



National Assembly for **Wales**  
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol **Cymru**

## **Preparations for the 2011 Census**

This paper provides information on the developments that have taken place to date in planning the next UK census.

It includes information on the possible content of the census, proposed methodological changes and census legislation.

**June 2008**





# Preparations for the 2011 Census

Stephanie Howarth

June 2008

Paper number: 08/037

© National Assembly for Wales Commission 2008

© Comisiwn Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru 2008



## Executive Summary

The census provides essential demographic information from national to neighbourhood level for government, business and the community. The information collected in the census is used to inform policy, plan services and distribute resources.

The next UK Census will take place on **Sunday 27 March 2011**. The Office for National Statistics (ONS), in consultation with the Welsh Assembly Government, has been working on preparations for the 2011 Census over the last few years.

The ONS has undertaken a series of consultations and held a number of events for census users to determine which topics should be included in the 2011 Census. A more detailed consultation took place examining issues surrounding ethnicity, national identity, language and religion. As part of this, it has been stated that a tick-box for people who wish to record their national identity as Welsh will be included in the next census.

For the first time, the Welsh language version of the census form is being dually developed alongside the English version. This has given equal status to the languages and allows the Welsh version to be tested more fully than has been previously possible.

A large programme of work has been undertaken to develop and test questions to include in the next census. Waves of cognitive testing have taken place to ensure that people are able to clearly understand and answer the proposed census questions.

The 2007 Census Test took place in five areas across England and Wales, including Carmarthenshire. The test concluded that the recruitment, training and pay of field staff would be outsourced to a contractor and that the majority of census forms would be delivered by post in 2011. A comprehensive address register is being developed by the ONS to facilitate the delivery of forms. A large-scale **rehearsal** of the census is due to take place in **October 2009**, with Ynys Môn being one of the selected areas.

Legislation is required to be passed before a census can be conducted. New powers have been transferred to Wales which will allow Welsh Ministers to play a part in the legislative process of the census for the first time. The legislation process begins with the publication of the census **White Paper** which is expected in **October 2008**.



## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Census Content.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Initial Consultation on Census Content .....	2
2.2	Consultation on Ethnicity, National Identity, Language and Religion .....	4
2.3	Current Position on Census Content.....	8
<b>3</b>	<b>Questionnaire Development and Testing .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Question Development in Wales .....	10
3.2	The Welsh Language Census Questionnaire .....	12
3.3	The 2007 Census Test.....	13
3.4	The 2009 Census Rehearsal .....	17
<b>4</b>	<b>Address Register Development.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Census Legislation .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>The Future of the Census .....</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>Annex A. Transcripts of Assembly Committees' discussions on the 2011 Census ..</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>Annex B: Proposed questions on national identity, ethnicity, language and religion for the 2011 Census .....</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Annex C. 2006 Census Test question on ethnicity in Scotland.....</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Annex D. Timetable of future census milestones .....</b>	<b>25</b>



# Preparations for the 2011 Census

## 1 Introduction

The census of the population is a survey of all people and households in the UK. The first UK census took place in 1801 and since then a census has been carried out across the UK every ten years<sup>1</sup>. The census provides essential demographic information from national to neighbourhood level for government, business and the community. The information collected in the census is used to inform policy, plan services and distribute resources.

The next census will take place on Sunday 27 March 2011. A detailed planning programme has been in operation over recent years to determine what information will be collected in this census, how it will be captured and processed and how the results will be produced and delivered. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out this work for England and Wales, with input from the Welsh Assembly Government. The census in Scotland is the responsibility of the Government Register Office for Scotland, while in Northern Ireland the responsibility lies with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

Following the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*<sup>2</sup>, the ONS became a non-ministerial department; however the Cabinet Office takes the lead when the ONS requires a route into Parliament. The UK Minister with responsibility for the census is Ed Miliband MP, the Minister for the Cabinet Office. The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery, Andrew Davies AM, is responsible for the content and conduct of the census in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government has worked with the Office for National Statistics throughout the census planning process to help ensure that issues relevant to Wales are given full consideration. Details of some of the work of the Welsh Assembly Government are outlined further in this paper. In addition to the work of the Welsh Assembly Government, preparations for the 2011 Census were discussed by nearly all Assembly subject committees and the Equality of Opportunity committee during the second Assembly<sup>3</sup>.

This paper gives details of the developments that have taken place so far with the 2011 Census and outlines any work still to take place. This paper will be updated in the future in line with developments in key census milestones.

---

<sup>1</sup> The one exception to this was in 1941 when the census did not take place due to the Second World War.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, see [MRS Quick Guide 40](#)

<sup>3</sup> Links to the transcripts of the Committees' discussions on the 2011 Census can be found in Annex A.

## 2 Census Content

There are pressures from different groups to include a variety of questions on a large number of topics in a census. However, such demands have to be balanced against a number of issues such as the length and available space on the census questionnaire, cost implications, the ability to design a robust question and any effect it may have on response rates. In order to determine which topics will be included in the 2011 Census, the ONS has undertaken a substantial programme of research and consultation.

### 2.1 Initial Consultation on Census Content

In May 2005, the ONS published the consultation document *2011 Census: Initial view on the content for England and Wales*<sup>4</sup>. This was part of a programme of consultations regarding topics for inclusion within the forthcoming census. The ONS put forward suggested topics with the aim of obtaining feedback on this and identifying any additional topics that could be included. Respondents to the consultation were encouraged to put forward their cases for particular census topics which would be evaluated against the criteria in Table 1.

**Table 1. ONS consultation criteria**

User requirement	ONS Considerations	Other reasons
User need	Data quality	Use for operational purposes
Small geographies	Public acceptability	Use for coding
Alternative sources	Respondent burden	Balance of topics
Multivariate analysis	Operational concerns	
UK comparability		
Continuity		

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

The consultation received around 2,000 topic responses from 500 users, including over 330 responses from 28 users in Wales<sup>5</sup>. Respondents included central government departments, local government, academia, businesses, special interest groups and members of the public.

Topic responses were evaluated against the criteria above and allocated to one of three categories which reflected their user demand and any concerns held about the topic area. This category system is outlined in Table 2.

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census: Initial View on Content for England and Wales](#), May 2005

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, [2011 Census Topic Consultation: Summary of Responses from Wales or about Welsh Issues](#), March 2006

**Table 2. ONS census topic categorisation**

Category	Description
1	Topics likely to be included in the 2011 Census.
2	Topics where further work is required before a decision is made on whether to collect them in the 2011 Census.
3	Topics which will not be collected in the 2011 Census.

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

The ONS's response to the consultation on census content, *The 2011 Census: Assessment of Initial User Requirements on Content for England and Wales*, can be accessed online<sup>6</sup>, as can a series of summary reports for each topic<sup>7</sup>.

In addition to the ONS's publications, the Welsh Assembly Government published a summary of responses from Wales or about Welsh issues such as the Welsh language and Welsh identity<sup>8</sup>. For the majority of topics, the cases put forward by respondents in Wales did not differ greatly from those received across England. Two exceptions included the topic on citizenship (i.e. entitlement to hold a passport), where there was no strong support from Wales, and the topic of religion, where support was somewhat weaker than in England. Responses largely supported continuing collecting information from the 2001 Census; the one exception being the group of questions measuring the quality of housing. Many respondents felt that these questions, covering areas such as central heating, bath/shower & toilet access and lowest floor level, could be dropped and replaced with a general housing quality question.

The areas where the arguments put forward by Wales were most different from England were for the topics of national identity and the Welsh language. The ONS received 17 topic responses from Wales on these subjects and around 70 postcards or emails requesting that:

- (a) Welsh people in Wales (and the rest of the UK) be able to describe their national identity as Welsh;
- (b) Welsh people (and those in the rest of the UK) should be able to indicate their abilities in languages other than English (including Welsh).

There was a strong user need in Wales for a census topic on national identity and Welsh language proficiency. Accordingly, both these topics have been classed as category 1 topics by the ONS. The Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Language Board also made representations for a question on frequency of Welsh language use.

Further information on national identity and language is given in section 2.2 of this paper.

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics, [The 2011 Census: Assessment of Initial User Requirements on Content for England and Wales](#), March 2006

<sup>7</sup> Summary reports for each topic can be found [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, [2011 Census Topic Consultation: Summary of Responses from Wales or about Welsh Issues](#), March 2006

As part of the consultation on census content, views were also sought on proposed new topics. These are summarised below.

- *Second residence*: There was support across England and Wales for collecting information on second residences, mainly to assist service provision planning and housing development strategies. This was made a category 2 topic as the ONS needed to carry out further work to design a suitable question.
- *Language*: A number of respondents in both England and Wales felt that it would be useful to collect information on languages used (including British Sign Language) in order to assist with the delivery of services. As a result, language was made a category 2 topic.
- *Internet Access*: Although there was some support for this topic, it remained in category 3 as the results could become outdated very quickly.
- *Transport to Place of Study*: A moderate case was made for the inclusion of this topic in order to provide a more complete picture of local daily travel patterns. Information is currently only collected on transport to place of work. As the case made for this topic was not as strong as for some other topics, the ONS placed it in category 2.
- *Sexual Orientation*: A high number of responses were received supporting the inclusion of a question on sexual orientation. Service provision and monitoring equality objectives were the most common requirements given. Although there was a clear user demand for a question on sexual orientation, the ONS had concerns regarding acceptability, privacy, accuracy, conceptual definitions and the effect such a question would have on response rates. Sexual orientation was given a special category of 3\*, as although a question on this topic would not be included in the 2011 Census, the ONS would undertake a programme of work to determine how to meet user need in this area.
- *Income*: There was support across England and Wales for the inclusion of a question on income. Reasons for this included monitoring poverty and deprivation and aiding resource allocation. A question on income was tested for inclusion in the 2001 Census but was subsequently dropped following poor response rates and low levels of public acceptability<sup>9</sup>. Work would be undertaken to establish whether a suitable question could be developed to accurately collect this information in 2011. Income was therefore made a category 2 topic.

## **2.2 Consultation on Ethnicity, National Identity, Language and Religion**

Following the 2005 consultation on initial census content, the ONS held a further, more detailed consultation on ethnicity, national identity, language and religion<sup>10</sup>. The aim of this consultation was to gain a better understanding of users' detailed requirements, particularly in relation to:

- Acceptability of questions and terms;

<sup>9</sup> Census to ask people to state their religion, *The Guardian*, 11 January 2000, p7

<sup>10</sup> Office for National Statistics, [Ethnic Group, National Identity, Religion and Language in the 2011 Census](#), December 2006

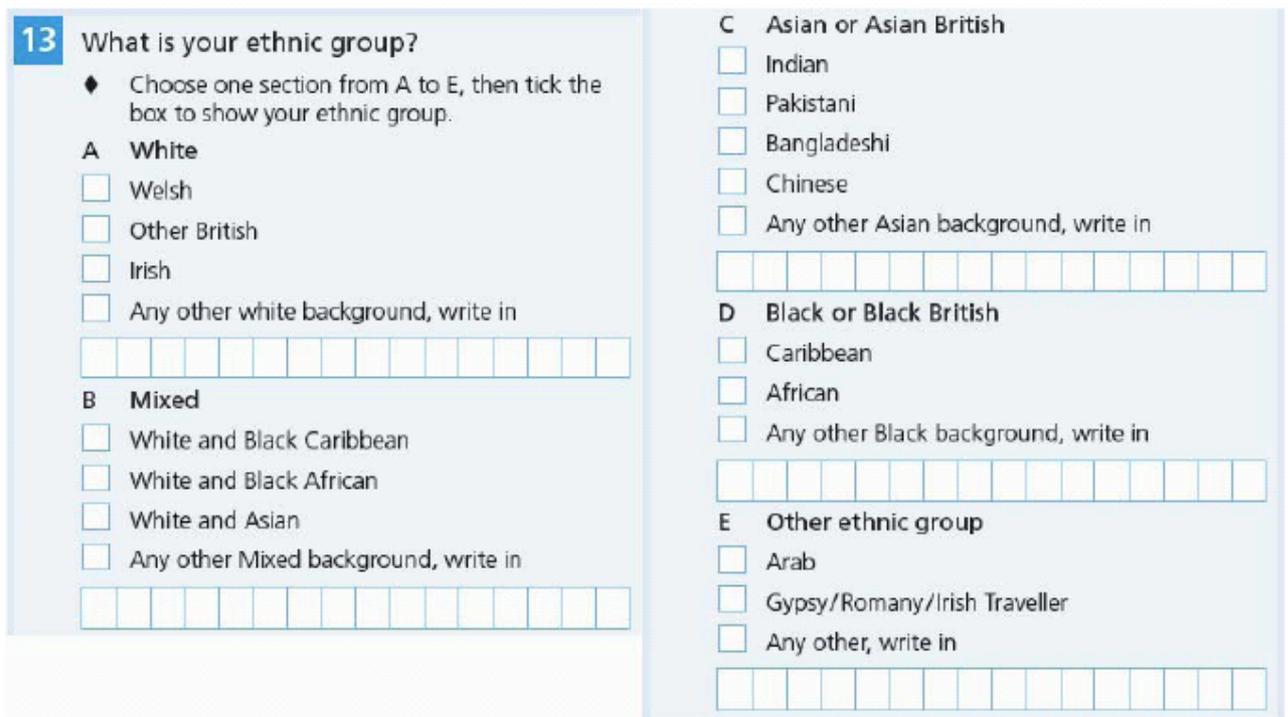
- Relative priorities for information, given the space constraints on the census form;
- Possible developments to the type of information collected by the Census.

The consultation ran from December 2006 to March 2007. As with the previous consultation, the Welsh Assembly Government published a summary of responses from Wales or about Welsh issues<sup>11</sup>. In total, 37 questionnaire responses were received from Wales and three from England referring to Wales or Welsh issues. Additionally, five comments (rather than questionnaires) were received via correspondence.

Users were invited to consider the detailed requirements for each topic, the suitability of proposed questions and terms, continuity with the previous census and comparability across the UK. The Welsh responses showed that the greatest user need was for information on ethnicity and language, followed by national identity and religion. Each topic is summarised below and, for ease of reference, is accompanied by the questions used in the 2007 Census Test. The Census Test questions have been used as they most closely resemble the wording discussed in the consultation. These questions do not represent the final questions to be used in the 2011 Census. The latest draft questions to be used in the 2011 Census can be seen in Annex B.

### ***Ethnicity***

**Figure 1. Ethnicity question in Wales**



**13** What is your ethnic group?

◆ Choose one section from A to E, then tick the box to show your ethnic group.

**A White**

Welsh

Other British

Irish

Any other white background, write in

**B Mixed**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, write in

**C Asian or Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

**D Black or Black British**

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background, write in

**E Other ethnic group**

Arab

Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller

Any other, write in

Users were asked whether they required information on ethnic group or concepts related to ethnicity, such as race, visible minorities, non-white groups or ancestry. The majority of

<sup>11</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, [Consultation on Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion \(EILR\) for 2011 Census in England and Wales: Summary of Responses From Wales or About Welsh Issues](#), October 2007

respondents in Wales needed information on ethnic group, with less than half needing information on the additional concepts, with the exception of race.

Only 28 per cent of respondents felt that the proposed single ethnic group categories met their needs. The main reason given for failing to meet needs was that respondents would be unable to record themselves as Welsh outside of the White ethnic group. It was suggested that the word 'Welsh' be added to the Black and Asian categories, as in the Scottish census questionnaire (see Annex C). Some concerns were also expressed about the term 'Mixed' and instead suggested using 'Dual' or 'Multiple Ethnic Origin'.

In terms of comparison, most respondents felt that a small loss of comparability between the 2001 and 2011 censuses was acceptable. This was also the case for comparisons across the different UK countries.

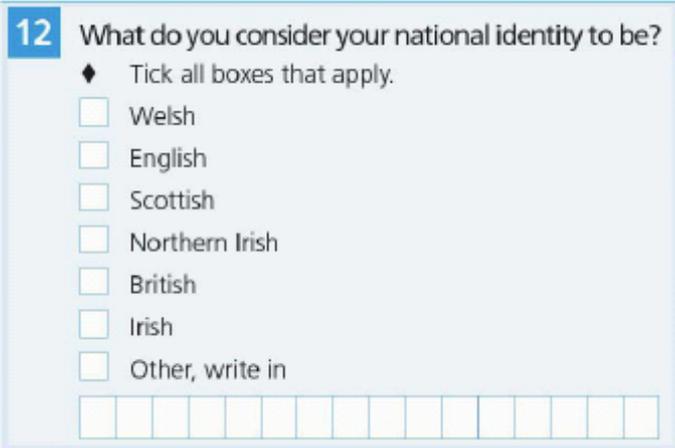
Respondents were also asked for their views on being able to select more than one ethnic group on the census form. Opinions on this subject were mixed. They stated that it would provide greater accuracy and, specifically, provide a more accurate picture of the 'Mixed' category; however there were concerns about spreading a small amount of data too thinly, a lack of historical comparability and burden on both respondents and those processing the survey forms.

### **National Identity**

A question on national identity will be included in the census for the first time in 2011 where respondents will be given the opportunity to express their identity as Welsh. Similar reasons were given across England and Wales for including a national identity question; however the user need was much higher in Wales than in England (75 per cent and 57 per cent respectively). Not all respondents to the consultation stated that they would use national identity data, but they accepted its importance in allowing self-identification and complementing the ethnicity question.

70 per cent of respondents said that the proposed national identity categories fitted their requirements and would provide the information they needed. Where concerns were raised, the main reasons were that the categories were too UK-specific.

**Figure 2. National identity question in Wales**



12 What do you consider your national identity to be?

◆ Tick all boxes that apply.

- Welsh
- English
- Scottish
- Northern Irish
- British
- Irish
- Other, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

### Religion

In Wales, 65 per cent of respondents needed information on religion and over three-quarters felt that the proposed categories were suitable. The main reasons given for the categories only partially meeting user needs were that categories were not specific enough and did not include other particular religions and non-religious beliefs. There was also some concern that the question only recorded religious identity/affiliation rather than levels of commitment.

A voluntary question on religion was asked for the first time in the 2001 Census and was answered by 92.3 per cent of people in England and Wales. Less than a third of consultation respondents completed a question on whether historical comparisons were needed. Of these, 67 per cent stated that comparisons were not needed.

### Language

A question on Welsh language proficiency has been included in every census since 1891. This consultation did not focus specifically on the Welsh language; however it did seek views on collecting Welsh language data in England. In Wales, 85 per cent of respondents stated a need for data on languages, with the majority specifying Welsh language data. Some respondents also suggested collecting first language, English language proficiency and frequency of use of Welsh. There was little demand for collecting Welsh language data in England from English respondents, but some respondents in Wales felt this would be useful when planning service provision.

Figure 3. Religion question in Wales

**14** What is your religion?

- ◆ This question is voluntary.
- ◆ Tick one box only.

None

Christian (including Church in Wales, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

Any other religion, write in

\_\_\_\_\_

Figure 4. Language question in Wales

**15** What languages can you understand, speak, read or write?

◆ Tick all boxes that apply.

	No ability	Understand spoken	Speak	Read	Write
Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>				
English	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other language, write in	_____				
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No ability	Understand sign	Sign		
British Sign Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other sign language, write in	_____				
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Over three-quarters of respondents in Wales felt that the proposed language categories met their needs. The figure for England and Wales combined was just 45 per cent. The main concern was that the question would not collect information on a person's main language.

### **2.3 Current Position on Census Content**

The original working assumption of the Office for National Statistics was that the 2011 Census would be a 24-page household questionnaire. In addition to the pages covering the whole household, there would be three pages of individual questions for up to six people within the household. This formed the basis of the ONS's bid for funding from the Treasury. However, it soon became clear that there was a great user demand for more topics than could be accommodated on a three-page questionnaire. The ONS therefore undertook some work to investigate factors such as the impact a longer questionnaire would have on response rates and the additional cost of a fourth page.

They concluded that there was no evidence that a longer questionnaire would reduce response rates. Response rates were more likely to be affected by the design of the questionnaire and the choice of topics. The additional cost of a fourth page was estimated to be approximately £25 million<sup>12</sup>. It was recently announced that the Treasury had secured cross-government funding for a fourth page of census questions<sup>13</sup>.

The Census Advisory Group for Wales (CAGW) is one of a number of advisory groups that allow the ONS to consult with census users. CAGW is jointly chaired by the ONS and the Welsh Assembly Government. The advisory group's members include Welsh local authorities, the Welsh Language Board, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other special interest groups<sup>14</sup>. At the May 2008 CAGW meeting, the ONS put forward its current position on proposed census content in light of the recent decision to include a fourth page of questions<sup>15</sup>. The proposed content for individual pages is given in Table 3. The proposed questions for ethnicity, national identity, religion and language are given in Annex B.

The only topic from 2001 not proposed to be included in 2011 relates to the number of employees. In addition to the pages for each individual household member, the census questionnaire contains a number of questions relating to the entire household. These remain largely unchanged from 2001<sup>16</sup>. However, the questions on lowest floor level and bath/shower & toilet access have been dropped and the question on availability of central heating has been replaced by a question on the type of central heating used. The only other new topic relates to information on visitors staying overnight on the date of the census.

---

<sup>12</sup> [HC Deb 23 January 2008 c2094-5W](#)

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, [2011 Census Newsletter: Issue 5](#), April 2008

<sup>14</sup> Full details of the membership of the Census Advisory Group for Wales are available from the [ONS website](#).

<sup>15</sup> Office for National Statistics, *2011 Census Questionnaire Development (CAGW paper (08) 03)*, May 2008

<sup>16</sup> The 2001 Census questionnaire can be found in English or Welsh online [here](#).



**Table 3. Proposed content for individual pages in the 2011 Census**

Topic	2001	2011
Name	✓	✓
Sex	✓	✓
Date of Birth	✓	✓
Marital / civil partnership (new) status	✓	✓
Student status	✓	✓
Term-time address	✓	✓
Second residence	x	✓
Country of birth	✓	✓
Address one year ago	✓	✓
Month/year of entry into UK	x	✓
Intention to stay in UK (a)	x	✓
Citizenship	x	✓
Ethnicity	✓	✓
National identity	x	✓
Religion	✓	✓
Welsh language proficiency (Wales only)	✓	✓
Language	x	✓
Health status	✓	✓
Long-term illness/disability	✓	✓
Carers	✓	✓
Qualifications	✓	✓
Economic activity status	✓	✓
NS-SEC (self employed, occupation, supervisor status, ever worked)	✓	✓
Number of employees	✓	x
Industry/name of employer	✓	✓
Workplace address	✓	✓
Transport to work	✓	✓
Hours worked	✓	✓

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

(a) Subject to further testing.

The proposed content is not the final decision on which topics will be included in the 2011 questionnaire. The final decision will be announced in the Census White Paper due in autumn 2008. This White Paper will need to be approved by Parliament. Section 5 provides further information on the census legislative process.

### 3 Questionnaire Development and Testing

In order for a topic to be included in the 2011 Census, the ONS needs to be able to develop a question which can be understood and answered as intended. Where new questions are developed or previously used questions are modified, they undergo a process of cognitive testing. Cognitive testing is an internationally recognised method which focuses on how respondents understand questions, remember or recall information, select a response and respond to sensitive questions. This process aims to identify elements of a questionnaire which could be misunderstood or cause confusion in respondents.

The ONS has undertaken a comprehensive testing programme. During 2007/08, they undertook six waves of cognitive question testing and the whole questionnaire will be tested during 2008. In addition to the cognitive testing programme, focus groups have taken place to discuss the acceptability of the terminology in the ethnicity question. Questions are also trialled in larger scale operations such as the Census Test (discussed below) and the Omnibus Survey<sup>17</sup>.

This section looks firstly at the developments specific to Wales with regards to question development and testing, before moving on to the 2007 Census Test.

#### 3.1 Question Development in Wales

In order to assess how proposed census questions are interpreted, understood and answered by minority ethnic groups in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government's Office of the Chief Social Research Officer (OCSRO) conducted 14 cognitive interviews with Somalis, one of the largest ethnic groups in Wales<sup>18</sup>. The aim of the interviews was to assess how Somalis living in Wales interpret, understand and answer questions on national identity, ethnicity, language and religion. Information was also sought on the layout and instructions on the census form. The key findings from this research are outlined below.

##### ***National Identity and Ethnicity***

Respondents born in Wales tended to tick their national identity as Welsh or British. Others wrote in 'Somali' in the 'Other' box. Many did not realise that they could tick more than one box and said they would have selected more than one option had they realised they were able to. The question on national identity was approached by the respondents in a number of ways, with three main themes being identified. These themes revolved around:

- how other people perceive you,
- how you perceive yourself,

---

<sup>17</sup> The Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey which samples approx 1,800 adults every month. The survey provides quick results of question testing. Questions can be added to the survey for one month or longer if necessary.

<sup>18</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, [Ethnicity Testing in Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government \(CAGW paper \(07\) 02\)](#), November 2007

- whether you are entitled to call yourself a particular nationality.

This last theme tended to relate to whether a person held citizenship for a particular country.

Ethnicity was defined by the Somali participants as being about an individual's background. They commented that while national identity can change, ethnicity does not. All respondents commented to interviewers that they were Somali, but did not necessarily record this on the census form. Some ticked the African box in the Black British category, while others wrote in 'Somali' under 'Any other black background'.

### ***Languages and Form Completion***

Regarding the proposed question on language, all respondents wrote in an additional language under 'Other language', with the majority listing 'Somali'. In many cases, respondents wrote in more than one additional language and some commented that there was not enough space to record all the languages they spoke. With regards to English language abilities, a high number of respondents did not tick that they 'Understood spoken English', despite ticking that they could speak, read and write English. Some respondents commented that they thought this box was for people who could only understand spoken English and not use it themselves.

With regards to the instructions on the form and routing of questions, some respondents commented that they were able to follow the instructions and routing as they were used to completing official forms and job applications. However they acknowledged that people who did not have this experience could find it difficult to understand and follow the questions.

In addition to the work outlined above, OCSRO held six focus groups across Wales (three in English and three in Welsh) with people who define themselves as White Welsh or White British. The aim of the focus groups was to determine whether there would be any confusion or objection regarding the national identity and ethnicity questions in the 2011 Census. When asked "What is your national identity?" Welsh speakers were more likely to describe themselves as Welsh than non-Welsh speakers. Some argued that national identity was linked to where you were born, while others felt it was more about whether a person "feels they belong". The participants found it harder to define ethnicity. With regards to whether there would be any objections to the questions, respondents generally stated that they did not have any major problems; however the issue of ethnic groups other than white not being able to record themselves as Welsh was raised.

### **3.2 The Welsh Language Census Questionnaire**

For the 2001 Census, approximately 43,800 Welsh language census forms were submitted to the ONS<sup>19</sup>. In the past, the Welsh language questionnaire was translated from the final version of the English form, after the English questionnaire had been through a rigorous programme of testing. It has been acknowledged that this approach could be problematic as there was little time to test the Welsh language form. This could result in respondents who completed the Welsh language form interpreting some questions differently from those completing the English version. For the first time, the 2011 Census form is being dually developed in English and Welsh. This allows concurrent cognitive testing of the two versions and gives the two languages equal status throughout the development cycle. A Welsh language questionnaire developer was seconded from the Welsh Assembly Government to the Office for National Statistics to lead on this work.

The work of the Welsh language questionnaire developer included:

- Updating the Welsh language questionnaire for the 2007 Census Test and considering the data quality from this test.
- Reviewing the language and style of the Welsh language questionnaire and developing a glossary of census terms.
- Consulting with language experts and advisers and appointing an independent reviewer.
- Working in partnership with the English language questionnaire developers and feeding back any findings which could affect or improve the English language form.
- Conducting and reporting on two waves of cognitive testing across Wales.
- Making recommendations on the Welsh language questions and layout of the final questionnaire.

The first wave of cognitive testing of the Welsh language questionnaire took place during 2007. In general, the language and style was considered appropriate and clear for respondents in North, South, Mid and West Wales. The testing identified some problems with understanding a small number of terms, including 'tanwydd solet' ['solid fuel'] and 'wedi goroesi partner sifil o'r un rhyw' ['surviving partner of a civil partnership']. In some cases, if a respondent did not understand a term, they would guess its meaning and possibly answer the question incorrectly. Some of the testing has resulted in changes to the English language form. For instance, examples have been added in brackets following the 'solid fuel' question. The second round of cognitive testing is due to take place during spring/summer 2008.

In many cases, the text of the Welsh language questions is longer than the English text. This has led to some formatting issues, some of which were picked up by respondents in the cognitive testing. This may require the Welsh language form to have a slightly different layout to the English form. Work is ongoing to resolve these issues.

---

<sup>19</sup> Office for National Statistics, [Census 2001 Review and Evaluation: General Report on the 2001 Census in Wales](#), September 2004

In 2001, census forms were hand-delivered to households in Wales. Enumerators were instructed to ask householders whether they wanted a Welsh or English language census form. The Welsh Language Board received a significant number of complaints which suggested that not all households were being given this option<sup>20</sup>. For 2011, two options were put forward: a tilt-and-turn bilingual questionnaire or separate English and Welsh language questionnaires. The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery agreed to separate questionnaires, with both versions of the forms being posted to households in Wales<sup>21</sup>.

### **3.3 The 2007 Census Test**

On 13 May 2007, the Office for National Statistics conducted the first large scale field test of the next census. The major aims of the test were:

- To examine the effect on response of posting questionnaires to households.
- To examine the effect on response of including a question on income.
- To assess the feasibility of operational procedures such as outsourcing the recruitment, training and pay of field staff.

The Census Test allowed the ONS to evaluate the quality and acceptability of new questions or those that have been redeveloped. The final set of census questions will be informed by this testing and will also include questions from small-scale testing and established questions from the 2001 Census. Some well established questions were excluded from the test in order to allow the testing of new or modified questions. The full test questionnaire in English and Welsh can be found on the ONS website<sup>22</sup>.

New questions in the Census Test included:

- National identity - to allow respondents to record their Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish, Irish or other identity
- Income - to collect level and sources of income
- Language - to collect information on proficiency in English, Welsh, British Sign Language and other languages. In Wales, people were asked about the frequency of their use of the Welsh language
- Second address - to identify the number of people with a regular second address and the purpose and frequency of its use
- Month and year of entry into the UK - to collect extra information about international migration

Redeveloped questions in the Census Test included:

- Illness and disability – expanded to cover the *nature* of illness and disability.
- Marital or civil partnership status – expanded to include the civil partnership equivalent of each marital status.

<sup>20</sup> Welsh Language Board, [Welsh Language Board asks the ONS to stick to the agreement on census forms](#), 18 April 2001

<sup>21</sup> Welsh Assembly Government Decision Report, [2011 Census: Welsh and English Questionnaires](#), 6 March 2008

<sup>22</sup> The 2007 Census Test questionnaire can be found in English or Welsh online [here](#).

Approximately 100,000 households across five local authority areas were selected to take part in the voluntary Census Test. Each local authority was chosen to represent different geographic and social conditions. The inclusion of a Welsh local authority also allowed the testing of issues specific to Wales. The selected authorities and the type of areas they represented are given below.

- Carmarthenshire - Coastal and Countryside
- Liverpool - Services and Cities
- Camden - London Centre
- Bath and North East Somerset - Prospering UK
- Stoke-on-Trent - Mining and Manufacturing

Areas with particular characteristics are known to be traditionally hard to count in a census. These characteristics include a high number of young adults, ethnic minorities, low income households and households living in rented and non-standard housing. In order to assess response rates and operational procedures across easy and hard to count areas, the ONS designed an Enumeration Targeting Categorisation (ETC). This allocates small areas within the sample, known as Enumeration Districts (EDs), to one of five ETC categories. EDs in category one are very easy to count (or enumerate) and EDs in category five are very difficult. The hardest-to-count areas (the EDs in categories four and five) make up around 10% of areas across England and Wales, however they made up 40% of the Census Test sample. This ensured that procedures were sufficiently tested in these hardest-to-count areas and that they could be reliably compared with the other three ETC categories.

Within each of the five enumeration categories, half the households received a hand-delivered questionnaire and half received their questionnaire via post. In each of these groups (post-out and hand-delivery), half the questionnaires contained a question on income and half did not.

The ONS plans to publish an evaluation report on the 2007 Census Test later in 2008; however some findings have been presented at Census Advisory Groups<sup>23</sup> and published in the journal BURISA<sup>24</sup>. These are discussed below.

### ***Results on Delivery Method***

One of the main aims of the Census Test was to assess whether the two delivery methods, hand delivery and post-out, resulted in differing response rates. The overall response rate for the 2007 Census Test was 46%. Tables 4a and 4b below show the rates for each method of delivery by ETC and local authority area.

<sup>23</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Evaluation of the 2007 Census Test: Emerging Findings (CAGW paper (07) 05)*, November 2007

<sup>24</sup> White, I. (2007) Evaluation of the 2007 Census Test in England and Wales – Emerging Findings. *BURISA*, 174, p2-6

**Table 4a. Response rates for delivery methods, by Enumeration Targeting Category**

ETC	<i>Percentage</i>		
	Hand Delivery	Post-Out	Difference
1	68.1	63.6	4.5
2	55.9	50.5	5.4
3	49.3	44.7	4.6
4	36.5	37.1	-0.6
5	33.4	29.1	4.3
<b>All areas</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table 4b. Response rates for delivery methods, by Local Authority area**

Local Authority	<i>Percentage</i>		
	Hand Delivery	Post-Out	Difference
Camden	35.4	34.0	1.4
Liverpool	46.7	41.5	5.2
Stoke	56.0	52.3	3.7
Bath	61.2	59.6	1.6
Carmarthenshire	66.2	60.9	5.3
<b>All areas</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

These tables show that households who received their census form via the post were less likely to respond than those who had the form delivered by hand. This finding appears to be consistent across ETC categories (with the exception of ETC 4), but less consistent across the different local authority areas.

As part of the test, all households received broadly similar levels of follow-up, regardless of how they originally received their form. In order to maximise response rates, up to three face-to-face attempts at contact were made. The follow-up success rate for post-out was only slightly less than for hand delivery. After carrying out some analysis on costs, the ONS concluded that some of the money saved by using post-out could be used for higher levels of targeted follow-up and greater community liaison, therefore mitigating the lower response rate associated with the post-out method. High levels of publicity at the time of the census would also improve response rates. As a result of this analysis, the ONS has decided that post-out will be used to deliver the majority of questionnaires during the 2011 Census.

## Results on Income

Analysis on response rates relating to the income question is given in Tables 5a and 5b.

**Table 5a. Response rates for income and non-income questionnaires, by Enumeration Targeting Category**

ETC	<i>Percentage</i>		
	No Income	Income	Difference
1	66.5	65.0	1.5
2	54.4	51.9	2.5
3	49.0	44.7	4.3
4	38.3	35.5	2.8
5	32.1	30.4	1.7
<b>All areas</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>2.9</b>

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table 5b. Response rates for income and non-income questionnaires, by Local Authority area.**

Local Authority	<i>Percentage</i>		
	No Income	Income	Difference
Camden	35.6	33.9	1.7
Liverpool	45.7	42.4	3.3
Stoke	55.2	52.9	2.3
Bath	61.4	59.4	2.0
Carmarthenshire	64.8	62.1	2.9
<b>All areas</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>2.9</b>

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

Response rates were lower when households received a form containing a question on sources and amount of income. Overall, the difference was almost three percentage points, although this varied across ETCs and local authority areas. This analysis only assesses response rates and does not investigate whether including a question on income affects the quality of responses. This is expected to be investigated in the Census Test evaluation report. Although the final decision on census topics will be decided by Parliament, the ONS has commented that it is unlikely to recommend the inclusion of a question on income. In an interview with the Daily Telegraph in January 2008<sup>25</sup>, Glen Watson, the ONS Director with responsibility for the census, commented that the negative effect on response rates was enough to convince the ONS that they should not proceed with a question on income. Mr Watson is quoted in the article as saying:

We tested the income question and the results of that have convinced us that we shouldn't proceed with it. I was concerned to see that it does seem to have a negative effect on the response rate.

<sup>25</sup> [Census drops plan to demand income details](#), *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 January 2008, p8

The position of the Office for National Statistics at the moment is that we do not intend to include an income question though, ultimately, it is for Parliament to decide the topics.

### ***Results on Outsourcing Recruitment, Training and Pay***

The ONS admits that it does not have the capacity to undertake the large scale recruitment exercise needed to hire, train and pay the field staff required for the census. Hays Specialist Recruitment Ltd was awarded the contract to deliver this area of the Census Test. The contractors were able to successfully protect confidential data and ensured that declarations in this area were signed by all field staff. There was some concern at the high attrition rate of field staff (38 per cent), but the ONS believes this can be combated by providing clearer information on the roles and responsibilities of the post when advertising the positions<sup>26</sup>. Following success in the test in these areas, the decision has been taken to outsource recruitment, training and pay.

#### **3.4 The 2009 Census Rehearsal**

The next large-scale test of the census will be the 2009 Census Rehearsal. On 11 October 2009, the ONS will carry out a voluntary rehearsal of the census in order to test its processes and operational systems prior to the full census in 2011. This is intended to be a prototype of the full 2011 Census and will therefore include the option to complete the census form online. The rehearsal will cover 110,000 households in three areas:

- Lancaster,
- London borough of Newham,
- Ynys Môn<sup>27</sup>

These areas were selected in order to provide a range of conditions which could be experienced during the full census. Ynys Môn was selected as it has many communal establishments (including an RAF base), a high number of students, above average levels of population fluctuation, second homes, travel connections to Ireland and a high proportion of Welsh speakers.

As with the full census, the ONS will be working with local authorities and community groups to ensure high participation in the rehearsal. Further information on how ONS intends to work with local authorities and community groups is available on their website<sup>28,29</sup>.

Two firms, Lockheed Martin UK and T-Systems, have put forward bids for the contract to manage the collection and capture of data for both the 2009 Rehearsal and 2011 Census<sup>30</sup>. Both firms were involved in the 2007 Census Test. The involvement of Lockheed Martin UK, a unit of the US defence company Lockheed Martin Corporation, has been the subject of fears regarding data confidentiality. If UK census forms or individual named data were to enter the United States, concerns have been raised that it

<sup>26</sup> Office for National Statistics, *2007 Census Test Evaluation – Key Lessons Learned (CAGW paper (08) 01)*, May 2008

<sup>27</sup> Office for National Statistics, [Census Planned for 27 March 2011](#), 26 March 2008

<sup>28</sup> Office for National Statistics, [Working With Communities and Local Authorities](#) [on 10 June 2008]

<sup>29</sup> Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census Local Authority Liaison: Action Plan](#), July 2006

<sup>30</sup> Office for National Statistics, [Two Companies are Shortlisted for Census 2011 Contract](#), 25 October 2006



could be forcibly disclosed under the US *Patriot Act 2002*. In written evidence to the Treasury Sub-Committee, the Exchequer Secretary (then the Minister with responsibility for the census) said:

I can assure you that the eventual contract that the ONS places with the successful bidder will have sufficient provisions to ensure that the service provider will, at no stage, allow the removal from the United Kingdom of any completed paper questionnaire, or any electronic data or images that could in any way identify an individual. Both the warehouse and the processing centre will be located within the United Kingdom.

Despite these reassurances, the Sub-Committee remained concerned about the possibility of UK census data being subject to the *Patriot Act* and asked the UK Government to take clear legal advice on this matter<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>31</sup> Treasury Sub-Committee, [Counting the Population](#), 23 May 2008, HC 183-I, 2007-08, para 106

## **4 Address Register Development**

If the ONS is to proceed with post-out delivery of census questionnaires, it is essential to have an accurate, comprehensive register of addresses. Currently, no single product is able to provide a definitive list of addresses across England and Wales. As part of the work to develop an address register, the ONS has been evaluating two products: Ordnance Survey MasterMap Address Layer 2 (AL2) and the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

Ordnance Survey's AL2 product provides a dataset of postal, multi-occupancy and non-postal premises for the whole of Great Britain. It is compiled from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File and multi-residency data and is matched against the Valuation Office Agency's Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates datasets. The AL2 also provides Welsh language alternatives to addresses. One of the ONS's requirements for the register is that addresses should be available in Welsh, as, if there is an unmet demand for this, response rates could be affected.

The National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) is a Public Private Partnership between Intelligent Addressing and the Local Government Information House. The NLPG is an aggregate of Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPGs), which are created and maintained by local authorities across England and Wales. LLPGs contain information on buildings, properties and land created from sources such as Council Tax and Electoral Roll datasets.

In 2006, the ONS undertook research to evaluate the two address register products. The aims of this research were:

- To assess the completeness of coverage of residential addresses within the two address registers.
- To determine whether an address is associated with a building.
- To determine levels of multiple occupancy coverage (e.g. a house divided into sub-premises).

A base list of addresses was produced using the May 2006 version of the AL2. Over a seven week period in autumn 2006, a team of address checkers were deployed to the Census Test areas to check addresses on the list against addresses on the ground. Address checkers were asked to identify any households not on the list (including sub-premises) and any that were on the list but no longer existed (i.e. demolished properties).

The ONS was supplied with new versions of the two registers at October 2006. Coverage of each register was then evaluated against the information obtained from the address checking exercise. A summary of this evaluation can be found in Table 6.

**Table 6. Evaluation of address register products**

Census Test Area	Address checking exercise			
	Residential addresses in original list <sup>a</sup> (Number)	New addresses found in the field (Number)	Coverage of NLPG <sup>b</sup> (Per cent)	Coverage of AL2 <sup>c</sup> (Per cent)
Bath & NE Somerset	10,045	920	93.1	94.1
Camden	26,355	7,544	96.0	89.4
Carmarthenshire	9,589	385	84.1	96.4
Liverpool	41,465	2,523	100.6	94.4
Stoke-on-Trent	15,623	343	97.9	98.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>103,077</b>	<b>11,715</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>93.7</b>

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

a. Address list produced from AL2 in May 2006 and used for address-checking exercise.

b. Number of residential addresses identified in the October 2006 supply of NLPG.

c. Number of residential addresses identified in the October 2006 supply of AL2.

Overall, coverage of the address registers was highest for the NLPG. The NLPG provided better coverage in the urban authorities of Camden and Liverpool, but the AL2 fared better in the remaining three test areas. The largest difference between the two registers was for Carmarthenshire where there was a 12.3 percentage point difference between the NLPG and AL2, with the AL2 having the better coverage. The ONS attribute much of this to issues surrounding the recording of addresses in Welsh in the NLPG.

The conclusion of this research was that both registers were, to varying degrees, not adequate in terms of coverage, classification of residential/non-residential addresses and positional accuracy of grid references. This research, phase 1 of the addressing programme, was undertaken in 2006. Since then, the focus of the addressing strategy has shifted. The ONS is now taking the following approach:

- Match together the AL2, NLPG and Royal Mail Postcode Address File.
- Work with local authorities to verify unmatched addresses.
- Supplement the matched and verified addresses with addresses from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates databases, utility addresses and multi-residence data from Royal Mail.

The ONS intends to pilot this process with 24 local authorities during mid-2008. Three Welsh authorities (Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire) are included in this pilot in order to assess the impact Welsh language addresses could have on the process.

In its report on *Counting the Population*, the Treasury Sub-Committee recommended that the Government work with the Statistics Authority (the governing body of the ONS) to remove any obstacles impeding the production of an address register. Giving evidence to the inquiry, the Exchequer Secretary noted that there had been issues with intellectual property and ownership. The new addressing strategy states that, subject to agreement, the ONS hopes to be able to share information with all data providers.

## 5 Census Legislation

In the build up to and following the 2001 Census, there was a great deal of opinion expressed regarding the matter of recording Welsh identity (the “tick-box” issue), following moves in Scotland to allow their residents to record themselves as Scottish in the ethnic group question. In light of this strength of opinion, it was decided that Wales should have a more formal role in future census planning.

In December 2006, a Transfer of Functions Order (TFO)<sup>32</sup> was made by Her Majesty in Council which transferred powers regarding the conduct of the census to Wales. The TFO gave provisions to Welsh Ministers in the following areas:

- A legal right to be consulted on the making of the Census Order;
- The power to make regulations for administrating the census in Wales.

The *1920 Census Act*<sup>33</sup> sets out the legislative process necessary to undertake a census in England and Wales. There are three main stages to the legislation process:

**1. White Paper:** This is the vehicle through which the government informs Parliament of the topics it intends to include in the census and any changes to the census methodology or policy. There will be a single White Paper for England and Wales, on which Welsh Ministers will be consulted. The forthcoming White Paper will be bilingual for the first time<sup>34</sup>. It is expected to be laid before Parliament during October 2008 and will be presented to the National Assembly for Wales at the same time.

**2. Census Order:** The Census Order sets out the date of the census, who is expected to make a return and what information is to be collected. The Census Order is expected to be laid in November 2009, for approval by both Houses of Parliament by February 2010. The 2006 Transfer of Functions Order gives Welsh Ministers the right to be consulted on the content of the Census Order.

**3. Census Regulations:** Following the approval of the Census Order, Regulations are made to specify delivery and collection methods and measures to protect confidentiality of data in the field. The Regulations authorise the recruitment of field staff and specify what their duties are. They also include a copy of the census questionnaire. Regulations are expected to be agreed by March 2010 in order to allow sufficient time to recruit and train field staff. The Census Regulations in Wales are the responsibility of Welsh Ministers.

The timetable for legislation, along with the expected dates of other key census milestones, is laid out in Annex D.

<sup>32</sup> [The National Assembly for Wales \(Transfer of Functions\) \(No.2\) Order 2006. SI 2006/3334](#)

<sup>33</sup> [The Census Act 1920 \(10 & 11 Geo 5 chapter 41\)](#)

<sup>34</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, [2011 Census Newsletter: Issue 5](#), April 2008

## 6 The Future of the Census

The 2011 Census could be the last traditional census in the UK. Some countries have already moved away from the paper-based method of data collection and instead turned towards population registers. The Treasury Sub-Committee supported this change in census direction, after concluding that “the traditional census has almost had its day”<sup>35</sup>.

The Sub-Committee visited Sweden, where they have replaced a census with a national population register. Statisticians in Sweden are given full access to administrative data and have linked it together to produce datasets on population, jobs, real estate and business. Swedish people are legally required to report a change of address, therefore ensuring that the register remains up-to-date.

The Treasury Sub-Committee supported the idea of developing a population register for the UK. They agreed with the (now-defunct) Statistics Commission's suggestion of developing a project to run alongside the 2011 Census to examine the effectiveness of combining administrative data sources, compared to the census<sup>36</sup>. Giving evidence to the Sub-Committee, the National Statistician confirmed that the ONS was pursuing the idea of a population register, but that this would be difficult without a legislative basis akin to that of Sweden. The Statistics Commission highlighted that progress with a population register could also be hampered by public concern that such a register would not only be used in matters of public interest<sup>37</sup>.

---

<sup>35</sup> Treasury Sub-Committee, [Counting the Population](#), 23 May 2008, HC 183-I, 2007-08, p4

<sup>36</sup> Ibid para 140

<sup>37</sup> Ibid para 135



**Annex A. Transcripts of Assembly Committees' discussions on the 2011 Census**

1. [Local Government and Public Services Committee](#)
2. [Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee](#)
3. [Health and Social Services Committee](#)
4. [Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee](#)
5. [Equality of Opportunity Committee](#)
6. [Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee](#)
7. [Social Justice and Regeneration Committee](#)





#### **Annex D. Timetable of future census milestones**

A number of events are still to take place before the next census is carried out in 2011. These are outlined in the timetable of key events below.

2008	Spring / Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2007 Census Test evaluation report published.</li> <li>▪ Second wave of testing for Welsh language questionnaire.</li> <li>▪ Welsh Ministers consulted on Census White Paper.</li> <li>▪ Topics for 2009 rehearsal and 2011 Census selected.</li> <li>▪ Questionnaires for 2009 finalised.</li> <li>▪ Supplier contract for 2009 and 2011 awarded.</li> </ul>
	Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topics for 2011 Census announced in White Paper.</li> </ul>
	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Questionnaire testing.</li> </ul>
2009	Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Census Rehearsal.</li> <li>▪ Census Order expected to be laid.</li> </ul>
2010	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Census questionnaires approved by Parliament.</li> <li>▪ Census Regulations made (Wales Regulations made by Welsh Ministers).</li> </ul>
2011	March 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Census Day.</li> </ul>