‘The Scottish Household Survey gives you a Scottish wide picture, but it is not useful at low geographical levels. The matrix of the SHS is very limited.’

Many of the delegates conducted their own research which was seen as especially important for the collection of information on sexual orientation and groups that were known to be hard to reach in the census and other surveys, such as Gypsy/Travellers.

‘Edinburgh College conduct 3 surveys per year for students and separate surveys for staff. The equalities section of these surveys asks for age, sex, ethnicity, sexuality and gender.’

‘The census is good to refer to and good to know that there are [Jewish] people in every LA but we use our own anecdotal evidence. We know that if we put on an event or where we go Jewish people will come along.’

Footnote

9) Statistical disclosure control is applied to all official statistics under the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics (further information available on [Scotland's Census](#)) website.

A delegate believed that the public may be more likely to disclose sensitive information in non-official surveys:

‘The accuracy of protected characteristic statistics can be affected by the way the data is collected. Some people will not answer controversial questions in official forms but they may do it in a survey.’

A number of delegates outlined a number of problems with Local Authorities and other organisations collecting their own equalities data:

‘Capturing that information by LA surveys will be very expensive. Each question and response category costs money, we are limited in resources and we’ll make a compromise between the information we need and the resources. For instance, in our LA we will [restrict] ethnicity categories to just a few groups, or even sometimes just white and non-white (including maybe a specific group), and that does not give you the information you need for providing the right services to communities. There are other ethnicity groups that we know are important.’

4.2 Accessibility issues relating to survey methods

A number of delegates also mentioned the various barriers that can prevent certain equality groups from fully accessing surveys. They emphasised the importance of looking at how surveys are carried out to understand if and how individuals might be excluded from taking part in them. They raised the issue of the use of telephone interview techniques potentially excluding deaf groups.

‘Anything that requires the person to communicate will be excluding for the groups we are interested in. For us the methodology of capturing data is very important.’

5. Administrative data sources

Delegates outlined a number of administrative sources that provide information on equality groups. Delegates working in education mentioned a number of administrative sources including Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) data on School Leaver Destinations, School census, School Pupil Survey, Scottish Qualification Awards (SQA) results, and University and College Admissions Service (UCAS) statistics which include information on age, ethnicity and disability. Jobcentre Plus statistics were also used for information on ethnicity and jobseekers allowance.

5.1 Coverage issues

Issues concerning the coverage of administrative data sources was mentioned by a number of delegates :

‘Using admin data sources which are supplemented by surveys brings up issues of coverage and representativeness...hard-to reach groups tend to get missed as they’re on the margins of society and you’re not going to get them by relying on admin data and surveys.’

‘Ethnicity information is complete for around 90% of in-patient records. It can be more difficult to get GPs to capture ethnicity information. Hospital

admissions capture some marginalised individuals but the data is limited to age, sex, ethnicity and linguistics.’

‘We lose a high percentage of the schools population [in the School Census], as private schools do not provide the data.’

5.2 Quality issues

There were a number of concerns about the quality of data relating to equalities characteristics derived from administrative sources:

‘Although social workers are supposed to compile equality group information they are often under too much work pressure to be concerned with the quality of the data.’

5.3 Accessibility and data sharing

The delegates had concerns about the accessibility of administrative sources:

‘Other departments within our LA may have the information we need, and although there is a feeling that sharing it should be the way forward, there is also a concern with lack of compliance when sharing or to release information we shouldn’t.’

‘I get the feeling the information we need is being collected but we don’t know where it is, how it is collected or how to access it. Probably schools and social work departments collect related information but we don’t have access to it. Even if we had it we are not connected very well, so an overall picture of the problem is not available.’

‘There’s a lot of information to be harnessed through record linkage...the opportunity to discover a wealth of additional information that is not captured elsewhere, however there is a tradition of not sharing data in the NHS.’

A delegate also expressed concern about the classifications in different administrative sources and the problems that this could cause for data linkage:

‘There can be differences between primary and secondary care information as they are operated by independent contractors – there is no transferability between the two.’

6. Qualitative research

A number of delegates also mentioned that they use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

‘At this moment, from an equality perspective, we rely on ad-hoc reports and in qualitative research. I belong to a multi equality forum which is useful to understand what is important for the different equality groups and contrast that with official information but again this is qualitative information.’

‘The community interest bank¹⁰ is another source of qualitative data.’

Qualitative information can reveal some unique information about sensitive information such as the experience of discrimination and hate crime:

‘Qualitative studies have revealed that being LGBT in a rural area is different and they are more likely to face discrimination and hate crime.’

7. Future options

A number of groups also gave opinions on the possible future methods for producing population and socio-demographic information. A number of delegates were positive about an increased use of electronic census forms:

‘Digital inclusion is the way forward...the completion of electronic census forms is a good move but you need to be careful not to exclude anyone and to make sure that technology is accessible.’

Some group members were interested in the short form/long form census method. They were particularly interested in the potential of developing surveys which contained a ‘spot light’ feature whereby questions were concentrated on a particular theme (i.e. having a transport feature which perhaps included questions on how the disabled travelled) or adapted to target a particular equalities group in a specific area.

‘We know that there are concentrations of deaf people within geographical areas relating to specific industries such as in the North East of England and Glasgow. Is there a possibility of asking different questions in these areas?’

8. Future information priorities

8.1 Information on the protected characteristics and sub-groups

The Beyond 2011 programme is looking into how much detailed information on equality groups can be collected from the census or whether it could be within the remit of other general surveys and administrative sources. The need for specificity and greater detail versus the cost of collecting this information and the chances of being able to release it given disclosure control constraints would need to be balanced.

The delegates discussed their future information priorities and the majority of delegates agreed that the ability to aggregate or disaggregate information on the protected characteristics was important.

‘LA information on all protected characteristics will be an improvement on what we have now. If it’s done below the LA it helps focusing the services in the areas that need them.’

‘We’d like to see questions referring to all protected characteristics.’

Footnote

10) PDF document available on the [Scottish Government](#) website

A number of delegates across the groups said that they needed more detailed information on the disability question.

‘We should be able to drill down the disabled group at least by type of disability, speech, sight, sensory.’

‘We need a higher breakdown in disability.’

A number of delegates said that they wanted more detailed information on the different deaf groups and different communication disabilities:

‘There has to be work on the disability question and more specifically on the deaf question to capture BSL (British Sign Language) and deafblind.’

‘In the Northern Ireland census there was a list of disabilities which contained an option to select ‘communication disability’ or ‘communication support needs’. Some people have receptive communication disabilities. I think it might be of benefit to have a question like “do you have difficulty making yourself understood or understanding others?”.’

‘There is a difference between short term and lifelong communication difficulty. I want to be able to deduce that ‘X per cent of people with cerebral palsy use our services, for example. Breaking down the type of communication needs is important.’

As the census does not capture information on LGBT, a number of delegates have requested that any future method should provide information on sexual orientation.

‘We need an LGBT question. There is no reliable source for this information and we have to estimate it based on the number of customers of organisations such as Stonewall.’

Delegates also emphasised the necessity for detailed information on ethnic groups.

‘For what we use the census for, data categories are not precise enough for the groups we require, and that’s important to provide the right services. Black/White category is too wide a separation, we need sub-categories by country of birth, as that sometimes determines how affluent that group is and how efficiently we can target services. There are also health related issues with each ethnic group by country of origin.’

8.2 Geographical level

For many of those delegates involved in service planning, the ability to provide information at different geographical breakdowns was seen as an equally important aspect of aggregation and disaggregation.

‘Obtaining information at LA level is good, but lower geographical levels, the ward, is also of interest. We need to know some information at local level, for instance the language spoken in the schools, particularly in deprived areas.’

‘In terms of geographical level, equality tends to be council wide but community councils also need to understand their population profile. People need to be reminded that there are areas within their city that are not as

affluent as the average.’

‘We tend to use national level data but Local Authority level when making funding applications.’

‘The numbers at LA level are so small that you end up arguing in terms of number rather than principle. It is difficult to justify a service for less than 5 people. For such small numbers these issues are best solved at a national level.’

Although national level statistics can help inform policy decisions, the experience of individuals with protected characteristics can be considerably different between cities and rural areas and there is also a need for information at a local level to monitor outcomes across Scotland.

‘Local Authorities are basing policy decisions on national level statistics but the experiences of LGBT are different from cities to rural areas. Stonewall have qualitative evidence that in rural areas LGBT have a different experience of being gay. There are less clubs, etc. and it’s more of an online experience [...] In rural areas there is a much greater difficulty coming out, and they are more likely to face discrimination.’

8.3 Frequency

The majority of delegates agreed that the frequency with which they receive population and socio-demographic information should be increased.

‘2001 Census data feels completely out of date now. Having newer data right now, even sacrificing certain accuracy, will be helpful right now.’

The majority of delegates across the discussions agreed that the ideal frequency of population and socio-demographic information should be around every five years. Across the groups, many delegates stated that having the population and socio-demographic information in line with their planning processes was the priority.

‘To conduct a census every five years would be ideal as the College produces its Strategic Plan every three years and relies on the census for this.’

‘It would be better to gain information more in line with the outcome process.’

‘The changes our work leads can take three years or more to implement, so it is not necessary for us to have more frequent statistics than that.’

The frequency of data collection was considered to be important to the accuracy of the data. As ‘people can be sceptical about the accuracy of Mid Year Estimates, high quality information every 5 years, with a tiered approach of something in-between to act as a marker’, was seen to be the ideal level of frequency for some delegates.

‘Five years would probably be a reasonable window. In two years there could be a spike but five years allows some smoothing.’

9. Implications of ceasing the census

The groups discussed what the main implications would be if the census was not available. Delegates felt that the main impact would be that they might not be able to meet their Equality Duties.

‘The NHS uses information from the census to help meet its legal requirements under equalities legislation.’

A number of delegates who rely on census data for service provision were concerned that they would not be able to effectively plan services and allocate resources

‘Without the census, it would be difficult to know what resources were required and to protect funding.’

‘If there was no census, it would be difficult to demonstrate and justify why the funding for projects and for small voluntary organisations was needed.’

In terms of other legal implications, the delegates reiterated the legal requirement to monitor and assess equalities information. Some delegates claimed that they could rely on other data sources to meet SOAs.

‘If the census was not available it would not be that bad as [we] tend to use other data sets in the council for SOAs. It would be more upheaval if the census was the only source of information.’

‘SOA is high on the agenda [...] we could do without the census as long as there was something on the population.’

Some delegates reiterated concerns about the accuracy of alternative sources to the census:

‘The consequences of not having a census in 2021 would mean that equality statistics would need to be gathered from local sources. Over the years, this data could become wildly inaccurate.’

10. Conclusion

The discussions that were held with delegates were very useful and allowed the Beyond 2011 team to see how the census is used across Scotland. Delegates emphasised the importance of equalities information derived from the census to their work.

The contents of this report will be added to the bank of information currently being collected by the Beyond 2011 team to aid the Equality Impact Assessment for the programme. It will also be used in the evaluation of any possible methods for the future provision of population and socio-demographic information in Scotland.

Delegates will also be kept informed about any future events relating to Beyond 2011 and were sent a link to the Beyond 2011 formal consultation in Spring 2013.

11. Our contact details

For further information or enquiries about Beyond 2011 please contact:

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Appendix A

2001 and 2011 Census questions relating to the protected characteristics

2001 Census	2011 Census
Gender	
What is your sex? Male Female	What is your sex? Male Female
Age	
What is your date of birth? day/month/year	What is your date of birth? day/month/year
Marital status	
What is your marital status (on 29 April 2001) ? Single (Never Married) Married (first marriage) Re-married Separated (but still legally married) Divorced Widowed	On the 27 March 2011, what is your legal marital or same-sex civil partnership status? Never married and never registered a same-sex civil partnership Married Separated, but still legally married Divorced Widowed In a registered same-sex civil partnership Formerly in a same-sex partnership which is now legally dissolved Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership
Disability	
Over the last twelve months would you say your health on the whole has been: Good? Fairly good? Not good?	How is your health in general? Very good Good Fair Bad Very bad
Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work that you can do? * Include problems which are due to old age. Yes No	Are your day-to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? *Include problems related to old age. Yes, limited a lot Yes, limited a little No
	Do you have any of the following conditions which have lasted, or are expected to last at least 12 months? * Tick all that apply. Deafness of partial hearing loss Blindness or partial sight loss Learning disability (for example, Down's Syndrome) Learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia) Developmental Disorder (for example, Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome) Physical disability Mental health condition Long-term illness, disease or condition Other condition, please write in

Religion	
What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to? None Church of Scotland Roman Catholic Other Christian, Please write in Buddhist Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh Another Religion, please write in	What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to? None Church of Scotland Roman Catholic Other Christian, Please write in Buddhist Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh Another Religion, please write in
What religion, religious denomination or body were you brought up in? None Church of Scotland Roman Catholic Other Christian, Please write in Buddhist Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh Another Religion, please write in	
Race (Ethnicity)	
What is your ethnic group? A White Scottish Other British Irish Any other White Background, please write in B Mixed Any Mixed background, please write in C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Any other Asian background, please write in D Black, Black Scottish or Black British Caribbean African Any other Black background, please write in E Other ethnic background Any other background, please write in	What is your ethnic group? A White Scottish Other British Irish Gypsy/ Traveller Polish Other white ethnic group, please write in B Mixed Any Mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British Other, please write in D Black, Black Scottish or Black British Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British African, African Scottish or African British Other, please write in E Other ethnic group Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British Other, please write in