

# **Taking Scotland's 2001 Census - A Review**

**PART 1**

## **Census User Needs and Legislation**

**General Register Office for Scotland  
March 2002**

## Foreword

This report is the first part of the Registrar General's assessment of how the Census in Scotland measured up against the four strategic aims of the Census.

## Strategic Aims

- To ensure that the question content is appropriate to meet the demonstrated requirements of users;
- To deliver products and services to meet legal obligations and users' needs within stated quality standards and to a predefined timetable;
- To ensure that all aspects of the census data collection operation and the dissemination of results are acceptable to the public and comply with Data Protection law;
- To demonstrate that the Census represents value for money.

The three remaining parts of the report will be released on the GROS website by March 2003.

**This part of the report is written in isolation from the remaining parts. The lessons learned will be reviewed in light of future parts of the report.**

The four parts of the report will be consolidated into a final published report by March 2003.

**Part 2: Census Operations**

Available May 2002

**Part 3: Quality of Census Results**

Available March 2003

**Part 4: Value for Money**

Available March 2003

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# Census User Needs and Legislation

## Executive Summary

In deciding which topics to cover in the 2001 Census the Registrar General for Scotland consulted widely, and took account of Scottish circumstances. The cases made for specific topics were balanced against the public acceptability of the questions, whether or not they could be asked in a way that gives reliable information, whether there were alternative methods of collecting information, and the overall burden on the form-filler.

The Census is a devolved function. The final decisions on the questions included and the conduct of the Census in Scotland were taken by the Scottish Parliament.

The consultation process started in 1995 prior to devolution, and the UK Government's proposals for the 2001 Census were published in a White Paper in 1999<sup>1</sup>. Following further consultation, the Scottish Executive's final proposals were scrutinised closely by the Scottish Parliament in the spring of 2000.

There was much debate on the proposals within the Committees of the Scottish Parliament during the legislative process. Had the machinery been in place, this process would have benefited from fuller and earlier consultation with key parliamentary committees and pressure groups prior to finalising the proposals. In the event, the relatively late inclusion of two voluntary questions on religion and revision to the ethnic group question required the layout of the Census form - which had been thoroughly tested in a 1999 Census Rehearsal - to be extensively revised.

A decision was taken not to include a question on income in the 2001 Census. Census users placed a high priority on the inclusion of an income question, but there was evidence to suggest that inclusion might reduce overall response rates. With this exception the Census did accommodate the information needs of Census users.

## 1.1 The Need for Census Information

The Census is the most complete source of information about Scotland's people because by law it has to include everyone. As in other parts of the UK, Scotland's Census was held on Sunday 29 April 2001.

Central and local government, health authorities, businesses and community groups all benefit from the availability of Census information. Accurate and reliable information on the number and characteristics of people in each local area, comparable for all parts of the country, helps those who form policy and distribute resources, and those who have to deliver services for particular groups of people, to do so effectively.

Because of the important uses to which they will be put, it is essential that Census statistics are objective, reliable and impartial. To ensure this, the Census is run by the Registrar General for Scotland. The Registrar General has his own statutory powers and duties and ensures that the statistics produced from the Census are authoritative and politically neutral.

All aspects of the Census are carried out in accordance with the principles and code of practice of National Statistics, which is a guarantee that Census statistics have been

collected and produced to the highest standards of impartiality and confidentiality.

The 2001 Censuses in the UK were planned and carried out in close cooperation by the three Census Offices:

- The General Register Office for Scotland;
- The Office for National Statistics (in England and Wales); and
- The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

## **1.2 Meeting the Need for Census Information**

In 1992, the three United Kingdom Census Offices undertook a Census Policy Evaluation and Reappraisal (PEAR) to review the future needs for statistical information on population and housing and the options for providing such information. The then UK Government's decision, announced on 13 October 1992, for planning to proceed on the basis of a Census in 2001, followed the results of the PEAR review which confirmed that;

- There would be a continuing need both in the public and private sectors for the type of statistical information on population and housing provided by the Census over the period 1996-2016; and
- There were no alternative sources for providing such information on a nationwide standard basis for local areas.

## **1.3 Consultation Machinery**

Consultation on the 2001 Census was held with United Kingdom level Census Advisory and Working Groups whose members covered the interests of Census users within central government, local authorities, health authorities, the academic community and the business sector. In addition, a Scottish Census Advisory Group covered Scottish interests in all these sectors. Each sector of the user community was asked to indicate the information it wished to see collected and to state the uses they would make of such information.

Less formal consultation also took place through information papers, ad hoc public meetings, the Internet and correspondence. The Census Offices welcomed views and submissions on the Census from any source with or without invitation.

Groups that were not necessarily Census users, but who were affected by the Census, became more involved in the consultation process after the Scottish Executive's proposals were laid before the Scottish Parliament.

## **1.4 White Paper and Strategic Aims**

In March 1999, the UK Government published the White Paper, 2001 Census of Population (CM 4253). The White paper set out the reasons for holding a Census in 2001, the broad principles on which it is based, the reasons for including each proposed topic, the arrangements for collecting and processing the data and disseminating the results, and the measures to safeguard the confidentiality of the information collected.

The proposals reflected the needs of central and local government, the health service, academics, the business sector and professional organisations identified during the period

of extensive user consultation.

The Government's proposals were based on the four strategic aims of the 2001 Census (see Foreword, page 2).

The White Paper was published more than two years before the Census, to allow for public discussion of the proposals which would affect every household in the country. They drew on the findings from the programme to test various questions and procedures.

Whilst recognising that the Census was a devolved function in Scotland and that the proposals for Scotland would be subject to the consideration of the Scottish Parliament - which would be established in July 1999 - the UK Government commended the detailed planning and preparations already in progress for the conduct of the Census in Scotland.

## **1.5 Consultation on Methods**

In the round up after the 1991 Census, users made several points they hoped would be dealt with in future Censuses. The consultation process covered these points as well as other changes in Census methodology.

### **One Number Census**

It was acknowledged that the 1991 Census missed some 2 per cent of the population. However, this undercount was not uniform - the proportions missed in some areas and age-sex groups were higher than in others. Furthermore, resolving the undercount took time, and as a result, several different population counts were available following the 1991 Census.

To address these problems, it was decided that the 2001 Census should be a "One Number Census (ONC)", meaning that adjustments for under-enumeration should be made before any results were published. The ONC methodology was agreed by a panel of experts and approved by the UK Registrars General and the National Statistician.

Shortly after the 2001 Census a Census Coverage Survey was carried out involving some 40,000 households in Scotland (approximately 2 per cent of households). Results from the Coverage Survey are matched against Census results and an estimate of the undercount produced. Research indicated that the ONC would provide an acceptable level of accuracy - around 0.1 per cent for the national population (or around +/- 1.5 per cent for each of 24 age sex groups in areas of some 500,000 people). The Census is then augmented with additional records to represent those individuals and households estimated to have been missed.

### **Population Base**

In the 2001 Census, everybody in Scotland was required to be included on a Census form at his or her usual residence. People with no usual residence were required to be included on a Census form at the place they were staying on Census night. Students and boarding schoolchildren were regarded as being resident at their term-time address irrespective of where they were on Census day thus making the Census more consistent with the base for the mid-year population estimates. However, minimal information on students and

schoolchildren was also collected at the parental address if this was different from the term-time address.

Unlike the practice in previous censuses, only the name and usual address of visitors to households and communal establishments (e.g. hotels) on Census night was recorded in the 2001 Census. Visitors with a usual residence elsewhere in the UK were required to be included on the form at that address, but visitors from abroad did not have to supply any further information. This change reduced the overall burden on the public in that information about each individual person was only supplied once and it also reinforced the notion of 'residence'.

## **1.6 Consultation on Questions**

Prior to the first phase of user consultation, the Census Offices developed a substantial list of possible Census topics, mainly based on previous Census experience. In view of underlying changes in society, technological developments and changes in government policy since the last Census, a UK Working Group on Content, Question Testing and Classifications, comprising representatives from the user community, was asked to consider the case for inclusion of these topics in the 2001 Census. The outcome of this process was the identification of a list of 62 topics.

All topics to be included in the 2001 Census (even those topics included in the 1991 Census) were expected to meet the following criteria:

- there is a clearly demonstrated need;
- users' requirements cannot be adequately met by information from other sources;
- a question can be devised which will produce data that is sufficiently accurate to meet users' requirements; and
- the topic is acceptable to the public and will not have an adverse effect on overall response.

Whilst the first criterion was the primary consideration, a balance between the sometimes competing demands of user need, quality, cost, and public acceptability was sought in order to achieve optimum value from the Census.

The next phase of consultation focused on assessing and further prioritising the need for information from the Census, and on developing question wording and response categories. Users were asked to describe their requirements for information, based on the list of priority topics previously identified by the Working Group. Detailed business cases were received from central government, local government, the health service, academics, the business sector and professional organisations. These cases provided a clear basis against which topics could be assessed and prioritised, describing proposed uses of the information, possible alternative sources, and the geographic level at which data are required. A number of topics were excluded from further consideration due to their comparatively weak business cases.

## 1.7 Census Tests

In conjunction with user consultation, an extensive programme of around 40 tests was carried out which included a variety of techniques:

- Small-scale testing involving focus groups, cognitive interviews and household based postal surveys
- A Census Test in 1997 of some 100,000 households. In addition to the general testing of questions and procedures the 1997 Test was specifically structured to measure the impact of an income question, the impact of different form designs, the impact of different wording for the ethnicity question and the impact of postback procedures
- A Census Rehearsal was held in April 1999, involving some 140,000 households across the United Kingdom. While the main objective of the Census Rehearsal was to test Census operational processes, it also provided a chance to confirm that proposed Census questions were largely acceptable to the public
- To measure the quality of responses within the self-completion Census form a sample of households involved in the Rehearsal were also interviewed in the Census Quality Survey
- Throughout testing, attention was given to ensuring that where appropriate questions were harmonised across the UK Census Offices, with the 1991 Census, and with other surveys. In particular, the employment questions were designed to be consistent with International Labour Organisation definitions and to allow the classification of people by the National Statistics socio-economic classification NS-SEC

Test results have facilitated the development of appropriate wording for questions, and have provided qualitative and quantitative feedback on the reliability of responses and the acceptability of questions. A number of priority topics, including relationship within the household, travel to place of study, qualifications and ethnicity were subjected to more extensive focused evaluation. A small number of topics were excluded from the Census as a result of problems highlighted by testing.

## 1.8 Questions Included

Compared with the 1991 Census, there were new questions on:

- religion (these 2 questions were voluntary);
- general health;
- provision of unpaid personal care;
- time since last paid employment; and
- size of workplace (number of workers).

There were also revisions to the questions on relationship within the household, ethnic group, qualifications, and the question on workplace.



## **Religion**

The 1999 White Paper proposed not to include questions on religion in Scotland, because key users had not made a case for this as a priority topic, despite the case made in England & Wales to provide additional information to supplement the question on ethnicity. Moreover the primary legislation made no provision for such a question.

However, there was a strong view among some Members of the Scottish Parliament (together with some outside groups) that at this key stage in Scotland's development it would be useful to collect benchmark information about different religions to inform the development and monitoring of antidiscrimination policies. It was felt relevant that in England and Wales it was proposed for the first time to ask a question about religion, mainly in order to collect more detailed information about particular ethnic minority groups. In Scotland, where ethnic minorities form a smaller proportion of the population, the focus for discussion was rather different - in particular, a view that more reliable data was required to shed light on any differences within Scottish society associated with the main religions – Church of Scotland and Roman Catholicism.

After considerable discussion, in which the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament was influential, Ministers and Parliament decided that religion should be included as a topic in Scotland's Census, although on a voluntary basis. This required a change to primary legislation, and a Bill to give effect to this went through the Parliament, using streamlined procedures, in under 3 weeks with all-party support.

A further round of consultation was carried out in the Spring of 2000, following which the Parliament - through the Census Amendment (Scotland) Order 2000 - agreed to include 2 questions on religion. The first asked about current religion and the second asked about religious background. In both questions, the answer could be None, and the Christian religion was sub-divided into Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, and Other Christian. Other categories were Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, and another religion. Although there was scope for respondents to write in descriptions when ticking Other Christian or Another Religion, it had been made clear during consultation that written in answers would not be coded and tabulated separately.

## **Ethnic Group**

An ethnic group question had been included for the first time in the 1991 Census, with the support of the Commission for Racial Equality, and received a good response. The main purpose, which still holds good, was to provide bench-mark information to tackle racial discrimination.

The proposal in the 1999 White paper was to include an ethnic group question that followed the 1991 Census with the addition of a mixed ethnic group category. It was not proposed to sub-divide the White category into British, Irish and Other as in England & Wales. This reflected the fact that Census users in England and Wales had indicated a higher priority for information about people of Irish background than had been the case with Census users in Scotland.

During debates in the Scottish Parliament, there were strong representations from Commission for Racial Equality, backed by the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament, to extend the Scottish question to include an Irish tick-box. It was argued that this extension would enable comparisons of social and economic conditions to

be made between the Irish and other ethnic groups. Once it had been agreed to include an Irish tick-box, it would have appeared insensitive in Scottish circumstances not to include a Scottish tick-box also. Following further consultation on the format of the question, the Parliament - through the Census Amendment (Scotland) Order 2000 - agreed to include not only an Irish tick-box, but also boxes for Scottish, Other British and Other. For reasons of space on the form, it was not possible to accommodate separate tick-boxes for English and Welsh.

After the Census questions had been agreed, there was further criticism from some members of the Scottish Executive's Racial Equality Advisory Forum that the form of the ethnic group question, in particular the sections for White, Black, and Asian, were inconsistent and problematic. Although the Census question could not be changed, Ministers agreed to review the classification of ethnic group to see whether consensus could be reached on a revised classification for use in the future. It was also agreed to give further consideration to the categories used in reporting the results of the 2001 Census.

The main arguments advanced by those who have criticised the Census question were that:

- The question mixes together colour and geography.
- It mixes together racial and cultural factors.
- It is unacceptable that the African tick-box should be included under the Black section of the question (categorised by colour), whereas, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese tick boxes are placed under the Asian section (categorised geographically).

The issue also highlights a difference in approach between those tasked with running a Census - which, if it is to be successful, needs to use terms in common use in contemporary society - and those whose aim is to challenge and change society's attitudes.

## **Care**

Voluntary care has been increasingly recognised as important in recent years. The question on providing care will produce valuable information for Scottish and UK-wide policies aimed at supporting carers.

## **General Health**

Research carried out since the 1991 Census, using data from surveys, has indicated that information about general health can help to predict requirements for health services, and therefore a separate question on this topic was included for the first time in the 2001 Census.

## **New Employment and Qualification Questions**

There were revised questions on economic activity, occupation, time since last employment, number of hours worked per week, supervisory duties, number of employees at place of work, and address and business of employer. The new employment questions enhance the basis for the classification of people and households by occupational and socio-economic categories and are also consistent with the ILO definitions.

The question on qualifications covered academic and vocational qualifications and aimed to

identify the highest qualification achieved. Information on qualifications will be used to assess the overall level of educational attainment, monitor the take up of vocational qualifications, support resource allocation and help plan education and training provision.

A balance had to be struck between the value of collecting information on employment and qualifications in respect of elderly people as against the burden on form-fillers. In the light of these considerations, it was decided not to ask those aged 75 and over to complete the employment and qualifications questions, even though some people in that age group would still be working. In the 1991 Census, the equivalent questions on employment and qualifications were not asked of those who had not had a paid job within the last ten years.

### **Relationship in household**

The revised question on relationship in household identifies the relationships between members of the household rather than just relationship to the first person on the form, as was the case in 1991. This will enhance the information available to organisations providing services to families.

### **Travel to place of study**

The questions on address of place of work and means of travel to work were extended to include place of study in Scotland. This information will be used to measure commuting patterns and traffic flows in order to inform decisions about public transport and schemes to relieve congestion as well as to derive information about travel-to-work areas.

Extending the coverage of the questions will produce fuller information on daytime populations and rush-hour travel patterns. In the 1991 Census, the questions on address of place of work and means of travel to work were asked within the group of questions relating to employment. In 2001, the questions were included in the group of questions asked of all usual residents.

The complete list of the person and household questions included in Scotland's Census is as follows:

### **Person Questions**

- Name (first name and surname);
- Sex;
- Date of Birth;
- Marital Status;
- Whether Schoolchild or Student in Full-time Education;
- Term-time Address for Schoolchild or Student in Full-time Education;
- General Health;
- Limiting Long-term Illness;
- Usual Address One Year Ago;
- Address of Place of Work or Study (including school);
- Method of Travel to Work or Study (including school);
- Country of Birth;
- Religion (belonging to);
- Religion (brought up in);
- Ethnic Group;

- Gaelic Language;
- Provision of Unpaid Care;
- Employment Status;
- Economic Activity (including whether working, unemployed or retired);
- Whether or Not Ever Worked (including year last worked);
- Size of Workplace;
- Supervisory Status;
- Hours Worked;
- Occupation (job title and description);
- Name of Employer (Industry);
- Nature of Business (Industry); and
- Academic and Vocational Qualifications.

## Household Questions

- Relationships within the Household
- Type of Accommodation;
- Self-contained Accommodation;
- Number of Rooms;
- Amenities (availability of bath/shower and toilet);
- Lowest Floor Level of Accommodation;
- Central Heating;
- Number of Cars and Vans;
- Tenure;
- Type of Landlord (for rented property only); and
- Furnished or Unfurnished (for rented property only).

## 1.9 Questions Not Included

The following questions were among those considered but were dropped either because the supporting case was not sufficiently strong, the question was not acceptable to the public, the Census could not provide good quality information or the question was not suitable for a self-completion questionnaire. In particular, strong representations were made to include questions on income and Scots language.

### Income

During earlier consultations, the main Census users placed a high degree of priority on including an income question in the Census. It was argued that other sources of income data were less reliable and comprehensive than could be obtained from a Census, and that good information on income linked to other Census variables was essential to underpin social equality and inclusion policies. However, research undertaken by the Registrar General for Scotland showed that, on the basis of Census tests (to which response was voluntary), it seemed likely that inclusion of a question on income would reduce the overall response rate to the Census (not just to the income question) by as much as 3 percentage points. In the light of this, Ministers felt that, despite the undoubted usefulness of the question, it would be too risky to include it. This judgement was endorsed by the Scottish

Parliament after debate and an income question was, therefore, not included.

## **Scots Language**

The Parliament also debated whether or not to include a question about the Scots language. Ministers proposed not to include a question on the Scots language, based on the findings from research carried out by the Registrar General for Scotland.

The main Census users did not provide a case for Scots language. However, the case put forward for inclusion was that the information would help the planning of the promotion of Scots, assist in the development of language-related industries, inform research into the language, its age and geographical profiles and its future prospects, and could also assist in planning for cultural tourism.

The research was carried out in 1996 following requests for the inclusion of a question along the lines of the 1991 Census question on Gaelic. Three surveys, each of 1,000 people, found that responses to such a question varied markedly according to the form in which the question was asked. For example, if the question was "Can you speak the Scots language?" the proportion of respondents answering "Yes" was 33%. However, if the question posed was "Can you speak Scots (e.g. Doric, Lallans, Buchan)?", the proportion who replied "Yes" fell to only 17%. A proposal to include the question was subsequently debated in the Parliament, and the Scottish Executive's proposal not to include such a question was approved.

Other questions considered at some stage during the consultation period but not included:

- Extended Family outside the Household;
- Date of Most Recent Marriage or Divorce;
- Usual Address Five Years before the Census;
- Term-time Address of Students One and Five Years before the Census;
- Duration of Residence at Current Address;
- Duration of Residence in Great Britain and Reason for Coming;
- Taught Languages;
- Welsh, Irish, Gaelic Language throughout the UK;
- Proficiency in English/Language Spoken at Home;
- Nationality;
- Health/Lifestyle;
- Disabilities;
- Receipt of Unpaid Care;
- Private Health Insurance;
- Private Education;
- Qualifications Write-in;
- Number of Jobs;
- Closed Industry and Occupation;
- Individual Access to Private Transport;
- Commuting Address;
- Size of Car and Number of Miles Travelled per Year;
- Use of Public Transport;
- Amount of Social Security Benefits Received;

- Source of Income;
- Gross Individual/Household Income;
- Private Pensions;
- Age of Property;
- Value of Home;
- Availability of Garden or Yard;
- Tenure Write-in; and
- Landlord Write-in.

### **1.10 Census Form**

The 2001 Census form<sup>2</sup> was designed to have a more user-friendly layout than the 1991 form. The form required three pages per person and, with household questions, the standard five-person form was 20 pages long, in comparison with a 12-page form in 1991, which catered for a household of up to six people.

Findings from the testing programme indicated that it was important that the Census form did not exceed three pages per person, in addition to the household section of the form. The Registrar General believed that exceeding three pages per person would have had an adverse effect on the user-friendliness of the form and, therefore, on response rates, and would also have increased costs significantly.

A near final version of the pages-per-person form was tested in the 1999 Census Rehearsal. However, the relatively late decision of the Scottish Parliament to include voluntary questions on religion and a revised ethnic group question meant that the layout of the questions on the form had to be further revised.

### **1.11 Legislation and the Scottish Parliament**

Scotland's Census is one of the functions devolved to the Scottish Parliament. Final decisions on the questions to include, and the conduct of the Scottish Census, were taken by the Scottish Parliament.

The statutory authority for taking censuses in Great Britain is the Census Act (1920). The Act makes provision for the taking of a Census from time to time (but no more frequently than every five years). When read with the Scotland Act 1998, the Census Act gives power to the Scottish Executive, if the Scottish Parliament agrees, to ask the Queen to make an Order in Council directing that a Census be taken on a particular day. To enable the Census Order to take effect, the Scottish Executive is empowered to make Regulations governing the detailed arrangements for the conduct of the Census. The duty for carrying out a Census in Scotland rests with the Registrar General for Scotland.

The Scottish Parliament took a close interest in the Census and the Scottish Executive's initial proposals were amended - in particular voluntary questions on religion were added and the question on ethnic group was revised. These changes required an Amendment to the primary legislation, and following this, amendments to the original Order and Regulations. The laying of Regulations prior to the making of the Amendment Order enabled the Registrar General to divide the country into districts and areas for the purpose of the Census. It also enabled the recruitment and appointment of persons to act in those districts and areas in connection with the Census.

The date of the Census, 29 April 2001, was chosen to be in term-time for students; in British Summer Time to provide light for enumeration; to avoid major public holidays; and to be consistent with the Census in other parts of the UK and the European Union guideline to hold a Census between March and May. The date of the Census was set in legislation when approved by the Scottish Parliament. In light of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in early 2001 the date of the Census was reviewed. It was agreed to proceed with the 29 April 2001 date and contingency enumeration procedures were produced with the Scottish National Farmers Union, the Scottish Landowners Federation, and Scottish Crofters Union.

Under the legislation endorsed by the Scottish Parliament it was a legal requirement that everyone usually resident in Scotland was included in Scotland's Census.

### **Census (Scotland) Order 2000**

The Scottish Executive's initial proposals for the 2001 Census were set out in the Census (Scotland) Order 2000<sup>3</sup>. The proposals outlined the questions to be asked, the date on which the Census was to be taken and the persons by whom and with respect to whom the Census returns were to be made.

The Parliament noted that the Census Order is subject to somewhat unusual procedures in that some parts are subject to negative resolution while others are subject to affirmative resolution.

The Census Act specifies that the questions on the following topics may be included in the Census and require negative resolution (that is, they could be included in the Census without a formal motion of approval):

- Name, sex, age;
- Occupation, profession, trade or employment;
- Nationality, birthplace, race, language;
- Place of abode and character of dwelling; and
- Condition as to marriage, relation to head of family, issue born in marriage;

The Act also allows for questions on topics that fall under the following condition to be included and these topics are subject to affirmative resolution and require a formal motion:

- Any other matters with respect to which it is desirable to obtain statistical information with a view to ascertaining the social or civil condition of the population.

During the Scottish Parliament debate on the Census Order, four main issues arose. These were whether or not to include questions on religion, income, and the Scots language, and the form of the question on ethnic group. The Census Order was approved by the Parliament and the Scottish Executive gave an undertaking to include voluntary questions on religion. This would require an amendment to the primary legislation, reflecting the view that religion was neither a 'social' nor 'civil' condition so that the Act did not provide for questions on religion to be asked in the Census.

## **Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2000**

The Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act<sup>4</sup> amended the primary legislation to make provision for information on religion to be gathered, if subsequently agreed by Order for a particular census. The Act is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Act made it clear that the criminal penalties for non-completion of census questions would not apply to questions on religion. The Act went through the Parliament using streamlined procedures in less than 3 weeks with all-party support. The Act received Royal Assent on 10 April 2000.

## **Census Amendment (Scotland) Order 2000**

Final proposals for the religion and ethnic group questions, taking account of consultation responses, were included in the Amendment Order<sup>5</sup> that was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 22 April 2000. The Amendment Order featured two voluntary questions on religion and a revised question on ethnic group. The Amendment Order was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 1 June, and was made at the Privy Council on 14 June.

## **Census Regulations**

Census Regulations<sup>6</sup> based on the Census (Scotland) Order 2000 setting out the detailed arrangements for the conduct of the Census, and containing facsimiles of the Census forms, provided for

- the appointment of the temporary local staff necessary for carrying out the census in the field;
- the supply of forms and other document for census enumerators;
- the arrangements for the delivery of forms and the collection and postback of completed returns, including individual returns;
- certain information to be provided by census enumerators and persons in charge of communal establishments;
- follow-up action by field staff in the case of non-response;
- information to be given to census officers as necessary;• other duties of field staff; and
- the safe custody of forms and documentation.

The regulations were laid on 5 April 2000 and came into effect on 31 May 2000. They were consistent with the Census Order and did not include the religion questions and the revised ethnic group question. Amendment Regulations<sup>7</sup>, including facsimiles of the forms containing the voluntary religion questions and revised ethnic group question were made after the making of the Census (Scotland) Amendment Order - these came into effect on 7 July 2000.

## **1.12 Security and Confidentiality**

To help ensure that the excellent track record of Census security and confidentiality was maintained, two separate reviews from independent experts were commissioned. One dealt with physical security, and the steps taken to protect completed Census forms and the information extracted from them. The other examined the measures necessary to prevent disclosure of personal and household information in the published Census results.



The Security Review identified risks and made a number of recommendations relating to the detailed security arrangements for the Census. The recommendations were accepted and the necessary action to protect against the risks identified in the Review was taken.

The Statistical Confidentiality Review concluded that the planned disclosure control strategy was appropriate to safeguard the confidentiality of respondents' information in tabulations planned from the 2001 Census.

A summary of the Reviews was published on 27 March 2001 in response to a Scottish Parliamentary Question.

The information given in the Census is kept totally confidential to the Registrar General, his staff and others involved in the collection and processing of the information, all of whom signed specific confidentiality undertakings.

Confidentiality of individuals' information is an issue that the Census Offices take very seriously. The information is only used for statistical purposes, and anyone disclosing Census information improperly will be liable to prosecution.

Census forms are held securely and are treated as confidential for a period of 100 years.

### **1.13 References**

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