



Scotland's 2011 Census Progress Report

December 2009

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1. The 2009 Census Rehearsal activity is coming to an end with the planned decommissioning of the processing site in December 2009.
2. The rehearsal Downstream Processing (DSP) system has successfully processed all the data from the 2009 rehearsal, and overall the quality of both the data and DSP has been high. With regard to our long-term development of DSP, from a methodological perspective, everything is on track. However, a number of challenges remain in terms of IT development which will need to be addressed.
3. Evaluation of the 2009 Census Rehearsal activities is continuing. A report of our findings, together with key recommendations to enhance our plans, is to be published on the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) website on 14 January 2010. To date the evaluation findings do not point to any major changes in policy, but do allow us to refine our plans for 2011.
4. The evaluation of the rehearsal data and results of additional testing on whole of questionnaire, 'nature of illness' and 'national identity' topics have allowed recommendations to be made on the final question set for the 2011 Census. The draft [Census \(Scotland\) Order 2010](#), which was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 26 November 2009, included the question detail. Following parliamentary debate the Order is expected to be approved by the Scottish Parliament on 22 January 2010. Publication of the 2009 Census Rehearsal findings before this date (on 14 January 2010) will provide evidence to support the Order. Once through Parliament, the Privy Council is expected to bring the Census Order into force by mid-February, with the Census Regulations planned to be approved around mid-April 2010.
5. A formal on-line consultation on census outputs plans will start in January 2010 and will run for a period of 12 weeks. This will seek to establish views, on, among other things:
 - Content of output products;
 - How the data should be made available;
 - Geographic products to be supplied;
 - Disclosure control, and the balance between the level of perturbation to ensure confidentiality and the level of detail included in the outputs;
 - Licensing, funding and charging models;
 - Analytical uses of the data, e.g. linking census with other data and using census data as a sampling frame for follow-up surveys; and
 - The need for microdata, such as samples of anonymised personal data.
6. At a UK level, the census outputs teams from GROS, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are meeting regularly to co-ordinate their work on a number of strands. These include:
 - Project plans and timetables for census outputs;
 - User consultation activities;

- Development of UK-wide comparable outputs;
- Meeting Eurostat reporting requirements;
- Metadata; and
- Tabulation software.

7. The Scottish Census Steering Committee¹ met for the second time on 8 September and was provided with details on the draft of Scotland's 2011 Census outputs strategy. This was well-received, particularly from the academic members, who welcomed the proposal to make the 2011 Census data available via multi-dimensional tables (hyper-cubes). While there would be some technical challenges to overcome, this proposed move potentially introduces enormous flexibility in the summaries of the data that can be tabulated and the geographies and classifications that can be used. The committee felt that the real challenge may be in educating the end user who is used to getting census data in a more traditional format, though more traditional-style outputs may still be available.

8. Our work to award contracts to support the 2011 Census continues. The contract to supply mobile telecommunications for our field staff and managers is currently out to tender. Expert advice has been brought in to procure suitable office accommodation for the 22 field offices required throughout Scotland, for field staff recruitment and training activities, and as a base for staff during the 2011 Census operational period. Negotiations continue with Royal Mail to agree acceptable service levels for the postal services contract for 2011.

9. As part of an ongoing programme to provide assurance that the plans, governance and financial management for the 2011 Census are appropriate, a Gateway Review will be held in January 2010. This strategic review will consider if the 2011 Census Programme is still operating as planned and may provide recommendations to enhance the management of the programme. Previous Gateway reports have been positive, with recommendations mainly enhancing existing plans or procedures.

10. In addition, the UK Statistics Authority has begun Phase 1 of its assessment of the census programme across the UK Census Offices. This involves consideration of the work and planning done to date on a number of the more "up-front" elements of the census programme. This phase is expected to conclude early in 2010.

Census Division
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¹ Representatives from groups that reflect different parts of Scottish society have been invited to provide the Registrar General, Duncan Macniven, with advice on how to develop plans for Scotland's 2011 Census. Further information is available on [the GROS website](#).