

FOI/2021/1494: Emails between Stonewall and ONS regarding how ONS gathers data on sex and gender in the past two years.

From: Morgan, Maggie <[REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>

Sent: 13 December 2019 12:03

To: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>;

Phelan, Lara [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>

Subject: Re: Sunday Times

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you. Really useful to know. We were also approached and our line was one we have used previously:

"We are continuing to ask the binary choice male/female sex question. This approach is unchanged since 1801.

"For those who wish to tell us about different gender identities, we propose adding an additional voluntary question on this subject for people aged 16 and over. The entire suite of questions work together to provide the data required for provision of vital public services.

"Most people will not need guidance for the sex question but for those who do, the guidance we are proposing is very similar to 2011. We sought, and continue to seek, a wide range of views to

Maggie

Sent from [Workspace ONE Boxer](#)

On 13 December 2019 at 10:43:03 GMT, [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk> wrote:

Hi all,

Yesterday evening we were contacted by [REDACTED] at the Sunday Times for a story she is writing on the proposed guidance for the 2021 census.

She has flagged that some academics have objected to the guidance and would like it withdrawn 'and the sex question in the 2021 census answered according to whether people were born biologically male or female' (her words).

We responded with the below statement. I would imagine you've been contacted by [REDACTED] about the story, so just wanted to get in touch, offer support and align on anything you need.

Best,

[REDACTED]

A Stonewall spokesperson said: 'Trans people have always been able to respond to this Census question in a way that reflects who they are and how they live. Guidance was introduced in 2011 to simply reaffirm this.'

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>
Sent: 04 December 2019 16:12
To: Randall, Melissa [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Census bill contacts

Hi Melissa

Thanks for the update, that's really helpful.

I've attached an updated version of Do Ask, Do Tell – this was published this year, and includes slightly updated terminology on the sexual orientation and trans status questions (e.g. lesbian or gay instead of lesbian woman or gay man).

And a meeting with [REDACTED] in January sounds good – I've got good availability throughout Jan.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>
Sent: 11 November 2019 11:38
To: Randall, Melissa <[REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Census bill contacts

Hi Melissa,

Hope you had a good weekend.

I caught up with Stuart and Helen last week, which was very useful – thank you for linking us up. I'm planning our work for the next few months, and given the election being called, I was wondering when the results/analysis from the Census rehearsal are likely to be published, and if there's a date that the ONS is working to for making its final recommendations for the wording of the questions and guidance, drawing upon the findings and analysis of the rehearsal (although I'm aware there may not be a fixed date for this, particularly given the election) – thank you very much.

I also recall from our catch-up that you're due to be starting some stakeholder engagement work/meetings in December (although I may have recalled this incorrectly) – let me know if this is still due to go ahead, or if it's likely to be moved to the new year due to purdah etc.

Thanks very much, and let me know if you have any questions.

With best wishes,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>
Sent: 14 June 2019 14:21
To: Gender Identity <Gender.Identity@ons.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Census 2021 guidance for sex, gender identity and sexual orientation questions

Dear Melissa,

Please find attached our comments. We are very pleased to see that both questions have been taken forward and are excited to see both in the census, hopefully. We just have a few small recommendations. Please let us know if we can support this any further. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please also feel free to contact us if you want to discuss any comments in more detail. I will be on annual leave, after Tuesday till the 8th, but my colleague [REDACTED], cc-ed in, is more than happy to answer any questions in the meantime.

Have a lovely weekend,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk]

Sent: 11 March 2019 10:32

To: [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Children and Young People Conference 2019

Hello [REDACTED]

I hope this email finds you well! Thank you so much for getting in touch.

The conference focuses on best practice in supporting LGBT children and young people across education and service provisions. Whilst there won't be a specific focus on how to capture data, we will draw from our [School Report \(2017\)](#) and hopefully be launching some preliminary findings on LGBT NEETs as well. Best practice for us includes asking young people about their experiences of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying whether LGBT or not, and giving space to identify as LGBT with their own language. This will be built into every session, along with an emphasis on youth voice.

Our policy and research teams, including [REDACTED] (cc-ed in), are due to meet with your colleague [REDACTED] at the end of this month, to discuss how the ONS collects data on sexual orientation and gender identity. [REDACTED] can let you know how that meeting goes, and would be happy to arrange a subsequent meeting if that'd be helpful.

Let us know if you have any other questions, it would be great to see you at conference!

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>

Sent: 06 March 2019 13:53

To: Education Team Inbox <education@stonewall.org.uk>

Subject: Children and Young People Conference 2019

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a [REDACTED] at the Office for National Statistics (ONS). As you may be aware, our team have been undertaking work to determine whether and how ONS could collect information on [gender identity](#).

I found out about your conference on children and young people (<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/events/children-and-young-people-conference-2019>) through a colleague and wanted to know if any part of it would focus on capturing data on children and young people in an educational or general context?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

Office for National Statistics | Swyddfa Ystadegau Gwladol

[REDACTED] [@ons.gov.uk](mailto:) | www.ons.gov.uk | [@ONS](https://twitter.com/ONS)

For the latest data on the economy and society, consult our website at <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

From: Randall, Melissa <[REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>

Sent: 27 September 2019 14:46

To: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk; [REDACTED]@stonewall.org.uk

Cc: Morgan, Maggie <[REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk; Phelan, Lara <[REDACTED]@ons.gov.uk>

Subject: Stakeholder engagement and Comms for Census SOGI questions

Hello,

Thanks for your time on Wednesday, it was good to catch up.

I am including here the report that we produced on [the guidance that is being used for Census rehearsal](#), which also details some findings from the qualitative testing. You can see in the report the guidance that was tested and the version we are using for the rehearsal. What isn't in this the report is the research questions that our interviewers probed respondents on – these were taken from stakeholder feedback that you (and others) provided, so thankyou – it was very useful to be able to test a variety of solutions and gives us confidence that this approach works. In the report, we say that following the rehearsal we will analyse how well this has worked, which will include seeking feedback from the contact centre staff who will be using this guidance when handling calls from the public. I am happy as always to take your feedback on the guidance.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thanks again for your help with this,

Melissa

Melissa Randall | Topic Lead for Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, Centre for Ageing and Demography, Public Policy Analysis Directorate
Office for National Statistics | Swyddfa Ystadegau Gwladol

[@ons.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.randall@ons.gov.uk) | www.ons.gov.uk | [@ONS](https://twitter.com/ONS)

<p>████████████████████ ████████████████████ Stonewall</p>	<p>We would also like to discuss in further detail whether the question titles ('your gender', for example) are for the purposes of this consultation, or if they will be included like this in the Census itself.</p> <p>Would like to discuss how ONS plan to code the data gathered through open text box (gender question).</p> <p>Keen to discuss how ONS intend to ensure that the data on sex collected in England and Wales in the 2021 Census is consistent with the data on sex collected in Scotland in the 2021 Census.</p>	<p>Dear ██████████</p> <p>Thank you for your response. We really appreciate your feedback on the questions and guidance which will further help inform our work.</p> <p>To answer a few of the questions that you had on the feedback you sent over, please read below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The titles used in the document were simply used to label the questions and guidance and do not reflect what will be included in the Census itself.- All responses to the write-in question for gender will be coded. A simple classification will be provided in advance of the Census rehearsal based on the information known so far from research and testing and the LGBT survey. The results from the Census 2019 rehearsal will then be used to quality assure, update and refine this
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		<p>ahead of the 2021 Census.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- As mentioned in our 2021 Census topic report we are working closely with both NRS and NISRA to ensure the UK outputs for sex in terms of 'male' and 'female' will be harmonised. <p>If you would like further information, please let us know and we can arrange a telephone meeting to discuss this further.</p> <p>Kind Regards,</p> <p>Melissa Randall</p>
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