

Gender Identity

1. 2011 Census Question

This question wasn't asked in 2011 and therefore there is no precedent from former Census,

2. Proposal for 2021 Census Question

Question	Sex <i>(sex question wording and response options agreed at programme board, but response option ordering and caveat were not)</i>	Gender identity <i>(As a result of the white paper this question may become voluntary and the prefer not to say response option removed)</i>
Proposed 2021 question	<p>What is your sex?</p> <p>→ NOTE: a question about gender will follow if you are aged 16 or over</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth? 2019 GEN 25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, write in gender</p> <p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say</p>
Proposed eQ question	<p>What is your sex?</p> <p>A question about gender will follow [only to be seen by those who are 16 or over]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male 	
Proposed proxy question	<p>What is [name]'s sex?</p>	

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	<p>A question about gender will follow [only to be seen by those who are 16 or over]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male 	<p>Is Minnie Mouse's gender the same as the sex they were registered at birth?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> No</p> <p>Please specify gender</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say</p>
Proposed past tense question	N/A	N/A
Proposed Welsh version	TBC	TBC

3. Topic Consultation

The 2021 Census topic consultation highlighted a need for data on gender identity in order to understand inequality, inform and monitor policy development and allocate services for this population. We also identified a respondent need, with some members of the public reporting that they were unable to complete the current sex question accurately as it only offered the two categories of male or female.

In our topic consultation response, we committed to:

- review the 'Trans Data Position Paper' in light of subsequent changes in legislation and the identified difficulties of collecting data on gender identity within household surveys
- seek to learn from other National Statistics Agencies
- engage with relevant stakeholders, including members of the trans community, to clarify data requirements
- identify alternative options for meeting the user requirement for data, for example administrative data
- develop and implement option evaluation criteria, to enable a decision on which, if any, of the identified options are appropriate to take forward

Testing and Research

This question development has progressed through four different approaches.

Approach 1: Add an "Other" option to the sex question

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We found that trans individuals would select their current acquired gender ('male' or 'female') not an 'other' option. This meant that there would be a significant undercount of the trans population through this approach.

Approach 2: Ask a binary sex question, then a non-binary gender question

This approach aimed to obtain information on the wider trans population by cross-tabulation. We found that the general population conflate the terms 'sex' and 'gender' and the trans population found this method underhanded. The trans population also reported their lived gender in both questions.

Approach 3: Ask a non-binary gender question, then a "trans status" question

We considered changing the sex question stem to ask about gender and including a third response option to meet the respondent need. However, we found that changing the question in this way risked the quality of data collected on 'male' and 'female' because it could lead to a media campaign. Therefore, we decided against pursuing this approach.

To develop a second gender identity question which collects information on the trans population we considered recommended questions from our stakeholders including Stonewall and the LGBT Foundation. Various questions were designed and explored via LGBT community testing. Although the initial designs required further development the approach was found to be broadly acceptable. These questions had two closed response options.

Approach 4: Ask a binary sex question, with an explanation that a gender question will be asked later, then a "trans status" question with an open response option to collect gender identity.

We concluded through the previous stages of research that the 2011 Census question on sex should not be changed due to concerns over data quality. As an alternate method of making the question more acceptable we decided to include a caveat underneath the question which signposts that a gender question will follow later. Within LGBT community testing we found this method very successful.

We further developed the "trans status" question designs to include an open response option for those who come under the definition of trans to identify their gender how they prefer. Further qualitative testing of these questions has allowed us to refine the approach down to two question design options. Both are broadly acceptable, would meet the data need and are easy to respond to.

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Testing completed	Outcomes	Link to report	Date
Public Acceptability ONS, NRS, NISRA	<p>Findings from public acceptability testing show that there appears to be no significant problems with asking a gender identity question on the 2021 Census.</p> <p>The acceptability reduced if asked for under-16s</p>	Link	January – March 2017
Phase 1 Qualitative research ONS	<p>None of the question designs would meet the requirement for a reliable estimate of the trans population.</p> <p>None of the question designs would fully meet respondent needs for questions that are easily understood and answered</p>	Link	March – April 2017
Quantitative Phase 1 ONS, NRS, NISRA	<p>There was no significant difference in overall response rates between the three alternatives.</p> <p>Having a gender identity question did not affect the quality of the data collected on sex.</p> <p>We still need to understand more about differences in response by age group.</p>	Link	June – August 2017
ONS community testing	<p>All question options were generally seen as easy to answer.</p> <p>Questions using gender identity, gender or trans status were generally found to be acceptable.</p> <p>Some missed the caveat in the ‘What is your sex question’ and therefore found the response options for this question too limited. When the caveat was missed, the question was found to be unacceptable by some due to being ‘exclusive’.</p> <p>When the caveat ‘Note a gender question will follow later’ was noticed it was found to be useful.</p> <p>The inclusion of prefer not to say in the response options was well received.</p>	Link	February 2018

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	<p>Respondents commented that a write-in option for 'other' should be provided for response options where this had not been the case.</p> <p>A number of respondents commented that there should be more response options. Some respondents found the questions or response options, which included both gender and sex, confusing, while others found the wording to be clear and understandable.</p> <p>When asking about trans status participants highlighted that a definition of the word trans would improve understanding.</p> <p>Age routing was seen as unnecessary by many of the respondents</p>		
<p>Qualitative Phase 2b ONS</p>	<p>DCM recommended the redesigned gender question to be followed by the sex different from gender question.</p>	<p>Link</p>	<p>February – May 2018</p>
<p>Qualitative Phase 2c ONS</p>	<p>DCM recommended the following two questions to capture information on sex and a person's gender status:</p> <p>Ask a question 'what is your sex' with binary 'male'/'female' response options. Include a caveat to indicate that a separate question regarding gender will be asked.</p> <p>Ask a question 'Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth?' with 'yes'/'no' (please specify)/ 'prefer not to say' response options.</p> <p>Locate these questions consecutively. Locate these questions at the start of the demographic set of questions (i.e. straight after name and 'Date of Birth' and before 'marital status' questions).</p> <p>Filter children under 16 away from answering the 'is your gender the same as your sex' question.</p>	<p>Link</p>	<p>February – May 2018</p>

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	<p>Reword the caveat to show the follow-up gender question will be asked straight after the sex question.</p> <p>DCM found the remaining two questions ‘Do you consider yourself trans, or have a trans history?’ and ‘What do you consider your gender to be?’ unsuitable.</p> <p>The term ‘trans’ was not considered appropriate to include in a government survey, there were comprehension issues with the terms ‘trans’ and ‘trans history’ and there were respondents who felt excluded by the ‘trans’ question</p> <p>Participants did not like the word ‘consider’ in the question ‘What do you consider your gender to be?’ as it was thought ‘consider’ was not a strong enough term when asking about gender identity; it seemed ‘frivolous’.</p> <p>Further cognitive and quantitative testing should be carried out to assess the impact of DCM’s question design recommendations on respondent acceptability and data quality.</p>		
<p>Quantitative Phase 2 ONS</p>	<p>The BMG research report showed:</p> <p>There were no significant differences in response rates between the three groups.</p> <p>There was no significant difference in the questionnaire mode completion across the three variants.</p> <p>Online responses to the questions were higher than paper response rates, and the non-response rate for treatment A (Do you consider yourself to be trans?) was five times higher than the non-response rate for treatment B (Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth?).</p> <p>Non-response rates also increased with age.</p> <p>No significant difference in drop-offs was found between the groups.</p>	<p>Finalising this report is still in progress</p>	

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	<p>No significant difference was found between the answers for Person 2 and Person 2 by proxy.</p> <p>The report found a statistically significant difference in acceptability between treatment A and treatment B. For treatment B over 80% of respondents found the question to be at least acceptable, while this applied to 66% for treatment A. Acceptability of question inclusion for either treatment decreased as age of respondents increased. But, only 4.3% of respondents in the 75+ group found treatment B not acceptable at all.</p>		
ONS Omnibus testing	<p>All questions performed well in terms of response.</p> <p>However, one question took three times longer to complete which led to us disregarding this version as an option.</p>	Presentation	April 2018

4. Stakeholder Engagement

Responsible	Esther Sutherland
Accountable	Helena Rosiecka
Consulted	<p>The Gender Identity Topic Consultation in 2016 raised the topic of Gender Identity being included in the census, and drew views from a variety of stakeholders. This also helped us identify the stakeholders we needed to consult with in future.</p> <p>Gender identity workshop, August 2016, attended by members from groups representing the trans community (Gender Identity Research Education Society GIRES, Stonewall, Mermaids), national health organisations, public bodies for example Equalities and Human Rights Commission EHRC, Government Equalities Office GEO, local government, academics and researchers, ONS, NRS, NISRA. To explore concepts, terminology and data need.</p> <p>Census Road shows, 2017</p> <p>Gender identity data user workshop, September 2017, attended by members from GIRES, LSE and British Society for population studies,</p>

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	<p>the Association of LGBT Doctors and Dentists, GEO, Stonewall, Gendered Intelligence, National Aids Trust, Cabinet Equalities and Diversity team. Reinforced data need, age cut off might be necessary and a two stage question design</p> <p>Gender identity event on the minimum age for asking a gender identity question, May 2018, attended by members from GIRES, the Cabinet Office, GEO, Stonewall, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality, Ernst and Young, ONS. No consensus on appropriate age to ask the question, priority to have some data even with compromises, the question must be in plain English</p> <p>Stakeholder Event, April 2018, attended by members from ONS, Women’s Budget Group, Women’s Aid, Equality and Diversity Forum, Equality Challenge Unit. Importance of not impacting data currently collected on sex.</p>
Informed	

5. Harmonisation

NRS	<p>NRS included a binary sex question in 2011 and did not include a gender identity question. They are considering how they can meet their user need for information on gender identity.</p>
NISRA	<p>NISRA included a binary sex question in 2011 and did not include a gender identity question. They did not find a user need for information on gender identity in their consultation but are considering differing question designs.</p>
GSS	<p>What is your sex?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female

6. Considerations

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Data quality	Our quantitative testing has suggested that although we may identify small numbers of trans respondents the majority are genuine. We have found little evidence of mischievousness.
Public acceptability	The last quantitative test showed that over 80% of participants thought the recommended question designs were acceptable.
Respondent burden	<p>Inclusion of a caveat in the sex question did not increase respondent burden, and some comments during informal testing suggested that it would help respondents to answer the question.</p> <p>Quantitative testing phase two found no significant difference in drop-offs or response rates between the treatment groups.</p> <p>Time to complete the sex and gender identity questions were in line with other similar questions in our quantitative tests.</p>
Equalities	<p>We have conducted an independent screening assessment of our research which was independently reviewed by Ernst and Young in 2018. Their review of our research highlighted some equality insights to consider if ONS were to include this question in the census form. Those related to the question design include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of individuals revealing their gender identity by answering the question • The clarity of the terminology among individuals with poor English language skills • Acceptability of the question among religious groups and elderly population, who are more likely to find the question unacceptable <p>We recommend that the gender identity question be asked to those aged 16 years and above. Our research and stakeholder engagement suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking those aged 16 years and above is likely to be consistent with the approach to be taken by other UK statistical offices on the census • Key stakeholders support this recommendation, including Stonewall, Government Equalities Office and the Equality and Human Rights Commission • Qualitative testing carried out by ONS in 2016 and 2018 also suggested that asking the question to those 16 years and over was acceptable • Acceptability testing commissioned by ONS suggested that most of the public found it acceptable to ask the question on the census to those aged 16 years and over

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Financial concerns	Not applicable
Questionnaire mode	We have found no significant mode effect.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that a question for gender identity is included in the 2021 census questionnaire. Alongside this a caveat should be included underneath the sex question to signpost that a question on gender will also be asked. It is recommended that the questions should be as follows:

<p>Paper</p>	<p>What is your sex?</p> <p>→ NOTE: a question about gender will follow if you are aged 16 or over</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male 	
<p>Online</p>	<p>What is your sex?</p> <p>A question about gender will follow [only to be seen by those who are 16 or over]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male 	<p>Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No, please specify gender_____ • Prefer not to say

8. Decision

Recommendation approved	
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Recommendation rejected	
Further information required	

Signature:

Date:

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Annex

Author and Quality Assurer:

Version Number	Changes made	Author	QA*
V0.1	Suggested changes made using track changes – including minor typos, inserting screenshots where available and restructure of a couple of sentences	Esther Sutherland	Caroline Batchelor

**Versions of paper through the QA cycle should be saved as V 0.1 etc. Final version that has been through QA cycle should be saved as V 1.0.*

If the Project Board requires actions or further information, this should go through another QA process, being saved as V 1.1 etc until signed off ready to go back to board as V 2.0

Outcomes of Project Board Actions:

Action	Owner	Outcome