



Scotland's Census

Shaping our future

A' dealbhadh ar n-àm ri teachd

**Scotland's Census 2022
Equality Impact Assessment
Results
v5.0**

December 2021

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1. Executive Summary

Scotland's Census 2022 is the official count of every person and household in Scotland. It is a unique survey in that it affects the whole of Scotland's population and there is a legal requirement to participate. In developing this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) National Records of Scotland (NRS) is mindful of the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Where any negative impacts have been identified, we have sought to mitigate/eliminate these. We are also mindful that the equality duty is not just about negating or mitigating negative impacts, as we also have a positive duty to promote equality. We have sought to do this through support and guidance available.

Therefore this EQIA presents evidence on potential impacts of the plans for Scotland's Census 2022 on equality groups in Scotland, recognising the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. For example, Scotland's Census 2022 will be predominantly online and it is recognised that this change in practice from 2011 may impact on particular groups of the population. This EQIA identifies those impacts and the activity undertaken to mitigate any potential negative impacts.

Scotland is a diverse nation and stakeholders representing a range of interests have been fundamental to shaping Scotland's Census 2022. In preparing this EQIA we have gathered evidence from a wide range of sources and reflected on our own and others' experience of previous censuses. In 2019 NRS held a series of stakeholder feedback sessions and conducted an online stakeholder survey to obtain feedback on the draft assessments. A report on the outcome of this period of consultation is published on the [Scotland's Census website](#).

The impact assessments for Scotland's Census 2022 make use of the data produced by the Scottish Household Survey. The 2020 survey results have been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and as such this assessment makes references to the 2019 survey results.

This document is one of eight impact assessments prepared for Scotland's Census 2022. Others include:

- Human Rights Impact Assessment
- Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
- Data Protection Impact Assessment
- Island Communities Impact Assessment
- Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Business Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Assessing the impact of Scotland's Census 2022 is an ongoing process, which will continue up to Census Day on 20th March 2022 and beyond.

2. Background

What is the census?

The census is the official count of every person and household in Scotland. It is usually held every 10 years and provides the most complete statistical picture of the nation available. It also provides information that central and local governments need, in order to develop policies and to plan, fund and run public services.

Scotland's Census is taken by the [National Records of Scotland](#) on behalf of the Registrar General for Scotland. The National Records of Scotland (NRS) is a non-ministerial department of the Scottish Administration, established on 1 April 2011, following the merger of the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) and the National Archives of Scotland (NAS).

The main purpose of NRS is to collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland's people and history and make it available to inform current and future generations. It holds records of the census of the population of Scotland from 1841 and every 10 years after that. The one exception to date was the wartime year of 1941 when no census was taken. Census records are closed for 100 years under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Scotland's Census moved to 2022

On 17 July 2020 the Scottish Government announced the decision to move Scotland's Census to 2022 following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The census collection is a huge logistical operation involving the recruitment and deployment of thousands of staff, including a large field force team who engage with the public on their doorstep. The 12 months leading up to a census are vital in planning and testing the effectiveness and safety and security of census systems and collection processes to ensure these are ready. COVID-19 restrictions during 2020 prevented these key activities from progressing. These impacts occurred in a number of areas, from progressing recruitment to being able to undertake comprehensive testing, from contacting care homes and hospitals to establish their requirements for questionnaires to engaging with third sector and community groups to encourage participation from everyone in Scotland.

The priority and responsibility of NRS is to put in place a census that enables everyone across Scotland to participate, so that information collected can be used to produce high quality outputs and deliver the benefits required by the people of Scotland. We had been monitoring the impacts of COVID-19 on the delivery of the 2021 census and explored a number of [options](#) to preserve this census date. The conclusion by NRS was that the only option in which there was confidence around securing the high response rate required was to move the census to 2022. Following the recommendation, Scottish Ministers decided to move Scotland's Census to March 2022 to ensure that a full and successful census is undertaken.

The census in March 2022 will follow the same model and question set as planned for March 2021. We will work closely with our stakeholders and partners to ensure that appropriate data is available to support work that was expecting to make use of Census 2021 data. We will also continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to ensure the needs of data users in Scotland and across the rest of the UK will be met.

Census legislation

The Census Act 1920 ("the 1920 Act") provides for a census to be taken not less than five years after the previous census. The 1920 Act applies to England, Wales and Scotland. In Scotland it is the duty of the Registrar General to undertake the census, in accordance with the 1920 Act and any Order in Council or regulations made in terms of the 1920 Act, under the direction of Scottish Ministers.

Section 1 of the 1920 Act provides the enabling power which underpins the taking of the census. It allows the making of an Order in Council ("the [Census Order](#)") which directs that the census be taken; the date on which it is to be taken; the persons by, and in respect of whom, returns are to be made; and the particulars which are to be stated in the returns. The questionnaire (or questionnaires) used in the census are prescribed in regulations ("the [Census Regulations](#)") under section 3 of the 1920 Act. This is where the census questions, as they will be seen by individuals completing the questionnaires, are legally set out. The questions must, of course, solicit the particulars set out in the Census Order.

All of the legislation required for a census in 2022 is now in force.

Non-compliance

There is a legal requirement to complete the census. Those householders who do not make a census return may be prosecuted and could receive a criminal record and / or fine. It is also a criminal offence for a person to refuse to answer a census question, or give a false answer. The only exceptions to this are the voluntary questions on religion, sexual orientation and on trans status or history, as enabled by the [Census \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#) and [Census \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) respectively. Together, both Acts specifically exclude penalising non-response to these questions.

Why have a census?

For over 200 years, Scotland has relied on the census to underpin local and national decision making. Around 200 countries worldwide now undertake a regular census under the [UN census programme](#). The census is the only survey to ask everyone in Scotland the same questions at the same time. It is unique in the provision of comprehensive population statistics. It is used by central and local governments, health boards, the education sector, the private sector, and the voluntary sector to plan and distribute resources that match people's needs. The information collected must be "authoritative, accurate and comparable" for all parts of Scotland, and down to very small levels of geography. Only the census can consistently provide such information.

Basic information on population size, age, sex and location are crucial to work on pensions, migration, economic growth and labour supply. Other information gathered helps governments to:

- identify housing demand and create housing supply including information on household size and family make-up which are crucial to policies on local housing demand and planning, and poor housing and overcrowding;
- identify areas of deprivation, enabling them to target services;
- gather data on equality groups, enabling them to tackle discrimination; and
- gather information on housing.

Census information is also used for a range of social and economic indicators:

- population estimates;

- employment and unemployment rates;
- birth, death, mortality, and fertility rates; and
- equalities data, such as age, sex, ethnicity, religion/belief and disability.

Census data are also used by local public services to meet local needs in health, education, transport, planning, and community care services.

An example of how census data has been used to inform equality issues is '[People with a learning disability or developmental disorder – Summary of published analytical notes](#)' report, October 2017.

In collaboration with NRS, the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory investigated the demographic characteristics of people in Scotland reported in Scotland's Census 2011 as having a learning disability or a developmental disorder. The objective was to make comparisons of the characteristics of these two groups with those of the general population. This will help build a better understanding of the health inequalities experienced by people with a learning disability or with a developmental disorder.

NRS calculated the cost to health board funding allocations if the census was not carried out in 2011. If census figures from 2001 had been used to make population estimates and allocate funding to health boards, in 2014/15 there would have been misallocations of between £30m and £40m. Some health boards would have received more, some less, than their appropriate share.¹

Following the 2011 Census, NRS, in conjunction with the other UK Census offices, explored alternative ways to produce population statistics. NRS identified potential options and examined and compared various approaches to counting the population, both here and overseas, engaged with a diverse group of users, commentators and public bodies, and undertook qualitative and quantitative research into attitudes to the census and population statistics. More information on the work which was done can be found in the [Beyond 2011](#) section of the NRS website.

Having considered all the [evidence](#), in March 2014, NRS recommended that a modernised 'traditional' census was the best way to meet users' needs. Specifically, NRS announced its intention to focus on planning for a census in 2021, which would be primarily online, while offering alternative modes of completion where necessary, and also aiming to make best use of technology and administrative data in its design, building on the online approach used successfully in the 2011 census.

The main objectives of Scotland's Census 2022 are to:

- produce high-quality results;
- generate outputs that meet the needs of our users;
- maximise online response rates for the census;
- produce timely outputs to maximise benefits;
- protect, and be seen to protect, confidential information;
- do so in a cost effective way; and
- make recommendations for the approach to future censuses in Scotland.

¹[Scotland's Census 2011 General Report](#)

Learning from census rehearsal

As part of our preparations for Scotland's Census 2022, NRS undertook a public rehearsal in parts of Scotland. The rehearsal took place during October and November 2019. People living in households in parts of Glasgow City, and Dumfries and Galloway, and Na h-Eileanan Siar were asked to help by taking part, and received a letter in early October with more information about the rehearsal and how to participate.

Unlike the census itself, participation in the rehearsal was not a legal requirement. Householders in these areas were asked to take part on a purely voluntary basis to help ensure things go smoothly for the main census in 2022. Field force and communal establishment enumeration operations were not included in the rehearsal activities and a temporary contact centre was created internally within NRS for the purpose of supporting the rehearsal..

The rehearsal also provided reassurance that our chosen approaches in many respects worked well. For example, initial contact materials and reminder letters were effective in encouraging returns, elements of our local engagement and marketing strategy tested strongly, and the overall design and functionality of the online and paper questionnaires allowed the public to complete returns and deliver usable data for our systems.

The rehearsal did importantly identify some new areas of improvement for NRS to take forward. These included the need to:

- make improvements to how we collect address information;
- make improvements to some online question routing;
- review the timing and tailoring of reminder letters; and
- improve the provision of management information.

The rehearsal evaluation report can be found [on the Scotland's Census website](#).

Barriers to participation

The numerous uses made of census data outlined above represent a key benefit and the positive impact of the census. However it is recognised that there are a number of barriers and challenges, which can potentially limit or hinder participation in the census. These include lack of awareness, lack of understanding, privacy concerns, language, mistrust in/lack of engagement with officialdom, impairments such as physical or learning disabilities, and known limitations around the 'reachability' of communities and groups. Some relate specifically to digital participation, such as digital access or connectivity issues, lack of digital skills or confidence, data security concerns and mistrust of digital systems. User research and testing from 2018, 2019 and 2021 has helped us understand the user experience of people who may face barriers to completing the census.

Significant market research was also undertaken in 2021, focussing on attitudes and knowledge towards the census and potential barriers to completion. More information is provided in the communications and engagement section below.

Digital participation

The public sector in Scotland is committed to respond to the changing expectations of customers by realising the opportunities that technology provides and delivering an increasing proportion of services online. Part of the Scottish Government's Digital Strategy is to increase digital participation in order to enable social mobility and tackle persistent inequalities. The online delivery of public services will also provide services which are easier, quicker and more convenient for people to use, and at a lower cost than other methods allow. The [UK Government's Digital Efficiency](#) Report suggests that transactions online are 20 times cheaper than by phone, 30 times cheaper than by post and as much as 50 times cheaper than face-to-face.

In general terms Scotland can be considered a digital nation. The 2019 Scottish Household Survey (SHS) reports that home internet access has increased steadily over time, reaching an all-time high of 88% of households in 2019². Previously, other sources have shown that 40% of people are reported to have a tablet computer (SCVO, 2015) and 63% use a smartphone (Ofcom, 2015a).

While this information is a useful indicator of internet availability, it is not necessarily indicative of potential response to a requirement to use the internet for a specific task such as completing a census form. A report published by the Carnegie UK Trust (Carnegie UK, 2014) highlights this fact noting that the barriers to getting online are multiple, varied and complex. They state that "being digitally connected is not the same as being digitally included". The same point was also made in a report outlining research looking at links between digital and social disengagement (Helsper, 2008) which notes "simply providing access to these platforms is not enough – digital disengagement is a complex compound problem involving cultural, social and attitudinal factors and in some cases informed 'digital choice'".

It is important therefore to have a full understanding of all factors influencing internet use before any assessment of potential digital participation can be made.

Everybody has their own individual set of circumstances and their own reasons for not being online. The four main kinds of challenge people face are:

- access (accessibility, location, cost, technology, infrastructure, language);
- skills (literacy, digital, security, confidence);
- motivation (risks, necessity, financial benefits, social benefits, health and wellbeing benefits); and
- trust (identity, security, standards, reputation).

The first two, a lack of access or skills, result in 'Digital Exclusion' while the latter two, lack of motivation or trust, may be best grouped with those situations where individuals have access and make use of the internet but will choose not to complete an online census as 'digital choice'.

Both digital exclusion and digital choice could have a significant impact on online response rates. Therefore, it is important that a focus for Scotland's Census 2022 is on promoting online participation and not just tackling digital exclusion.

We are also keenly aware of the demographics and infrastructural aspects of the digital connectivity landscape in Scotland. Households with higher income are more likely to have internet access. Households with lower incomes and households in

² [Scottish Household Survey 2019: Annual Report](#)

Scotland's most deprived areas are less likely to have home internet access., but the gap has narrowed in recent years. Internet access varies by tenure. In 2019, 79% of those in social rented housing had internet access compared with 91% of households who owned their home.³

The option of submitting census questionnaires online was introduced for the first time in 2011 to those living in households; those living in communal establishments were only able to complete on paper. Around 20% of all returns were submitted online. The 2022 Census is being designed under the principle of 'Digital First' with a target online completion ratio of at least 70%.

Online services will be promoted through a number of different routes, such as community engagement activity, publicity initiatives, websites, contact materials and information leaflets. To reflect the steep rise in the use of social media in recent years, there will be a much greater emphasis on the use of social media as part of the programme's marketing and publicity activity, to satisfy increased customer demand and expectation.

The move to a primarily online census, including a change in enumeration strategy (e.g. post out of contact materials instead of enumerator hand delivery), will reduce the direct contact between householders and field staff. Public assistance channels and services together with publicity and marketing will have a critical role in compensating for this and encouraging and enabling maximum response.

We are monitoring broadband roll-out initiatives overseen by the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise which have set ambitious targets for broadband coverage across Scotland. We will continue to track progress against such initiatives to develop and maintain knowledge of those localities where digital access presents the biggest challenge, so we can best channel our support and assistance efforts.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 100 separate pieces of legislation including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Act provides a range of protection from discrimination for nine "protected characteristics": age, religion and belief, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment. The aim of the Act was to simplify, harmonise and strengthen previous protections. The Act provides protection for the protected characteristics across employment, education, and goods, services and public functions.

Under the Equality Act 2010 NRS has a legal obligation to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and ensure that the census is inclusive and accessible to all of Scotland's people. The census is for and about everyone in Scotland and our designs have to take account of these diverse needs. These needs may be influenced by individuals having one or more of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

³ [Scottish Household Survey 2019: Annual Report](#)

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty, a single equality duty that incorporated the nine protected characteristics listed above.

The “general equality duty” came into force on 5 April 2011 and requires public authorities, and any organisation carrying out functions of a public nature, to consider the needs of protected groups, for example, when delivering services and in employment practices. It incorporates all the protected characteristics, although marriage and civil partnership is only partially covered. The general duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

Public authorities in Scotland subject to the specific equality duties are required to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty;
- publish equality outcomes and report progress;
- assess and review policies and practices;
- gather and use employee information;
- publish gender pay gap information;
- publish statements on equal pay;
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement; and
- publish required information in a manner that is accessible.

A key reason for requiring census data on a range of topics is to be able to fulfil the public sector equality duty. For example, census data assists public authorities in carrying out EQIAs when they assess and review policies and practices.

Equality questions

The census already collects information relevant to a number of the protected characteristics. It includes questions relevant to the protected characteristics of sex, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion, and race. Scotland's Census 2022 will ask new questions about sexual orientation and gender reassignment. The census uses the terms ‘trans status or history’ in its question, rather than reflecting the exact language of the 2010 Act, to promote understanding and engagement with the question. This decision was taken as a result of user testing and feedback. In recognition of the sensitive and personal nature of these questions, these new questions will be asked on a voluntary basis, in the same way as the question on religion.

The Scottish Government has identified evidence gaps across the protected characteristics. These are set out in [Scotland's equality evidence strategy 2017-2021](#). The strategy does not define projects to fill these gaps. Rather, responsibility for addressing gaps in data and evidence will be shared across a range of organisations.

Following a [Topic Consultation](#) in 2015, further engagement and investigation of how to improve the quality of data collected on equality characteristics continued, to meet identified user need for Scotland's Census 2022. This engagement focuses on outputs and how census data can be more accessible to users for equality monitoring. Following a programme of research, stakeholder engagement, and

question testing, NRS set out recommendations on all of these topics in the [Plans for Scotland's Census 2021](#), accompanied by the [research](#) findings on question development. Further information on the development of the question set for Scotland's Census 2022 can be found on the [question development](#) page of our website. The [question set](#) for Scotland's Census 2022 has been agreed by the Scottish Parliament through the census legislation.

As we develop our plans for outputs we are holding stakeholder events to update users on our plans and progress. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on some of our stakeholder engagement and as a result we have had to make use of online technology to engage with stakeholders in the absence of face to face interaction.

NRS are planning a Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) and Outputs consultation as part of our wider engagement plan and will build on our previous [topic consultation](#). This SDC and Outputs consultation will seek users' views on a number of areas to better understand user needs and ensure that the outputs we produce maximise the value of the census for all of Scotland's population.

Alongside the consultation we will continue to engage with users through our regular stakeholder events where we update users on our work and plans. We will also provide updates to existing groups that we are members which includes our Population and Migration Statistics Committee and events organised by other UK Censuses.

3. Delivering Scotland's Census 2022

Communications and engagement

A detailed integrated communications and engagement strategy has been developed focussing on those groups most at risk of non-participation, identified by market research.

Initial market research was conducted over four phases to understand more about public knowledge about the census, what their motivations would be to help them complete the census and what messages resonate best to help promote the census. We then conducted and completed further public research in November 2020 to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on public perception/knowledge of the census.

Eight key groups have been identified as potentially being less likely or able to complete the census. While we aim to reach all of Scotland through our marketing and advertising campaigns, messaging will be tailored to these key audiences using a range of platforms, including social media, PR, marketing and community and stakeholder engagement.

All communications and engagement material will be aligned to contact activity with the public.

Marketing and PR campaign

A three-phased approach has been developed aiming to reach all of Scotland, covering awareness, persuasion and action. Media will be targeted for each of the

marginalised audiences, particularly in the persuasion and action phases. This will include television, radio, out of home posters and digital ads.

The creative concepts have gone through two rounds of public testing with our key audiences both in group sessions and in one to one in-depth sessions.

The marketing activity will be supported by the PR campaign which will also incorporate the three phases and again focus on those hard to reach groups. This activity will include media relations and social media.

Stakeholder and community engagement

NRS is engaging with key stakeholders, including Scottish Government, local authorities and key organisations and partners across the Third Sector, to ensure messaging about the census and its value reaches those at most risk of non-participation. This engagement will be supported by a 'field and partnerships' campaign to develop in-depth partnerships with stakeholders with reach to our key groups. These partnerships will play a key role in explaining what the census is and what the benefits are as well as the available help and support in census completion.

Online Collection Instrument

The Scotland's Census 2022 Online Collection Instrument will be made-up of three public-facing systems: the online questionnaire, a website and a request system for ordering products. The website will provide access to the online questionnaire and will feature a wide range of help and guidance, including accessible videos and access to web-chat.

To inform the design and iterative development of the online experience, we have performed the following User Research/User Testing:

- Accessibility Testing with Users (Dec 2018 – March 2019)
- Audience Discovery Research (Dec 2018 – March 2019)
- Information Needs User Research (Dec 2018 – March 2019)
- Tree-Testing – (June 2021 – August 2021)
- Usability testing (June 2021 – Sept 2021)

Other activities that have been performed to support the usability and accessibility of the online experience include:

- OCI Accessibility Audit (3rd Party) – March 2020
- Content review (3rd Party) – May 2020

Further accessibility testing/audit will be conducted by the end of 2021. You can find further information about our User Research/User Testing in **Annex A**.

This work has provided valuable insights into the needs and motivations of different groups and communities. These include people with digital skills limitations, low literacy, reading impairments, English language limitations, people from ethnic minorities and marginalised groups.

Scotland's Census website

In preparation for Scotland's Census 2022, we have developed a new website to host census results and supporting information.

The website was developed using the [Digital First Service Standard](#), a core part of the Scottish Government assurance framework. This is a set of 22 criteria that aims to make sure that services across Scotland are continually improving, and that services are being designed with users. NRS successfully completed an assessment against this criteria before the website was launched in May 2021.

Throughout the development of the website we completed a number of user testing sessions. This included users with a variety of education levels, occupations, digital skills, locations, ages and levels of awareness of NRS and census. These sessions ensured that the service was useable and accessible for users of census data.

An example of some of the user-centred features we included are:

- **Dark mode**

During usability and accessibility testing, users suggested that they found it much easier to consume information using dark mode on their devices, but that not all websites were compatible. In particular, users with dyslexia said they preferred the inverted colours of dark mode and found it easier to focus on longer paragraphs of text on a dark background. As a result of this testing we added this option to the website ahead of launch.

- **Gaelic content**

Outputs from the 2022 census will be accessed through the new website. We identified a user need for Gaelic content on the website, we have discussed this with stakeholders and the feedback received will inform how we present this for Gaelic users. We will continue to develop the website this year as we work towards the census in 2022. During this time we will identify content to be presented in Gaelic on the website. The most significant part of this work will be when we create new content in 2023 as the new census data are added.

- **British Sign Language**

Similar to the plan for use of Gaelic on the website we are engaging with stakeholders to plan how we use BSL with the Scotland's Census website.

Following feedback from stakeholders, we have identified some potential development work to the website that will help us integrate BSL content. We are planning to carry out this development work ahead of outputs being published in 2023.

Alongside the website we are developing a plan to provide assisted digital support to users who require assistance accessing the census results offline.

The period between launch of the website (May 2021) and new data being released is being used to iterate and continuously improve the offline support provided by NRS.

Public assistance

A Digital First census

In-line with the Scottish Government's "[Programme for Government 2021-2022: A Fairer-Greener Scotland](#)" – Scotland's Census 2022 seeks to support a digitally inclusive and connected Scotland.

“Over the past 18 months, the Coronavirus pandemic has changed our way of life fundamentally. Many of us have worked successfully from home and we have come to rely on home shopping, online education and new and creative ways of using digital technology to keep in touch with family and friends.

But, it has also demonstrated the problems that come from digital exclusion. It has reminded us that whilst technology can transform lives for the better, it is essential we ensure no-one is left behind.”

Source: Page 78, Programme for Government 2021-2022: A Fairer-Greener Scotland

Scotland's Census 2022 is intended to be a predominantly Digital First census, with paper questionnaires only being made available on-request. We have been working with our digital delivery partner(s) to assure that the online census questionnaire is a modern, usable and accessible digital platform that meets citizen expectations of a government service.

The same standards of usability and accessibility have also been used when developing the www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk (Outputs) website.

Both digital platforms have been tested to work on different browsers and devices, and have met the criteria of the [Digital First Service Standard](#).

Provisions have also been made to offer alternative options for census completion for those who choose not to complete online, or who cannot complete online.

Digital exclusion

Despite the pandemic resulting in an increase in digital participation and adoption - it is considered that digital exclusion may still apply to:

- older generations and those who have poor digital access or IT connectivity issues,
- those that may lack the digital skills or confidence to complete an online form; or,
- those who simply do not have a device or have data security concerns about submitting a census form.

We continue to work with public sector organisations across Scotland to understand what else can be done to support those audiences who are digitally excluded.

Other barriers to participation

In addition to digital exclusion there are a number of other barriers and challenges that may limit or hinder individual participation in a digital census. This includes lack of understanding, language difficulties, public mistrust or lack of interest and engagement with officialdom, visual impairments, physical or learning disabilities and/or other known barriers around 'reachability' of communities and marginalised audiences.

Under the banner of "Public Assistance" the census programme has developed a number of Help and Support strategies for these audiences.

Public assistance delivery model

On account of the coronavirus pandemic, the programme has had to adapt its original Public Assistance Delivery Model and Plans.

Originally there had been the intent to create a national network of support hubs via libraries and using the physical estate of other public sector organisations, but it has been considered that this may not offer Value for Money (VfM) at this time when COVID-19 restrictions may be reintroduced preventing the effective promotion and participation at these support hubs.

Based on the lessons-learnt of what has "worked-well" from ONS and NISRA around their Census 2021 experience we are investing in our:

- Language and Accessibility support products; we are,
- Increasing the capacity of our contact centre operation; and we are,
- Leveraging our stakeholder networks and community engagement activity.

Support	Description
Central services and support	Centrally, we will offer 2 primary routes for accessing Public Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online at www.census.gov.scot and via the, • Free Helpline on 0800 030 8308
Decentralised services and support	Our Field Force and Enumeration teams will provide a decentralised Public Assistance offer (i.e. support and encouragement to complete your census with sign-posting to other help and support available).
Language and Accessibility Support Products	We will offer help and support in different languages and accessible formats.
Translated Guidance	Translated questionnaire guidance will be available in 16 languages to download from the website at www.census.gov.scot/languages . These translations are intended to help users complete the paper questionnaire in English. In addition to accessing the translated questionnaire guidance online, users can contact the free Helpline number on 0800 030 8308 if they would like a printed version posted to their home. They will also be able to request a paper copy of the English language questionnaire if they do not already have one.

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Language Support Line	<p>Support will be available in most languages over the phone, and a dedicated language helpline (0800 030 8333) has been set up to provide language support and translation services.</p> <p>This service will be promoted via the Household Information Leaflet to all Households.</p>
Gaelic (Ghàidhlig)	<p>Individuals will be able to complete their census online by switching to Gaelic before they start to complete. This functionality will offer translations of the census questions and question help.</p> <p>Key parts of the website will also be translated in Gaelic, and the following products will be available to download:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'Gaelic Guidance Booklet' (PDF) • A Gaelic translation of the Contact Letter (PDF)
Accessibility Products	<p>Individuals will be able access help in British Sign Language, Easy Read, braille, audio and large print – to help complete their census.</p>
British Sign Language (BSL) support	<p>The online questionnaire has BSL translations for each question to help BSL users to complete the census, and the website also contains BSL translations for all primary pages.</p> <p>A text relay service is also available on 18001 0800 030 8308 and BSL users can also contact us by using contactSCOTLAND-BSL.org, Scotland's national BSL interpreting video relay (IVR) service.</p>
Large Print	<p>If you have a visual impairment or struggle to read regular print, users will be able to order a large print version of the household questionnaire.</p> <p>This product will also include additional guidance for completing the questionnaire in large print.</p>
Braille	<p>Individuals will be able to order a translation of the household paper questionnaire in braille.</p>
Easy Read	<p>An Easy Read guide (PDF) can be downloaded from the website, or alternatively individuals can request that a printed version be sent to them via post.</p> <p>The guide tells you about the census and how to complete it in 'plain English'</p>
BSL, audio and subtitled question help on DVD or USB	<p>Individuals will also be able to request</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Sign Language translations of the paper questionnaire on USB or DVD • an audio CD of the paper questionnaire questions <p>To order these products, you will need to let the contact centre know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your name • address and postcode • how many you need
Audio CD	<p>Individuals will be able to order an audio CD version of the household paper questionnaire.</p>

Contact centre

Our Contact Centre will open on 28 February 2022. This will provide individuals with a free, dedicated Helpline that can be used for Help or Support when completing your census.

Our contact centre team will be trained to deal with common queries, print product requests and complaints.

The hours of operation will be:

- Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
- Saturday and Sunday: 9am to 4pm
- 19 and 20 March: 8am to 8pm

Calls are free-of-charge from UK landlines and mobile phones.

The Contact Centre will deal with queries via social media, e-mail, webchat and IVR. They will provide basic IT technical support helping users with their login difficulties and support users with the completion of telephone captured questionnaires via the online process.

The Contact Centre will also be able to request replacement Internet Access Codes to be issued to respondents. These codes will be sent by paper, text or email.

Contact Centre and field force staff will be able to provide assistance to support completion, as well as Telephone Data Capture (TDC). This includes assistance for those seeking to complete an individual questionnaire as part of a household. In addition, the census questionnaire can be completed on behalf of the householder by a family member/friend/carer.

Field operations and recruitment

The field force which supported Scotland's Census 2011 was in the region of around 7,500 staff who were responsible for hand-delivery of paper census questionnaires to the vast majority of Scotland's households. In 2022 initial contact with households will be by letter and field force responsibilities will focus on following up non-response. The field force will be around half the size of that in 2011.

Field force staff will be recruited across the country and we will seek to best represent the people of Scotland within our workforce, in full compliance with relevant employment legislation.

Data collection

Respondents will be able to complete the census questionnaire online, or can request a paper questionnaire for return by post. Enumeration processes include the use of a robust address list to ensure every household receives instructions on how to make a census return. This is complemented by deployment of a field force who will seek to ensure every household and communal establishment is able to participate in the census. The Census Coverage Survey, which follows up a sample of the main operation, assesses the extent of coverage across the whole population.

Data processing and statistical outputs

Statistical data processing, and the methodology underpinning it, will seek to ensure that all data captured by the census are processed appropriately and consistently to best meet the identified user needs, and are considered throughout the data lifecycle. Statistical Disclosure Control policies and processes protect individuals, particularly those who hold less prevalent protected characteristics, from being identifiable from census outputs.

SDC involves controlling access to data and the level of detail that is available to census data users. For Scotland's Census 2022, we will use 3 main SDC methods:

- record swapping
- cell key perturbation
- flexible table builder rules

Record swapping means swapping a small number of households with other demographically similar households in nearby areas. All households have a chance to be swapped. Those containing individuals with rare characteristics are much more likely to be selected for swapping.

Swaps are made between similar households to minimise the impact on data quality. Swapping helps to ensure that people and households with rare characteristics cannot be identified in published outputs.

An innovation for Scotland's Census 2022 will be the availability of a flexible table builder tool. This will allow users to create their own tables from census data. The table builder will use a method called cell key perturbation. This will help protect the confidentiality of data within tables. When a user creates a table, small adjustments will be made automatically to cells in the table.

The flexible table builder will also have built-in rules to protect confidential information. Any information that may identify an individual or household will not be available in the table builder tool. For example, users will not be able to access tables containing very small cell counts at a geographic level.

An individual's census data, once supplied, cannot be used for any decision about the individual. The data are for statistical use only.

4. Key findings - protected characteristics

Age

Overview

Scotland's population is ageing. In 2018, just under one in five people (19%) in Scotland were aged 65 and over, compared with 16% in 2008. The population aged 16 to 64 has decreased from 66% to 64% over the last 10 years. The higher number of women at older ages reflects their longer life expectancy⁴.

⁴ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2018>

There is a clear relationship between age and use of internet, with lower rates of internet use among older adults. In 2019, 99% of adults aged 16 to 24 reported using the internet compared to 43% of those aged 75 and over.

Although older adults were less likely to use the internet, the gap in internet use between adults aged 16-24 and adults aged 60 and above has fallen over time, mainly driven by an increase in internet use amongst adults aged 60+ (from 29% to 66%).⁵

Younger internet users were more likely than older users to access the internet using a smartphone, with 98% of 16-24 year olds using smartphones compared with 47% of adults aged 75+ (an increase from 29% in 2018). Older internet users were more likely than younger users to use a tablet to access the internet.

Our experience of previous censuses has shown that older people need a range of support mechanisms to raise their awareness of the need to complete a census questionnaire and to help them to do so. However, in light of the evidence above, the emphasis on online completion in 2022 will present fresh challenges in mitigating the risk of non-participation amongst older people. We will therefore ensure that paper questionnaires will be available on request for those that need them.

Information from the 2011 Census shows that 53% of those aged 65 and over are limited in their ability to carry out day to day activities due to a health condition or a disability. This compares to 20% for the population overall.

This has influenced design decisions and strategies around public assistance, community engagement, enumeration and fieldwork.

Older single person households may be wary of doorstep contact by field staff and therefore we hope to recruit staff who have previous experience of working with vulnerable groups, subject to the necessary checks and clearances.

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

Data on age, or date of birth, were first collected in the Census in 1821. There is a strong and well-established user need for the key demographic variable of age. By combining sex and age information, the census provides a basis for calculating rates of morbidity, mortality, fertility, marriage and divorce. These are vital inputs to population estimates and household projections which are used by central and local government to inform resource allocation, target investment, and carry out service planning and delivery.

Social surveys generally collect information about age, either by asking for age or age bands, date of birth, or a combination. We will continue to collect information on age (via a question on date of birth) in 2022. No question development has been considered necessary for the date of birth question as the data collected in previous censuses were of good quality which met user needs.

As we are including a question to gather age data in 2022, data on this variable will be available in census outputs. Outputs relating to age are an important tool for creating a complete demographic picture of Scotland. Stakeholder feedback has indicated that these outputs are vital for resource allocation, target investment and service planning/provision across the country.

⁵ [Scottish Household Survey 2019: Annual Report](#)

Question development work seeks to ensure that the language used in questions and guidance is inclusive, acceptable and aids people of different ages in answering questions confidently and correctly. This includes guidance for those who are completing returns on behalf of others who may be at school, retired, or young children. All questions are reviewed to ensure that they are asked of the appropriate age groups – in particular, questions on sexual orientation, trans status or history, language and labour market participation. Testing of all new questions, and any questions considered for changes, has been undertaken with communities of interest and the general population to understand the implications of posing these questions to all individuals, or targeting to relevant age groups, to understand how different age groups may respond to questions, and whether the questions are publicly acceptable to all age groups.

The asking of some questions will be limited to certain age groups only

In 2022, we need to make sure that the census only collects the information that we need from the people of Scotland and we want to make sure that the questionnaire is easy to complete and takes as little time as possible. Testing has also shown that some questions are less acceptable when they are asked about people under the age of 16 years.⁶ With this in mind there will be some age routing in the online questionnaire. This means for example that the person completing the form will not be asked how well a two year old can read English or where a 6 month old baby lived a year ago.

For the online questionnaire the response used to the date of birth question will be used to calculate a person's age so they will not need to respond to questions that are not relevant to them. On the paper questionnaire we will provide guidance about which questions should be answered by people of particular ages.

You can find more information about age limitation policies in the Scotland's Census 2022 [Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment](#).

The following age-limitations will apply:

Questions asked of people aged 16 or over:

- The new voluntary question on trans status or history
- The new voluntary question on sexual orientation
- The new question on ex-service status
- The question on legal marital and civil partnership status
- The qualifications held question
- The questions on employment and activity last week

Questions asked of people aged 4 and over:

- The question on whether you are a school child or full-time student
- The questions on travel to place of work or study

Questions asked of people aged 3 and over:

- All of the language questions
- The question on provision of unpaid care

Questions asked of people aged 1 and over:

⁶[Sex and gender identity topic report | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

- The question on address 1 year ago

All other individual questions will be asked of everyone usually resident in households or communal establishments.

Support to complete the census

Certain age groups may be unaware of the census or unsure of some of the language used. Some older people may experience difficulties in understanding advice and guidance.

We have created guidance and information with a target reading age of 9-years-old. This is the average reading age of adults in the UK and will ensure as many people as possible can access help and support to complete the census.

Ensuring maximum participation from all age groups

Young adults have also been identified as a group at risk of not participating in the census, and will therefore be the subject of targeted community engagement. Digital exclusion, whilst more prevalent in older people, also exists as a barrier to the participation of young adults to an extent. However, attitudinal and motivational factors such as lack of knowledge/awareness, disengagement with officialdom, and fears around security of data are key amongst this group, some of whom may be experiencing their first census as a respondent. There will therefore be an emphasis on raising their awareness of the obligation to complete a questionnaire, highlighting the benefits of doing so.

- Evidence⁷ suggests that the internet and social media are a good way of targeting young people, but other ways of reaching and engaging older people may be more effective. Some phases of the PR campaign focus entirely on marginalised audiences, with tailored activity delivered for each of those audiences.
- In other phases of the campaign, specific media will be targeted for each of the marginalised audiences, for example, traditional press for older people.

Publicity and marketing campaigns will seek to maximise the potential for social media and other channels to target all age groups with tailored messaging. Messaging will also seek to reassure respondents by highlighting our commitment to keeping data secure.

Evidence⁸ shows that older people are less likely to use the internet, so may not have as much access to census data outputs if they are only available online. Census outputs will be made available in a variety of accessible formats both online and in hard copies on request. This will ensure that all data users, regardless of their internet access or proficiency can have access to census data outputs.

Summary of impacts

Measures that help older people may help to advance equality of opportunity by assisting them to complete the census. For example the national helpline may help to mitigate any negative impacts, and advance equality of opportunity, helping

⁷https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0025/149146/online-nation-report.pdf

⁸Scottish Household Survey 2019: Annual Report

people who may need extra help, including those who do not have internet access. It may also have a positive effect in fostering good relations between people, as helpline staff may have the opportunity to understand more about the difficulties faced by older people.

Sex

Overview

Mid-year estimates for Scotland for 2019 produced by NRS show that 51% of Scotland's population were female and 49% were male.⁹

The census has collected information on the numbers of males and females since 1801. For the first four censuses, information was not recorded on an individual basis, only on the total number of males and females per address. Since 1841 the census has asked individual households to record details of the people who are resident there including their sex.

Since 1920, the census sex question has been asked in a variety of different ways, with different instructions given and in different formats. For example:

- 'Please tick appropriate box'
- 'Write in your sex' or
- 'What is your sex?'

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

Prior to 2011 in Scotland, there was no additional guidance provided on how to answer the sex question. In 2011, in response to user requests, additional information was provided online to help trans people understand how they should answer this question. That guidance advised people who were trans that they did not need to answer the question with the sex recorded on their birth certificate.

The [Census Topic Consultation in 2015](#) identified a continued need for data on sex to be collected in the census, and in addition identified a need to consider how the question could be inclusive of everyone in Scotland. Some stakeholders raised that the 2011 binary sex question could not be answered by those who are non-binary. This was evidenced in 2011 by some respondents ticking both response options, writing in 'non-binary' over the response or refusing to tick either response option. Investigating how to address this was considered important as the sex question is a mandatory census question and therefore completion rates should be 100%.

A programme of research and development was therefore undertaken, the findings from which were published in September 2018. The [Sex and Gender Identity Topic Report](#) reported the findings that a non-binary sex question was publically acceptable and produced less item non-response than a binary sex question. NRS reported in the [Plans for Scotland's Census](#) in September 2018 that it was continuing to investigate whether a non-binary sex question would lead to improvements in data quality for the next census.

During the consideration of the Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, there was discussion around the sex question, in particular, whether a non-binary question

⁹ [Mid-2020 Population Estimates Scotland | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](#)

should be considered further. Whilst some stakeholders felt that such a question could lead to better results, some stakeholders raised concerns over the concept of a non-binary question. In particular, there was a widely expressed view amongst those stakeholders that sex is biological and can only be male or female and therefore any question which asks a respondent about their sex must be binary.

In its Stage 1 report on the [Census \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#), the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee of the Scottish Parliament recognised that there are different views on the issue of a binary or non-binary sex question but recommended that the question remained a binary one in 2022. It has been agreed that a binary sex question will be asked in 2022.

NRS commissioned ScotCen Social Research to test the nature and impact of guidance associated with the sex question. ScotCen carried out two surveys on: the general population aged over 16 and living in Scotland; and adults aged over 16 who self-identify as trans / non-binary and living in Scotland. The full ScotCen report can be viewed [here](#). The sex question recommendation report was published in December 2019 and can be found [here](#).

Following careful consideration of all of the available evidence the former Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture confirmed to the Scottish Parliament [in a letter dated 26th February 2020](#) that Scotland's Census will, subject to the Census Order and Census Regulations being in force, include a binary sex question with self-identification guidance. The question follows the format of the 2011 sex question and while the guidance has been updated, it will still allow for a self-identified basis of response. The guidance will remain online and separate to the census questionnaire.

On 31 August 2021 NRS published the sex question guidance on the [Scotland's Census website](#) confirming that the guidance, as previously outlined in Parliament, includes the fact that people may self-identify when answering the sex question:

Question as it will appear on paper questionnaire

3 What is your sex?
 Female Male

Question as it will appear on online questionnaire

[Back](#)

Question ref: 13

J Bloggs: What is your sex?

Select one option only

- Female
 Male

A voluntary question about trans status or history will follow if you are aged 16 or over

[View this page in BSL](#)

[Need help with this question?](#)

Save and continue

How do I answer this question?

If you are transgender the answer you give can be different from what is on your birth certificate. You do not need a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

If you are non-binary or you are not sure how to answer, you could use the sex registered on your official documents, such as your passport.

A voluntary question about trans status or history will follow if you are aged 16 or over. You can respond as non-binary in that question.

This guidance will support and maximise inclusion and participation in Scotland's Census 2022. Our [evidence](#) on the need for and use of guidance confirms that over 99% of respondents will not refer to guidance when answering the sex question. The guidance is for the proportionately small number of people who identified a need for clarification.

Prior to March 2021 all three UK census offices were using similar guidance¹⁰ which confirms that from a statistical perspective there is confidence that the NRS guidance is suitable for Scotland's Census. Following a legal challenge in England and Wales, both the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland and Statistics Research Agency (NISRA) changed guidance mid-census collection to reflect a legal sex basis of response but are content that these variations still enable high quality statistics to be produced.

A legal challenge has been brought in respect of the guidance to be issued for the sex question in Scotland's Census.

Summary of impacts

The provision of sex data from the census helps to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by informing the provision of public services.

Sexual orientation

Overview

There are currently limited data and evidence collected on sexual orientation in Scotland.

A question on sexual orientation is now asked in the Scottish Household Survey, the Scottish Health Survey and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey as one of the Scottish Government's core questions. Developed by the Office for National Statistics, the question was designed to provide accurate statistics to underpin the equality monitoring responsibilities of public sector organisations and to assess the disadvantage or relative discrimination experienced by the lesbian, gay and bisexual population. It should be noted that estimates on self-identified sexual orientation from this question are likely to under-represent the lesbian, gay and bisexual population. According to the Scottish Household Survey around one in fifty (1.7%) adults reported their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian in 2019, this is an increase of half

¹⁰ [Census 2021 sex question guidance - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

a percentage point since 2018, and compared to 1% in 2011.¹¹ In 2011 and 2018, 0.4% of adults preferred not to provide a response to the question.¹²

According to a recent UK study¹³ by the Office for National Statistics, in 2017, 1.9% of Scotland's population identified as LGB.

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

The census has not previously asked about sexual orientation and the question will be included for the first time in 2022.

Considerable user demand has been identified from the [2015 Topic Consultation](#) for the collection of information on sexual orientation in the 2022 Census. The main requirement identified is in relation to the monitoring and reporting duties for public bodies, and service planning and provision. The information is also required to inform EQIAs, which in turn inform policies and practices. The Equality and Human Rights Commission require this information to use in a statutory review of equality and human rights, which is carried out every five years.

Research and development carried out across UK census offices found that a sexual orientation question (asked of those aged 16 or over) was generally acceptable to the public and the majority of respondents would provide a valid response. Results can be found in the [Sexual Orientation Topic Report](#). However, acceptability decreased with age: while only 4% of those aged 25-34 years and 11% of 35-44 years indicated the inclusion of a sexual orientation question in census was unacceptable, 27% of those aged 65-74 and 30% of those aged 75 or over indicated that a question of this nature was unacceptable.

Overall, 14% of the public said they would not answer a sexual orientation question if it was included in the 2022 Census. The majority of these (13% of all participants) said they would skip the question and continue completing the rest of the form. Only a very small proportion of participants said that they would request an individual form (less than 1%) or stop completing the census altogether.

Clarification on why information regarding sexual orientation is required and additional reassurances of information security should address the reluctance to answer the question.

In the context of completing the census on behalf of another household member, the proportion who found the question not acceptable increased to 20%. Similarly, just over one in five people (21%) indicated that they were not comfortable with providing this information on behalf of others.

Testing of the questions showed almost all participants provided a valid response to the question on sexual orientation. Of those who did not provide a response to the sexual orientation question, the majority were aged 65 or over (59%). Less than 1% of participants provided an invalid response to the question. The question was voluntary and, as such, 9% of participants chose not to provide an answer.

¹¹ [Scottish Household Survey 2019: Annual Report](#)

¹² [Scottish Household Survey 2018: Annual Report](#)

¹³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017>

On this basis, and in recognition of the sensitive and personal nature of the question, the Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2019 allows for this question to be asked on a voluntary basis. A number of respondents from the [2015 Topic Consultation](#) felt that the question should not be asked of people under 16 years of age. This question will only be asked of those aged 16 years and older.

We continue to engage with Scottish Government teams and other stakeholders to ensure the outputs from the census and other surveys are comparable. This will enable data users to use a full range of outputs on .sexual orientation to promote equality and identify inequalities.

Privacy when responding to sensitive questions

Some concerns were expressed during the question development process about confidentiality in relation to sensitive questions, particularly for young people who may feel unable to answer the question if they still live at home with their families. Missing this group would be an issue as young people have specific service needs. To provide complete privacy and confidentiality for any person responding to the Scotland's Census 2022, the facility to request and receive an individual questionnaire for completion in private will be available to all people aged 16 or over who are capable of completing a return. Any such individual will be able to complete an individual form without other members of the household being aware. The Scotland's Census [Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment](#) includes more information around age limitations for census questions. The different impacts of this policy demonstrates intersectionality between protected characteristics of age and sexual orientation.

The census may help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations by informing the provision of public services through the provision of quality data, improving awareness amongst stakeholders and respondents and helping respondents to complete the census through the provision of question help and guidance.

Gender reassignment

Overview

Although there are no accurate data on the actual trans population, the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO) [estimated in 2018](#) that 'there are approximately 200,000-500,000 trans people in the UK,' while recognising the lack of robust data at that time.

Under the 2010 Act, there is no requirement for a person to have had any medical procedure or treatment in order to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. There is no requirement for a person to have a Gender Recognition Certificate in order to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission website notes that:

"In 2016 a Women and Equalities Committee report made over 30 recommendations calling for government action to ensure full equality for trans people. One of the report's recommendations was that the use of the terms 'gender reassignment' and 'transsexual' in the Equality Act 2010 are outdated and misleading. The preferred umbrella term is trans".

Transgender (or "trans") is a term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as their sex at birth. We use the term trans in the sections that follow.

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

The census has never previously asked questions around either gender reassignment or trans status. The [2015 Topic Consultation](#) highlighted a need for information on gender identity. Further consultation with data users refined this data need to being about the size and geography of the trans population – both those who currently identify as trans as well as those who might have a trans history. Given the lack of alternative data sources, and the small populations, this makes census the only statistical collection likely to gather robust data on the trans population. A key reason for requiring census data on trans status is to be able to fulfil the public sector equality duty (see [section above in relation to the Equality Act](#)). Census data would, for example, assist public authorities in carrying out EQIAs when they assess and review policies and practices.

Following stakeholder engagement to understand data needs fully, NRS tested a trans status or history question, alongside the sex question, to replicate responses as they would be perceived in the census itself. The results of this are set out in the [Sex and gender identity topic report](#). Testing found that the trans status or history question was acceptable to members of the trans community and to the general population, and produced good quality data.

Respondents were able to answer the question on trans status or history with ease on behalf of themselves - around 94% of respondents provided a valid response to the question on trans status or history. Respondents indicated they were comfortable answering on behalf of another member of their household if they had their permission to do so. Stakeholders had a range of views on potential age limits for asking the trans status or history question. Whilst some stakeholders suggested age limits of 16 or below 16 years (such as 12 or 13 years), others suggested it should be asked of all regardless of age. Respondents in cognitive testing indicated the question should be asked of all regardless of age.

Public acceptability testing for the gender identity topic was carried out in January – March 2017, for the three UK census offices. The results of this can be found in the [Sex and gender identity topic report](#). In Scotland, 5,000 households were invited to take part. Public acceptability testing is designed to explore the views of the public on the acceptability of including sensitive questions in the census, thereby identifying particular sensitivities and potential barriers to public confidence and exploring mechanisms for overcoming concerns. This showed, in the context of providing an answer on behalf of another household member aged 15 or under, the proportion who found the question acceptable decreased from 74% to 58%, and the proportion who found the question unacceptable was 16% (compared with 9% when asked of those aged 16 or over). The proportion who were undecided increased from 16% to 26%. The acceptability testing also highlighted the proportion of the public who reported they could not answer accurately for any members of their household increased from 4% when asked of those aged 16 and over, to 9% when asked of those aged 15 and under. The results of public acceptability testing showed that while the general public found the inclusion of a question was acceptable, acceptability decreased if asked of those aged under 16 years. Therefore, whilst some need for data on trans status of under 16 year olds was identified, asking the question of those aged 15 and under was less acceptable.

Testing has shown that additional guidance enables members of the general population to have a better understanding of the terminology and answer the question. The question for trans status or history in Scotland's Census includes the text "Trans is a term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were registered at birth".

As with the questions on sexual orientation and religion, it is recognised that this is a sensitive question and no-one should be compelled to answer it. The Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2019 allows for the trans status or history question to be asked on a voluntary basis. This question will only be asked of those aged 16 years and older.

We will engage with Scottish Government teams and other stakeholders to ensure the outputs from the census and other surveys, where a question on trans status or history are asked, are comparable. This will enable data users to use a wider range of outputs on trans status or history to promote equality.

Privacy when responding to sensitive questions

Some concerns were expressed during the question development process about confidentiality in relation to sensitive questions, particularly for young people who may feel unable to answer the question if they still live at home with their families. Missing this group would be an issue as young people have specific service needs. To provide complete privacy and confidentiality for any person responding to the Scotland's Census 2022, the facility to request and receive an individual questionnaire for completion in private will be available to all people aged 16 or over who are capable of completing a return. Any such individual will be able to complete an individual form without other members of the household being aware. This policy is discussed in the Scotland's Census 2022 [Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment](#). This reflects the different impacts which demonstrate intersectionality between the protected characteristics of age, sex and gender reassignment.

The census may help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations by informing the provision of public services through the provision of quality data, improving awareness amongst stakeholders and respondents and helping respondents to complete the census through the provision of question help and guidance.

Disability and long-term conditions

Overview

According to the 2011 Census, the proportion of people in Scotland with a long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability was 20%, the same proportion as reported in 2001. The disability rate has stayed the same despite Scotland's ageing population.

A higher proportion of people in Scotland reported a long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability than the UK as a whole (18%). However, Scotland recorded a lower proportion than Wales (23%) and Northern Ireland (21%).

[Data from ONS](#) indicates that disabled people are less likely to be recent users of the internet, particularly those over the age of 75. 41% of disabled adults in this age group were recent internet users, compared with 54% of non-disabled adults.

There may be barriers for disabled people that may prevent their participation in the census. Scottish Household Survey data from 2019 show that 71% of adults who have some form of limiting long-term physical or mental health condition or illness reported using the internet, lower than for those who have some form of non-limiting condition or illness (90%) and those who have none (94%).¹⁴ We have developed and designed a wide range of support services and solutions to help mitigate the risk of non-participation.

Stakeholder engagement has indicated those with certain disabilities or impairments may have specific needs and/or may have difficulty completing a census questionnaire. They may also have challenges in accessing or understanding contact materials and guidance.

Public assistance services will offer a wide range of support products including British Sign Language (BSL) translation, Braille questionnaire guidance, large print and an easy read guide to the census. Live interpretation for BSL users will also be available via contactSCOTLAND-BSL, a Scottish Government funded public service. BSL translation videos of the questions and question help will be embedded within the online questionnaire with each question, as well as other transactional parts of the online questionnaire. BSL translations of census questions and help as they appear on the paper questionnaire will be available to order on DVD or USB.. Audio clips will also be available for customers to request on CD. Text and Video Relay will be available to request any of these products or simply to ask us a question. Products can also be requested by calling our Contact Centre, web chat, eForm, social media, e-mail or by post. Design of contact materials has given consideration to impairments to ensure they can be read and understood.

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

Data about general health, long-term conditions and long-term health problems or disability are used by central government, local governments and public bodies to identify health and social care service needs and to inform resource allocation at national and local level. It is also widely used to inform service planning and develop, monitor and assess policies on population health and health inequalities. There has also been extensive use in multivariate analysis undertaken by a range of users, including academics and research institutes. A suggestion made to use an impairment based model of health as a framework for data collection was not supported by respondents to the Scotland's Census Topic Consultation in 2015. Engagement with stakeholders highlighted the 2011 questions met data needs, but concerns around data quality were noted. Question development for 2022 focused on improving the data quality, as comparable data over time were highlighted as a priority for users.¹⁵

The census outputs website has been designed to meet the Public Sector Web and Mobile Accessibility Regulations (2018). The website has been through an accessibility audit and accessibility testing with users to ensure it performs well with

¹⁴ [Scottish Household Survey 2019: Annual Report](#)

¹⁵ [Health topic report | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

common assistive technologies. We are currently exploring options for making outputs available in BSL.

GOV.UK guidelines advocate that written content should meet the minimum reading age of 9 years, to ensure it is easily understood. In May 2020 we reviewed and improved content across online and offline products to ensure that it is user-friendly, authoritative, clear and accessible..

The census may help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations by informing the provision of public services through the provision of quality data, improving awareness amongst stakeholders and respondents and helping respondents to complete the census through the provision of question help and guidance.

Race

Overview

The 2011 Census showed Scotland to be a more ethnically diverse nation. Results from the Census showed that 8% of the population identified as an ethnic minority, up from 5% in 2001. Despite this increase, Scotland was still a much less ethnically diverse country in 2011 than England, where 20% identified as an ethnic minority.

Between 2001 and 2011, Scotland's 'Asian' population doubled (an increase of 69,000 people), and the 'African, Caribbean or Black' population increased more than fourfold (by 28,000 people). 'Mixed or multiple' and 'Other ethnic group' non-white groups also showed an increase. People who identified as one of the 'Asian' categories represented 2.7% of the Scottish population in 2011 compared to 1.4% in 2001. Each minority ethnic group made up a larger proportion of the population in 2011 than in 2001. The vast majority (82%) of those who recorded within the 'African, Caribbean or Black' group identified as 'African' in 2011. Nine % of the group identified as 'Caribbean' and seven % as 'Black, Black Scottish or Black British'. In 2011, people who identified as 'Pakistani' made up the largest Asian group in Scotland, followed by those of 'Chinese' and 'Indian' ethnicity. 'Bangladeshi' remained the smallest Asian group of the categories listed on the 2011 Census questionnaire.

A separate 'White: Gypsy/Traveller' response category was added to the census questionnaire in 2011. 4,200 people recorded their ethnic group within this category (0.1% of all people in Scotland).

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

A question on ethnic group has been asked since 1991. As well as meeting previous legislative obligations, the data are used for resource allocation by central and local governments.

Scotland is a culturally diverse nation and ethnic group is one of the most widely used census variables. Information on national identity and religion complements that on ethnic group. It has contributed to developing the Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework and Action Plan¹⁶ and has proved useful in helping to understand the links between national identity and ethnic identity, according to

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/>

respondents to the Topic Consultation. Information on national identity and religion when used in conjunction with ethnic group data, has also been helpful in developing a fuller understanding of cultural identity.

In addition to ethnic group, information on country of birth is extensively used for a range of purposes, including area profiling, equality monitoring and to identify local areas which have experienced in-migration. It has supported ongoing work to understand the impact of migration and to assess at local level the extent and speed of integration. Given the recent shifts in migration patterns, understanding the origin country of migrants has become increasingly important, in order to anticipate needs better.

Information on ethnic group is used for resource allocation, to inform policy development and make service planning decisions. It also helps organisations meet and monitor their statutory obligations arising from Equality Act 2010 – over half of all respondents to the 2015 Topic Consultation told us that they use ethnic group data for equality monitoring purposes. Collecting this information in the census is particularly important because many minority ethnic groups in Scotland are too small to be effectively captured by sample surveys, and the census gives the only robust information on size of groups at small area level.

Data users have identified that the need to collect data that are consistent over time is important in order to monitor change over time. We worked with stakeholders to understand how the question could be improved to meet need better, whilst allowing consistency across time and recognising that public acceptability around the use of language in relation to ethnic group has changed substantially over time.

A large amount of work was done to review the ethnic group categories for the 2011 Census. In planning for 2022, NRS undertook further question research and development in light of requests made for response options and terminologies to be reviewed and/or additional information to be collected. This includes engagement with a wide range of ethnic groups and populations using focus groups, surveys and stakeholder events, both independently and in collaboration with our ONS colleagues. This engagement increases the understanding of what user and respondent needs are now, language and concepts that are acceptable, and how data quality from an ethnic group question could be improved. Investigation was also undertaken around how other information collected in the census, specifically religion and country of birth, can be used to improve the evidence base on ethnicity.

One of the major concerns which was raised in relation to the 2022 census was around the concept of what is being measured under the 'ethnic group' question. This question has been asked in a broadly similar way since 1991; the response options used in the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census questions combined concepts of colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins. This measurement in the UK is influenced by the legal framework (The Equality Act 2010), which specifically refers to 'racial grounds' – namely colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

One of the main criticisms of the ethnic group classification is its inconsistent use of terms of colour and geography. In the review of ethnicity classification prior to the 2011 Census, many of these issues were explored.

Ethnicity is a complicated and sensitive concept. The format and content of this question has changed with each census to reflect this and best meet user needs, while retaining an element of comparability over time and with the rest of the UK.

Through consultation, research and question testing for the 2022 Census, NRS continued to hear opposing views on the acceptability of descriptors in the ethnic group question. The consultation for 2022 highlighted a need for continuity with 2011 and/or earlier censuses, particularly to enable monitoring of equality related policy and service delivery. Changes to the existing categories would prevent this. For the 2022 Census, NRS considered question testing and research requirements in light of a limited number of requests which were made for the response options to be reviewed and/or additional information to be collected within the existing question format to retain comparability over time.

In light of all of the consultation and discussion, a limited number of changes have been made and are described below. More details on ethnic group question development can be found in the ethnic group topic report¹⁷, ethnic group and religion question development update¹⁸ and the ethnic group update¹⁹.

Information on the Sikh population

A user need was expressed for collecting information about the Sikh population in Scotland, which has historically been captured through data about religion. A question on current religious belonging has been included in Scotland's Census since 2001, and this information is also captured through the three largest surveys in Scotland: SHS, SHeS and SCJS. Stakeholders expressed concerns that using religion as proxy for the Sikh population risks undercounting the population, and raised concerns that some of the population do not identify with the options included in the 2011 Census ethnic group question.

The evidence for a potential undercount of the Sikh population through the religion question in the 2001 Census and 2011 Census is weak. In 2001, 6,572 people identified as Sikh through the current religion question, and 6,821 people identified their religion of upbringing as Sikh, a difference of 3.7%. Further analysis of the write-ins for "Sikh" in the ethnic group question in 2011 by ethnic group category by the respondents' response to the 2011 religion question showed that 9,055 people identified as Sikh through the question on current religious belonging. There were 873 write-in responses for "Sikh" in the ethnic group question. Of these respondents, 26 (3%) did not identify as Sikh in the religion question.

A tick box for "Sikh, Sikh Scottish or Sikh British" was then tested in focus groups with Sikh participants. Within each group, participants were asked to respond to the 2011 Census questions on religion, national identity and ethnic group on paper. Following this, participants were asked to feedback on the acceptability, quality and clarity of two different designs of the ethnic group question and to compare these designs with each other and the 2011 Census question.

A "Sikh, Sikh Scottish or Sikh British" tick box was included under "Other ethnic group" in one version of the ethnic group question and under "Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British" in another version. In addition, a tick box for "Sikh, Sikh Scottish or Sikh British" was included for qualitative survey testing in Scotland under the "Other ethnic group" category following the tick box for "Arab, Arab Scottish and Arab

¹⁷ [Ethnic group topic report | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnic-group-topics/ethnic-group-topics-report)

¹⁸ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnic-group-and-religion-question-development-update)

¹⁹ [Ethnic group question update September 2019 | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnic-group-question-update-september-2019)

British". Key results from cognitive focus groups and the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below. More detail is available in the Topic Report published on the Scotland's Census website.²⁰

- The inclusion of a Sikh tick box was found to be acceptable to many focus group participants. However, there were some strong acceptability issues. Some participants found the inclusion of a religion under ethnic group unacceptable, inappropriate or confusing. This made them question what they were being asked. Some felt that religion and ethnic group should be separated or that this was repetitive since they had already selected Sikh under religion. Participants who found the tick box acceptable, and those that did not, questioned why Sikh was the only religion included in the question on ethnic group. Some felt singled out or that inclusion would only be acceptable if other religions were included or the question wording was changed. In comparison, there were very few acceptability issues with the 2011 Census question.
- The inclusion of Sikh was largely acceptable in the qualitative online survey, but the placement of Sikh under 'Other ethnic group' continued to cause difficulty for some respondents.
- Focus group participants who naturally identified as "Scottish Sikh" or "British Sikh" typically found a question including a Sikh tick box easier to answer because they could locate a response more easily. However, other participants were clear they would not select a Sikh option in ethnic group, found the inclusion of the tick box confusing and found it more difficult. Some participants multi-ticked or initially missed the Sikh tick box and later changed their answer. These results suggest that a Sikh tick box would undercount the population and that there may be other impacts on data quality.
- In the qualitative online survey, a larger proportion of the Sikh population could be identified as Sikh through the alternative question. However, the religion question provided the best information on the Sikh population.
- There is a risk that if data from ethnic group were used alone, this figure would undercount the Sikh population. NRS will consider how equality related outputs are presented to meet user need.
- Acceptable comparability at category level would be achieved with a Sikh tick box under the Asian category. Comparable category level data would otherwise be achievable by aggregating a Sikh tick box under 'Other ethnic group' with the Asian category. Acceptable comparability at category level, which might be achieved by aggregating different groups, would allow for harmonisation with census statistics across the UK.

On the basis of these findings, a Sikh tick box will not be included under the ethnic group question in 2022.

To encourage the full participation of Scotland's Sikh community in Scotland's Census a prompt to write in "Sikh" is included in the 'Other ethnic group' category to highlight the opportunity to write in "Sikh" as a response. This will ensure that Sikhs can be fully represented within the data set generated by the census and provides some additional clarity to members of the Sikh community on how they may choose to complete the ethnicity question.

Information on the Jewish population

²⁰ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

A user need has been expressed for collecting information about the Jewish population in Scotland, which has historically been captured through data about religion. A question on current religious belonging has been included in Scotland's Census since 2001, and this information is also captured through the three largest surveys in Scotland: SHS, SHeS and SCJS. Stakeholders expressed concerns that using religion as proxy for the Jewish population risks undercounting the population. They highlighted the difference in the numbers identifying as Jewish in the current religion question included in the 2001 census (6,448) and in the religion of upbringing question included in the 2001 census (7,446), and their continued application of this difference (13%) to provide an estimate for the size of the Jewish population in Scotland.

The religion of upbringing question was not included in the 2011 Census. Analysis of the number of write ins for "Jewish" in the ethnic group question in 2011 by ethnic group category by the respondents' response to the 2011 religion question showed that 5,887 people identified as Jewish through the question on current religious belonging. There were 812 write in responses for "Jewish" in the ethnic group question. Of these respondents, 219 did not identify as Jewish in the religion question.

A tick box for 'Jewish, Jewish Scottish or Jewish British' was included for qualitative survey testing in Scotland under the 'Other ethnic group' category following tick boxes for 'Arab, Arab Scottish and Arab British' and 'Sikh, Sikh Scottish or Sikh British' and the key results from the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below. More detail is available in the Topic Report published on the website.²¹

- The inclusion of Jewish was largely acceptable. The placement of a Jewish option under 'Other ethnic group' was mostly acceptable, but caused difficulty for some respondents.
- Results indicate that the best estimation of the Jewish population is likely to be the estimate obtained from the religion question (around 90 %) plus those who identify ethnically only by responses across ethnic group categories (around 10%). We will consider how outputs can be created to meet this user need best.
- Including a tick box improved data quality on the Jewish population gathered by ethnic group but did not improve estimation of the total population size in the test. There was no evidence that including a tick box increased the capture of people who identified as ethnically Jewish but not religiously Jewish in this test. These people mostly chose to express their Jewish identity by writing this in to the ethnic group question with 2011 Census response options.
- Including a prompt to write in to indicate to respondents that Jewish is an acceptable response to the ethnic group question would likely result in the same overall improvements in data quality and may reduce issues with acceptability of the placement of a tick box.
- Acceptably comparable category level data would be achievable by aggregating a Jewish tick box with the 'White' category. Acceptable comparability at category level would allow for harmonisation with census statistics across the UK.

²¹ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnic-group-and-religion-question-development-update)

As a result of this work, a prompt to write in "Jewish" is included in the 'Other ethnic group' category.

Information on the Roma population

A user need has been expressed for collecting information about Roma in Scotland. There are no alternative sources for this information. [Research in England and Wales by ONS](#) showed "Roma" was considered the most appropriate term to use for the Roma community and that the placement of a 'Roma' tick box under the "White" high-level category was acceptable, with participants feeling that they should be placed in close proximity to the "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" tick box. This placement made it easier for respondents to locate the tick box. A tick box for 'Roma' was included for qualitative survey testing in Scotland under the 'White' category following the tick box for 'Gypsy / Traveller'. The key results from the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below. More detail is available in the Topic Report published on the website. ²²

- The inclusion and placement of a 'Roma' tick box was acceptable and preferred by most respondents. However, there were a small number of Roma respondents to the 2019 qualitative survey.
- The alternative question improves data quality to meet user need. All respondents identified as Roma in the alternative question by combining responses to the Roma tick box with write in responses compared to half in the question with 2011 Census response options.
- Although the alternative question improved data quality to meet user need, not all respondents chose to select the "Roma" tick box. While the location of the tick box has been shown to improve data quality, be generally acceptable, and easy to locate, NRS will consider how outputs can be created across ethnic group categories to best meet user need.
- Acceptable comparability over time is expected at category level. Comparability at category level will also allow for harmonisation with census statistics across the UK.
- ONS also included a tick-box for 'Roma' within the 'White' category under 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller', providing for the collection of comparable data on Roma in the ethnic group question for Census 2021.

As a result of this work a 'Roma' tick box is included under the 'White' category.

Information on Showpeople

A user need has been expressed for collecting information about Scottish Showpeople in Scotland. There are no alternative sources for this information. A tick box for 'Showpeople' was included for qualitative survey testing in Scotland under the "White" category following tick boxes for 'Gypsy / Traveller' and 'Roma'. The key results from the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below and more detail is available in the Topic Reports published on the website. ²³

²² [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

²³ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

[Ethnic group question update September 2019 | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

- The inclusion of a tick box for 'Showpeople' was highly acceptable, with the majority of respondents selecting this option in the alternative ethnic group question.
- The alternative question improved data quality to meet user need. However, many write in's across the ethnic group questions in this test were for 'Showman' or 'Showperson' rather than 'Showpeople'. A tick box for 'Showperson' rather than 'Showpeople' may improve both acceptability and data quality
- While the location of the tick box has been shown to improve data quality, be highly acceptable, and generally easy to locate, NRS will consider how outputs can be created across ethnic group categories to best meet user need.
- The alternative question design provides acceptable comparability over time at category level. Comparability at category level will also allow for harmonisation with census statistics across the UK.

As a result the addition of a 'Showman / Showwoman' tick box is included in the 'White' category.

Information on the African population

A user need has been expressed for collecting more detailed information about African ethnic groups in Scotland. The aggregate level of data available for this group from the 2011 Census was considered to mask specific African ethnic groups that have particular needs. A write in option to capture African ethnic groups was included for qualitative survey testing in Scotland under the "African" category. The key results from the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below and more detail is available in the Topic Report published on the website.²⁴

- There were no acceptability issues with the alternative design. Including "Scottish" and "British" may further increase acceptability.
- Almost all African respondents provided detailed information about their African ethnic group or background in the alternative ethnic group question. This information meets the user need for detailed data about African ethnic groups. There was also an indication that this design improves the quality of data entered by respondents who would choose to write in, compared to the 2011 Census question.
- Testing demonstrated there would be no comparability issues over time at category level.

As a result the design has been changed to be a write in response for the "African" category to improve data quality and the category heading has been changed from "African" to "African, Scottish African or British African" to improve acceptability and parity.

Information on the Caribbean or Black population

Stakeholders and testing participants expressed concerns about parity of design across the ethnic group question. The design of the ethnic group question as a whole has been considered by NRS in order to provide as much parity as possible while reducing respondent burden and capturing data to meet user needs. To

²⁴ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

provide parity across the question, and to capture more detailed data, a write in response for the “Caribbean or Black” category was tested. The key results from the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below and more detail is available in the Topic Report published on the website.²⁵

- No acceptability issues were indicated with the alternative question. However, there were a small number of Caribbean or Black respondents to the 2019 qualitative survey.
- All respondents provided write in responses to the alternative ethnic group question.
- The alternative design allows comparability over time and across the UK at category level.

As a result the design has been changed to be a write in response for the “Caribbean or Black” category to improve data quality.

Data Collection and Enumeration

People from some ethnic groups may require information to be available in a range of community languages.

Translated guidance will be available in 16 community languages, including Gaelic, and a language sheet will be sent with all contact letters offering details on how to get support in 24 community languages.

Our public assistance channels will also ensure that live interpreting advice is available and respondents will be able to talk to an advisor in their own language through an interpretation service covering over 200 languages to help answer any questions they might have.

During follow-up activity field force enumerators will carry a language card covering the top 24 community language translations, and signposting to where assistance is available.

We will engage with a range of communities to encourage and support increased participation in Scotland's Census 2022 and to inform enumeration strategies and processes, which will be tailored to specific identified needs and circumstances where necessary.

Knowing more about the ethnic make-up of Scotland could help public authorities in designing services for people and planning ways in which they can foster good relations. The provision of quality data can advance equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination by informing the provision of public services.

Religion and belief

Overview

Scotland became a less religious country in the decade to 2011 according to the 2011 Census. Almost two fifths of the population (2 million people) stated they had no religion in 2011, an increase of over half a million people from 2001.

²⁵ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnic-group-and-religion-question-development-update)

Those reporting a 'Christian' denomination represented the majority of the Scottish population (54%). The next largest religion was 'Muslim' which represented over one % and the other religions combined (including 'Hindu', 'Buddhist', 'Sikh' and 'Jewish') represented a further one %. Seven % did not state their religion.

The number recording their religion as 'Muslim' increased by 80% and those reporting as 'Hindu' almost trebled.

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

The question on religion was introduced in the 2001 census, and its inclusion was allowed on the basis that answering it was voluntary. Consultation with users has shown that public bodies use the census information on religion to assist with monitoring discrimination, linked to the introduction of the public sector equality duty. The data has also been used to inform service provision for health, social care and education.

Data on religion gathered in the census is used by a range of users, including central government, local government, public bodies and religious organisations, to plan and deliver services. It is widely used by local government in equality monitoring, area profiling and to identify demand for denominational schools. The data are also used for planning a range of services and for research and analysis.

There are a number of ways in which a question on religion can be asked and these give rise to different results. Respondents to the Topic Consultation in 2015 and stakeholder engagement noted that continuing to ask a question in 2022 which was conceptually similar to that asked in previous censuses was important in order to be able to track changes over time and for monitoring purposes, and continuity with 2011 and/or earlier censuses was thought important by the majority of users. The [Plans for Scotland's Census 2021](#) proposed to continue using a question which asks about 'belonging to' a religion, religious denomination or body, on a voluntary basis. Development and testing have been undertaken to ensure, where there have been requests for additional response options, these produce good quality data which meet user needs. As national identity, religion, and ethnic group are different but related facets of how people think of themselves, any testing is conducted across all the relevant questions to understand how people understand and respond to the questions. Further details on this can be found in the Religion Topic Report²⁶ and Ethnic Group and Religion Question Development Update²⁷.

Two changes will be made to the religion question in the 2022 Census:

Further information on the Muslim population

A user need has been expressed for more detailed information on branches or schools of Islam to be captured through the census religion question, in a similar way to how data on Christian denominations are captured. There are no alternative sources of this information. A prompt for Muslim respondents to write in, leaving how to identify open to respondents, was included for qualitative survey testing in

²⁶ [Religion topic report | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁷ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

Scotland and the key results from the 2019 qualitative survey test are described below. More details on this can be found in the Topic Report.²⁸

- The alternative religion question was found to be slightly more acceptable than the 2011 religion question.
- The majority of respondents wrote in and further specified their religious group in the alternative question, gathering data to meet user need.
- Comparability over time is expected at category level ('Muslim') and would allow for harmonisation with census statistics across the UK.
- Some respondents indicated that they would prefer a tick box for their denomination. User need for this information is not stronger than the user need for other census questions or religion response options, and this test has shown that user need is met by having a write in prompt. Two additional tick boxes would be required in the question to meet this data need.

A write-in box to collect additional information on denomination or school for Muslim respondents has been included for 2022.

Information on the Pagan population

A user need has been expressed for a Pagan tick box to be added to the religion question for the 2022 Census. A tick box for 'Pagan' is included in the religion question in the [Scottish Surveys Core Questions Set](#). The core question is asked in all Scottish Government cross-sectional surveys, including the three largest surveys in Scotland. These questions are recommended for use in other surveys to improve comparability, reduce costs of designing surveys, to ensure participants understand what is being asked by using thoroughly tested questions, ensure outputs can be grouped in ways that are useful for analysis and reduce risk of offence when asking about sensitive subjects because the questions have been widely consulted on.

The SHS provide estimates at council area level for the population by religion of belonging. However, due to the small population size and therefore sample size of this group along with many other religious groups, data are unreliable and may not be available for analysis against other variables. It is common for data on Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, Pagan and other religious groups to be combined for analysis. As a result, census is the best source of information for the Pagan population.

A tick box for 'Pagan' has previously been tested for the census in Scotland. A tick box was included in the [2006 Census Test and 2009 Census Rehearsal](#). There were no issues with acceptability, clarity, data quality or comparability concerns with the inclusion of a tick box for 'Pagan' highlighted through these tests. A response option was tested for 'Pagan' because this was the most frequently written in religion response under the Other category in Scotland in 2001. A tick box was not included in the 2011 Census. As in 2001, Pagans used the write-in box to specify their religion.

A tick box for 'Pagan' was included in the religion question included in the 2019 qualitative survey. There are no acceptability, data quality or comparability concerns about the inclusion of this tick box for the Pagan population. As such, this testing did not include a quota of Pagan participants. Testing showed that there were no

²⁸ [Ethnic group and religion question development update | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

acceptability, data quality or comparability concerns with the inclusion of a tick box for 'Pagan' for other respondents.

A tick box for "Pagan" has been included for 2022.

The gathering of census data on religion will advance equality of opportunity by informing provision of services and foster good relations by improving awareness of populations and communities.

Pregnancy and maternity

We have never asked a specific question around pregnancy or maternity in the census and will not do so in 2022.

Question development work included a consideration around altering the term 'maternity leave'. This has been changed to 'maternity or paternity leave' in the labour market questions to provide more information to our users to understand the impact of policies.

Data Collection and Enumeration

Our experience of previous censuses has shown that there can be sensitivities stemming from confusion or misunderstanding about whether to include babies on questionnaires if recently born or pre-natal. Cases of still-born or infant deaths also require careful and sensitive consideration. We will take full account of issues around registration, parental preferences and legal considerations in the design and provision of advice and guidance to respondents and the training of field and contact centre staff.

The gathering of data around maternity and paternity will help to advance equality of opportunity by improving awareness and informing employment and welfare practice and the provision of public services.

Marriage and civil partnership

Overview

Marital or civil partnership status information is used by a wide range of users, including central government and other public authorities in EQIAs, which in turn inform policies and practices.

Question Development and Statistical Outputs

As a result of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014, the question has been reviewed. Consultation work identified a low user need for information on same sex marriage, and alternative data sources are available from official marriage statistics. The census marital and civil partnership status question collects data on legal marital and civil partnership status. As there is no difference in the legal status of same sex and opposite sex marriage the question will not be changed to separately identify same sex marriages.²⁹

²⁹ [Demographics and household composition topic report | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)


5. Recommendations and conclusions

The assessment of impacts for Scotland's Census 2022 is an ongoing process which will continue beyond census day in March 2022 and until release of all census outputs.

The impacts discussed in this EQIA have been directly assessed in the EQIA record document. In summary, the main areas of impact anticipated are:

- the move to predominantly online
- the inclusion of new voluntary questions on sexual orientation and transgender status or history
- the facility to request and receive an individual household questionnaire to complete privately is available for anyone aged 16 years and above, who is capable of completing
- the limitation of household or individual returns to respondents aged 16 or over
- the limitation of questions to certain age groups only.

NRS has considered all of these impacts in the design of Scotland's Census 2022. The census is unique and important, and as discussed throughout the document, there are a range of impacts which reflect very positively the enormous care and attention given to achieving the right balance of equality, accessibility and inclusion against the production of high quality data and outputs which will shape wider policies and the provision of services for the coming years, whilst mitigations are in place to reduce negative impacts wherever possible. We are very grateful to all of our stakeholders who have informed planning and design of Scotland's Census 2022.

Signature	
Date	December 2021
Name	Paul Lowe
Title	Registrar General for Scotland

Annex A - Online Collection Instrument: Research

Accessibility testing research summary

The Online Collection Instrument (OCI) delivers the core question set for the census. There was a need to conduct some initial accessibility testing on the early version of the site to identify any early issues. We conducted a round of accessibility testing with 10 participants with a variety of disabilities from December 2018 – March 2019.

Around half of the participants were visited in their home in order to allow for the use of any specific assistive technology such as screen readers and magnifiers and to help make them more comfortable.

From the OCI, we tested:

- On-boarding – entering Internet Access Code (IAC), setting up a password and password recovery.
- Questions H1-5 – details of who is in the household

Participants ranged from 20 to 61 years of age and had a range of disabilities and assistive technology needs, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, blindness, arthritis, detached retina, macular degeneration, Friedreich's ataxia.

Key findings

The majority of participants found it relatively straightforward to get through the on-boarding and H1-5 sections of the prototype. They were very positive about the idea of completing the census online as it meant they would be able to complete it in a format best suited to them, save progress and complete it in their own time.

However, there were a number of overarching issues that affected all types of users. These were predominantly usability issues, but some assistive technology specific issues were encountered as well. Usability issues will cause problems for all users, but they are heightened for disabled people and users of assistive technology. Causing confusion, frustration and being slowed down can have a significant impact on these users. In some situations it can cause stress/anxiety and lead them to seek support with completion or make them feel like they don't wish to continue. Many of the participants had to stop to ask the moderator what was meant or required and some needed to be told how to progress to the next step.

Additionally, while the questions in this version of the prototype were not the final 2022 question set, a number of usability issues were uncovered that will be important to consider independent of the question content and can be worked on and resolved for subsequent rounds of usability testing.

The key issues identified included:

- unclear error messaging when creating a password
- 'set up password recovery' usability and error messaging
- users having difficulty understanding what's being asked for in the 'temporarily away' question

- users having difficulty understanding what is being asked for in the 'visitors' question
- confusion caused by the 'dashboard' when users land on it for the first time
- unclear or missing instructions or supporting text – e.g. needing to use capitals and hyphens in the IAC code
- the IAC code was challenging for many

Findings specific to assistive technology were identified:

- Zoomtext issues: participants who used screen magnifiers appreciated the amount of space on each page and having single questions per page.
- Screen reader issues: participants who used screen readers had very different experiences. This could be for a number of reasons such as version of software, device used or level of users' experience with assistive technology.

Additional findings:

- Some users may not be able to read the letter, the service needs to consider how blind people living on their own can be supported.
- Some users will require a large print letter to be able to read the IAC number, consider how they can be easily identified and provided with the right information. Is there any way of knowing about this need before sending the letters out?
- When the initial letter will be sent out to give people enough time to get right version of information that they need, and also how any reminder services may come through to them (i.e. reminder letters are inappropriate for a blind person).
- Some users will misplace or lose the letter and so how they can still access online without the IAC code will need to be considered and made clear to users.

Information needs user research summary

This research, to understand whether the digital version of the 2022 Census meets the needs of people, comprised of usability and accessibility testing from December 2018 – March 2019, conducted by the Scottish Government Digital Transformation Division. While these sessions predominantly focussed on the use of the digital components (i.e. the website portal and the 'online collection instrument' (OCI)), we also discussed what information participants expected or felt they would need in order to take part in the census at various points, including showing a version of the letter to set context.

The main findings from these sessions are regarding usability and accessibility, which have been reported via the 'OCI User Testing' strand of work, but broader insight around information needs have also been uncovered. In order to further understand information needs for people we utilised a number of sessions to explore the following objectives:

- Understand what information is required by a user to support them in their census experience.
- Understand what channels users expect to be able to access information to support them in their census experience

- Review of the current language and terminology to determine whether it supports the user's understanding of the information they need in order to complete the census
- Understand how the user's need for information changes over their census collect experience.

Key findings:

- Standard patterns for question pages: reduces cognitive load which may quicken response
- Explanation and narrative to set expectations and orientate users within the form would benefit some users
- In a small number of cases there was misunderstanding of the questions
- Type ahead functionality for industry and occupation questions caused particular problems in choosing an answer
- Hard validation meant users got stuck in a loop where they could not answer a question and so could not submit their census response
- Problems accessing Help and Support while in the questionnaire
- Age related question routing meant some questions are asked of children within the household that are not relevant for a child
- Misunderstanding of questions or uncertainty about how to answer.

Findings are informing further development of OCI and the question engine to maximise respondent ease and minimise respondent burden.

Audience discovery research - Qualitative research among 'seldom heard' audiences

- To investigate their needs and inform the design of the process and website for Scotland's Census 2022.
- Research to provide a deep and robust understanding of user needs – with a specific focus on those users who have specific situations for Census collection or who require Assisted Digital support.
- The purpose is to ensure that these users' needs are accurately represented in the design of the OCI: -
 - Flat / House Sharers
 - Communal Establishments
 - Communities with Reduced Links
 - Ethnic Communities (sample included Somali, Roma, African, Romanian, Kurdish)
 - Religious Communities (sample included Sikh, Muslim)
 - Other Communities (Camphill)
 - Skill Limitations
 - Digital Disengagement
 - Low Literacy Skills
 - Reading Impairment
 - Supported Applications
 - English Language Limitations
 - Gaelic Speakers

With a focus on exploration and discovery, the detailed research objectives were:

- Develop a deep knowledge of who the service users are in terms of their circumstances, situations, attitudes, skills, abilities (as appropriate)
- In relation to officialdom generally; in relation to the Census specifically
- To what extent information and support are/are not accessed
- Understand motivators and barriers to completing the Census
- Comprehension of the Census; its (perceived) importance
- Personal obligations
- Identify the support and interventions that would facilitate participation in the online Census
- Information needed, support needed, enumeration needs
- Explore perceptions of and reactions to the OCI design
- Aspects that help and hinder completion
- Identify how the above should be reflected in the OCI, and in general, to ensure a successful Census

Situations and skills

- Broad spectrum of situations: some people have thrived in Scotland, some have struggled.
 - Positive experiences can inspire appreciation of Scotland / its government, and willingness to comply with officialdom.
 - But some feel let down by the system and less willing to comply.
 - Others fear the authorities and sharing personal information.
- Broad spectrum of skills and skill levels across Digital, English Language, Reading Impairment, Literacy.
 - Low skills don't seem to necessarily correlate with a less positive life experience.
 - Key factor seems to be whether the family or household unit perceives it's 'doing well'.
 - Possible exception: low Literacy Skills might have a stronger correlation with feeling let down by the system, that life has been impoverished (unnecessarily).

Support

- People with lower skills tend to have an established support network
 - Family, friends, Community Leaders and Organisations etc they trust and turn to for help / advice.
 - Many need 'hands-on' support with officialdom in general, English translation, reading and writing, or digital activity.
- Hands-on support is likely one of the most important success factors for the Census
 - Providing the skills that are missing...and also overcoming low motivation / mistrust / scepticism.
- Reaching out to Community Leaders and Organisations is vital
 - They are close to their communities, strong advocates of the Census, and very keen to help.
- Like the general population, some people have stronger skills and will do well with 'self-serve' support available from their network or on the website.

Attitudes to the Census

- A spectrum of engagement with the Census.
 - A few 'evangelists', e.g. Community Leaders and Managers of Community Establishments.
 - Some people are mistrustful or resistant, likely due to personal experience.
 - Most seem to be around the mid-point: willing to carry out their legal obligation, but might not perceive the value of the Census.
- Opportunity to improve engagement for the greater success of the Census – quality of experience for the public as well as quality and accuracy of information.
 - Many simply don't know much about it – what it's for, what it stands for, the difference it can make.
 - Improving understanding tends to improve engagement.

The letter

- The letter presents significant difficulties for people with lower skills
 - What's it about? What does it mean? What do I need to do? Do I have to?
- Indeed, for many, the letter is 'daunting' to read – many won't see it through to the second page and will seek help.
- It conditions expectations that participating in the Census will be difficult – too difficult to attempt.

The website

- By contrast, when people see the design for the website, confidence builds.
- Some now feel they will 'have a go' under their own steam, seeking help if needed, and look forward to a sense of achievement.
 - So, it's important to make the process (seem) easy in order to optimise autonomous participation.
- The website design creates a pleasing and reassuring atmosphere.
 - Excellent use of colour, space, imagery (people), and nuggets of text to increase engagement and reduce cognitive effort – and suggest it's easy.
 - Wears its official credentials lightly.
 - Surprisingly and positively different from the letter and much official communication; should play a central role in shaping engagement.

User testing – August/September 2021

A further round of user testing was performed across August and September 2021. The testing was designed to test the end-to-end user journey across six key audience groups:

- Single-family households
- Multiple-family households
- First-time census completion
- Low digital literacy
- Marginalised groups
- Low trust in government

The testing was conducted completely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results from the testing provided NRS with:

- insights into completion challenges
- user expectations versus the reality of online experience
- potential content and help refinements

As a result of the testing, there have been:

- updates to content to provide more clarity to users
- new content commissioned to support users understand and use the service
- refinements to some layout and design to improve usability

A further accessibility audit will be conducted on the online system in November 2021. This will identify any further refinements needed to ensure the online experience is as accessible as possible.