

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

CENSUS UPDATE FOR PAMS: JUNE 2008

Questions

1. Since the meeting with LA members of PAMS in March (see note attached in Annex, on which comments are welcome) work has continued on developing and refining the questions for use in the Census in 2011 and the 2009 Rehearsal. Some further cognitive testing work has been concluded and close liaison with ONS and NISRA on their question testing programme continues. Areas that have been the focus of particular attention include:

- The question on nature of illness/disability
- Ethnicity and national identity
- Languages

2. It has been confirmed that the questionnaires in Scotland and the rest of the UK will include 4 pages of individual questions. This will allow most strong user needs for questions to be met. It is still expected that a question on household income will be included in the household section of the form.

3. It is now envisaged that the “White Paper”-type document, presenting the proposals for the Census to Parliament, will be published in November. Work on drafting of the document is underway.

Rehearsal

4. The Census Rehearsal will be held in Spring 2009 in West Edinburgh and Lewis and Harris. The intention is for this to be as complete a rehearsal of field aspects of the full census as possible, and it will also include rehearsal of internet data collection. Recruitment of senior managers for the rehearsal areas is underway.

“Back-office services”

5. Evaluation of tenders for the “back-office services” for the 2011 Census in Scotland has concluded, and we hope to announce the identity of the successful contractor shortly.

Coding and Downstream processing

6. Now that the content of the questionnaire is near to being finalised, work is underway on coding requirements, so that the requirements are drafted when the contractor starts work. In addition successful planning of a joint approach to the downstream processing phase has been continuing with ONS.

Outputs

7. Work on consultation with users on output requirements in tandem with ONS has continued, using an on-line questionnaire and blog.

Publicity and communication

8. Consultants have been appointed to deal with communications, publicity and branding for the 2011 Census. They have started focus group work looking at alternative approaches to census branding.

**GROS Census Division
June 2008**

ANNEX

Topics and questions for Scotland's 2011 Census: meeting between GROS and local authority members of PAMS
Friday 29 February 2008, St Andrew's House

Present:

Peter Scrimgeour, GROS	Richard Belding, Aberdeenshire Council
Sara Conroy, GROS	Jenny Boag, Falkirk Council
Lin Hattersley, GROS	Tammy Brown, Clackmannanshire Council
Celia MacIntyre, GROS	Louise Comrie, Scottish Borders Council
Sandy Taylor, GROS	Allison Craig, North Ayrshire Council
Iain Thomson, GROS	Jan Freeke, Glasgow City Council
	Alistair Harvey, City of Edinburgh Council
	Ron Hunter, SPT
	Anthony Jenkins, Dundee City Council
	Allan Lambie, South Lanarkshire Council
	Sarah Longley, North Ayrshire Council
	Lin Murray, Inverclyde Council
	Bob Stead, West Lothian Council
	Cameron Thomas, Highland Council

Apologies: Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council
 Chris Carr, Argyll & Bute Council
 Lesley Mann, North Lanarkshire Council

Background

Peter Scrimgeour provided some scene-setting and general context for the meeting. He drew attention to the timetable for key decisions and milestones up until Census Day in March 2011, noting that GROS proposals for the topics/questions for the Scottish 2009 Census Rehearsal were due to be agreed by the GROS Census Programme Board (CPB) in early March with decisions at a UK level in April. There was therefore a limited window over the next month or so to take on board points of detail on question categories etc, and for evidence from further cognitive testing of a few questions to be incorporated.

Peter noted that while final decisions remained to be taken by the CPB, there is funding in place and a current recommendation for a fourth page of individual questions. This will go a long way towards meeting strong user need for information from the census (and also strengthen the ONS/NISRA position in respect of their case for obtaining a fourth page of individual questions in England & Wales/ Northern Ireland). [Note: ONS recently announced that the necessary funding has been secured.]

Topics and questions

Sandy Taylor led discussion on the proposals set out in the GROS paper, with the following main points arising.

Household accommodation

Some discussion about the merits of including a question on number of bedrooms, though on balance the general view was that collecting information on number of rooms would suffice for nearly all analysis purposes.

Suggested that in the absence of a specific question on crofting, the possibility of matching census records with other information sets on crofts should be investigated (though it was pointed out that this matching would need to be below postcode level to be adequate).

Otherwise no substantive comments on the questions for this topic. The recommendations given in the paper on those questions listed for exclusion were accepted.

Demography

There were no substantive comments on the questions for this topic.

Migration

The recommendations to exclude the questions on intention to stay and second residences were accepted. On intention to stay, it was agreed that this question was unlikely to provide accurate or usable data (eg it would generally miss seasonal workers); that there would be sensitivities about asking for this information; and that the census was not the best place to seek it. On second residences, it was suggested that enumerator records might provide a potentially useful source of information on the number and locations of second residences.

Travel to work and study

It was noted that the inclusion of a specific category for "ferry" in the travel method question would have been useful for some. Comment was also made in passing that there were some limitations in the origin-destination data available from the 2001 Census due to the statistical disclosure control applied. Otherwise there were no substantive comments on the questions for this topic.

Health & Care

Plans to further develop the question wording on nature of illness/disability were noted. It was suggested that further consideration needs to be given to: framing the categories for learning disability/ learning difficulty/ mental health condition (e.g. giving additional examples of conditions); and on whether the chronic illness category is intended to capture only the more severe types such as those currently given as examples or whether other conditions such as asthma should also be covered.

Ethnicity, identity, language and religion

It was noted that the proposed question on ethnicity reflected the outcome of the extensive review of the ethnicity classification carried out by the Office of the Chief Statistician in the Scottish Government. This would give comparability (for the broad ethnic groupings) with 2001 and at a UK level, and a proxy comparison on national

identity at a UK level may also be possible in census outputs (the Census in England & Wales will likely have a separate question on national identity). However, it was noted that differences between Scotland and England & Wales in the detail of the ethnicity classifications each was proposing, and the adoption of a separate question on national identity for the census in England & Wales, may have implications for the ethnicity/ national identity questions in UK-wide surveys such as the Labour Force Survey.

Having a separate tickbox for “Polish” but not other groups was questioned: there was recent evidence that the number of Poles in Scotland may have started to decline and their numbers may be even lower by 2011.

The set of proposed language questions (Q16 – Q18) was thought to be useful. A few drafting suggestions were made – routing from “None of these” at Q16 should be to Q18 – and doubts were expressed about how well a category for “Scots” will be understood. It was noted that these questions were still undergoing cognitive testing.

The recommendations to exclude the questions on national identity and religion of upbringing were accepted.

Labour market and qualifications

On the qualifications question, the preference was to try and include foreign qualifications against the appropriate level rather than have a single bucket category for them. It was noted that this question was still undergoing cognitive testing.

On the hours worked question, the preference was to ask about actual hours worked rather than the full-time/part-time split (at 30 hours) being proposed by ONS as the former was more useful for analysis purposes.

Suggestions were made that a category/question be included on voluntary work – a measure of “social capital”; and that there may be a role for the inter-departmental business register (IDBR) in relation to the question on name of organisation worked for.

The recommendation to exclude the question on size of organisation was accepted.

Other

The recommendations given in the paper on those questions listed for exclusion were accepted.

Income

There was strong support from those at the meeting for the inclusion of a question on household income. The consensus was that the analysis benefits of having this data available would outweigh possible shortcomings in data quality, though it was accepted that potential risks to the census of including what some would consider an “intrusive” question would have to be considered by GROS. It was suggested that the set of income bandings in the draft questionnaire may be too coarse for some purposes.

Output

Sandy Taylor provided a brief update on the consultation being undertaken by the three UK census offices about outputs from the 2011 Census. He noted that an online questionnaire and blog had been launched on 25 February, the main aim of which was to establish users' high-level requirements for outputs from the 2011 Census. Further, more detailed, phases of consultation on census outputs were planned to take place over the next few years. Several people at the meeting had already completed the online questionnaire, with some commenting that they had found this to be quite time-consuming. Others commented that it would have been helpful to have had the facility to: a) print out the questionnaire in its entirety (eg so colleagues could more easily be consulted when responding); b) pause/save a partly completed questionnaire (eg if there was not enough time to complete at one sitting); and c) skip back and forward between sections of the questionnaire (eg so that responses to one section could be contextualised with those to others). Sandy Taylor agreed to feed these comments back to the team in ONS who were running the online consultation.

Sandy Taylor closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their helpful contributions.

GROS
March 2008