

CENSUS OUTPUT SPECIFICATIONS

1 Summary

The form in which results from the Census are to be made available is of great importance to users, and we have made great efforts to consult users on their requirements. Following the final round of consultation in Autumn 2001, the specifications of the tables which will form the Standard Area Statistics output for England and Wales have been agreed, and these will shortly be made available to users. The specification of other forms of output, such as profiles, is also being considered and we are inviting comments from interested parties.

2 Specification and Publication of Tables

2.1 Consultation

The consultation process on the specification of tables for the standard output began in Spring 1999. The fourth, and final, round of consultation ended in November 2001. Several hundred responses were received during this final round, with more than 1,900 comments or suggested changes recorded. Each suggested change was assessed with reference to the criteria of:

- weight of user demand;
- requirements of good table design; and
- the risk of changing the table at the final stage of consultation.

As a result of this assessment, approximately 300 changes were implemented in the tables for England and Wales¹. These tables have now been signed-off as the final table specifications. *It should be noted, however, that the release of planned output is dependent on it being of good quality and non-disclosive so there may be minor changes needed to fulfil these criteria, particularly as a final decision has yet to be made between the two disclosure options.*

2.2 Changes in table specifications

In view of the number of changes made, only 'major' changes are described here.

¹ A similar number of changes are likely to be implemented for tables for Scotland and Ireland: these table specifications are, however, awaiting final sign-off from GROS and NISRA respectively.

2.2.1 Workplace

In response to requests, from commercial users in particular, we have introduced four Standard Tables relating to the workplace population. These provide cross-tabulations of:

- industry and gender by occupation;
- industry and gender by distance travelled to work;
- industry and gender by highest level of qualification; and
- gender and distance travelled to work by method of travel to work.

We have also drafted some Census Area Statistics (CAS) univariate tables to provide a simple characterisation of workplace populations at the Output Area level.

2.2.2 Standard Spending Assessments

An important use of the Census results is in the Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs). We have checked SSA requirements with DTLR and the National Assembly for Wales and amended some tables to ensure that the Census outputs fulfil the requirements of both English and Welsh SSAs. We also recognise that there is a great deal of interest in using the SSA indicators at a more local level than that required for the SSAs themselves, and have sought to make the indicators available at Output Area level wherever possible.

2.2.3 ‘Welsh’ dimensions

The responses to the consultation showed a clear requirement for much more detailed output on the Welsh language, as well as interest in the number of people identifying themselves as ‘Welsh’ in the ethnic group question. Following discussions with the Local Government Data Unit, the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Language Board, we have specified 13 Standard Tables to answer this need, including such cross-tabulations as:

- knowledge of Welsh by NS-SeC and gender;
- knowledge of Welsh by and highest level of qualification by gender; and
- children speaking Welsh in Welsh-speaking households.

We have also revised the Key Statistics tables to provide a more detailed early account of Welsh language skills, and to provide counts of people identifying themselves as Welsh².

2.2.4 Comparisons with 1991

Comparisons with the 1991 results were included in eight Key Statistics tables as specified in Autumn 2001. We were keen to include comparisons with 1991 to help users more easily interpret the 2001 Census results. There are, however, several complications (including changing geographies, changes in

² In addition to the Standard and Key Statistics tables, there will also be one Theme table; two CAS tables; one CAS Theme tables and one Univariate table covering the Welsh language.

definitions, and the advent of the One Number Census) which may make many such comparisons more likely to be misleading than helpful. We have thus decided we need to do further work on this before finalising the specifications with regard to comparisons. The exception is the Key Statistics table for 'Usual Resident Population', where the impact of these complications is likely to be least.

2.2.5 Other changes

Other changes meriting mention here include:

- the introduction of a theme table on ethnicity;
- the reworking of the collapsed Standard Industrial Classification categories in CAS to provide more useful information;
- the rationalisation of the presentation of data in the migration tables; and
- the provision of counts of people by country of birth for a much greater range of countries than previously specified.

2.3 Availability of table specifications

The table specifications for England and Wales will be made available on the NS website before the end of June, together with cell reference numbers for each table, and a short note describing changes made to the tables since the final round of consultation.

2.4 Publication of table outputs

A broad description of the arrangement and timing of the publication of Census tables is provided in the Census Output Prospectus at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/op.asp>. We have followed user requests to produce the Key Statistics outputs as a priority. Following consultation with users we have also produced a draft specification of the tranches of Standard and CAS tables to be provided in April/May 2003. This specification allows the earliest possible publication of demographic and 'cultural' data.

Information relating to the labour market appears in the second tranche whilst data on migration, tenure and dwellings is planned for the third tranche. As the processing for migration and dwellings tables is very complex we have decided not to include this data in the Key Statistics reports to avoid the risk of delay in publication of the reports. We plan to make this data available in the third tranche of tables discussed above.

3 Other Products

In addition to the standard tabular output described above, we have identified other products which will be of interest to users.

3.1 Profiles

Profiles are intended to provide an easily understandable and obtainable set of key statistics on individual areas. They will be provided either in reports, as an option in electronic products or as hard copies on request from Census Customer Services. Data will be presented in a number of standard 'templates' either for sets of areas - like the Key Statistics reports - or as a picture of a single area, and will also contain some comparative measures. Planned profiles are:

3.1.1 Small Area Profiles

These profiles would be made available for areas, such as some small parishes and communities, which do not meet the thresholds for the production of CAS. They would typically consist of a page of text providing summary aggregated statistics (largely expressed as percentages), along with comparisons with England/Wales averages. We are inviting suggestions on the content of these profiles and will contact those Local Authorities who have expressed an interest in discussing requirements.

3.1.2 Standard Area Profiles

These profiles would be made available for administrative geographies (except sub-CAS threshold areas, which would be described in the Small Area Profile described above). These would incorporate the text, and supporting information, provided in a Small Area Profile together with one or two pages of more detailed tabulated results for the area, including a greater degree of category disaggregation than shown in the Small Area Profile and covering a range of demographic variables. We intend to base the content of these profiles on the feedback we received from the consultation on Key Statistics.

3.1.3 Postal Sector Profiles

Postal Sector Profiles would be similar to Standard Area Profiles but with a greater focus on variables of interest to commercial users (the prime users for this type of profile). We have received a detailed proposal from the Demographic User Group and the Market Research Society on the content of these profiles but would welcome any further comments.

3.1.4 Multi-area Profiles

These would be produced for 'two-level' geographies such as LADs within counties and wards within LADs. These would provide key counts for the areas in a format similar to the 1991 Ward and Civil Parish Monitors, allowing easy comparison of those counts for areas within a parent area.

As with the Standard Area Profiles, we intend to base the content of these profiles on the feedback we received from the consultation on Key Statistics.

3.2 Extension Tables

In addition to the tables described in Section 2 above, we are also considering the production of 'Extension Tables'. These would extend the standard set of tables by providing detailed cross-tabulations relating to particular topics at a high geographical level. We expect the majority of these tables to be specified through the Multi-Source Topic Report project, and are awaiting proposals for required tables from report authors. Once these proposals have been received, we would welcome suggestions on topics which have not been, and should be, covered by these tables.

ONS
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