



CDCTP Programme Board

Census 2021 Collection Operation Readiness Assessment for Weekend Media Launch

Purpose: Reissue in line with Board decision

Version Number: 1.1

Date: 9th February 2021

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1 Purpose

This paper provides a readiness assessment for the Go Live of the “Public Engaged” phase of the Census 2021 Collection Operation. The board is asked to provide decisions and/or direction as summarised in the Table 1 below.

Decision / Direction		Commentary / Recommendation
1	Recommendation: Readiness assessment	See scope of specific commitments that form this phase
2	Decision: Go decision on Awareness Postcard	Decision required to ‘go’ on the awareness postcard immediately after the go/no-go meeting. This needs to be decided today
3	Note: In relation to contingency for a delayed start to Field Follow Up	We have the flexibility to delay the commencement of field follow up until the 22 nd March, but costs increase the later we make the decision and there are associated risks of field officer attrition. Cost estimates are being refined.

Annex 1 summarises the schedule of Post Go Live Assurance and Decision Points planned to assure and control decision making following 9th February Programme Board.

2 Scope and structure of this paper

The Census 2021 Collection Operation has been incrementally going live from circa August 2020. Up until February 2021, we have been live with the “Enabling Operations” phase. This phase includes services like printing and personalising questionnaires, recruiting and training the field force, and going live with the early phases of community engagement.

From February 2021 there is definite change as we start the wave of contact, significantly increase the number of services live and our public facing risk profile is very high. This is referred to as the “Public Engaged” phase. It is this “Public Engaged” Phase which is the focus and scope of this paper. This excludes Non-Compliance and Census Coverage Survey Operations.

The specific commitments for this phase are listed below:

- Commitment to send awareness post cards from HH to Royal Mail 8th February
- Commitment to launch campaign on 22nd February
- Commitment for eQ, RH and authentication to Go Live on 23rd February
- Commitment for Processing to receive and process data on 23rd February
- Commitment to start CE Field Operation on 23rd February
- Commitment to launch Census Online Help on 23rd February
- Commitment to launch Public Support on 1st March
- Commitment to launch Paper Services on 1st March
- Commitment for Tranche 1 Household field officers (other field work, not household follow up) to start 8th March
- Commitment to start HH field follow up on 23rd March

Tackling such a complicated subject requires a multi-perspective approach, which is outlined below.

- Section 3: Overall Assessment and Recommendation
- Section 4: Business Area Perspective
- Section 5: Testing Perspective
- Section 6: Security Risk Perspective
- Section 7: Operational Contingency Planning
- Section 8: COVID-19 Preparations
- Section 9: External Outlook

3 Overall Readiness Assessment

All RAG statuses are with respect to being ready to go live as planned during the Public Engaged phase of Census 2021. The RAG status definitions used throughout are summarised below:

Table 2: RAG Definition used for the Phase Go Live overall assessment		
RAG		Commentary
1	Green	Successful delivery of the Collection Phase CSFs appears highly likely and there are no major outstanding issues that at this stage appear to threaten go live for the Public Engaged Phase of Census 2021.
2	Green / Amber	Successful delivery of the Collection Phase CSFs appears probable. However, constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening go live for the Public Engaged Phase of Census 2021.
3	Amber	Successful delivery of the Collection Phase CSFs appears feasible but significant issues already exist requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and, if addressed promptly, should not present a cost/schedule overrun, or materially impact the CSFs.
4	Amber / Red	Successful delivery of the Collection Phase CSFs is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed and establish whether resolution is feasible.
5	Red	Successful delivery of the Collection Phase CSFs appears to be unachievable. There are major issues which at this stage do not appear to be manageable or resolvable. The project/ programme may need re- baselining and/or overall viability re-assessed.

Readiness assessment

This paper makes a **GREEN/AMBER** assessment of the go-live status of the “Public Engaged” phase of the Census 2021 Collection Operation based on the balance of risk summarised in Tables 3 and 4 below.

#	Table 3: Area of strength	Commentary
1	2019 Rehearsal proved out at a smaller scale the performance of our systems, supplier interfaces and day to day operational procedures/processes	
2	All Business Leads have assured and recommended a go decision for their areas without exception, as detailed in Request to Proceed (RTP) 6 – 8 th February	
3	Many of our services are live already - Print Services, Central Operational Governance, Census Field Operations, and Community Engagement	
4	Testing to date of ONS and Supplier systems has shown good results with low level of defects and strong results from non-functional (load) testing	
5	We have adequate workarounds in place for most gaps	

#	Table 3: Area of strength	Commentary
6	ORCPs in place most practiced already, with the remainder being walkthrough ahead of the Public Engaged Phase	
7	Operational problem and incident management performing well on live incidents to date	
8	Wave of contact much stronger with more channels than 2011: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online response - More CEMs/CAs - More reminder letters - Strong national and KPG campaigns - 500k of Telephone Capture - Flexible and targeted digital marketing 	
9	Our teams experience, skills, and ability to put in the significant discretionary effort that will be required to make the collection operation a success	

#	Table 4: Area of concern	Mitigations/Contingencies
1	Field recruitment	- See Annex 7
2	Progress on COVID 19 Testing for the field	- See Section 8
3	Restrictions to field mobility due to local lockdowns and the impact on managing variability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essential Service/Key worker status for field officers to enable travel - RCA/FPA allows us to intelligently trade off response versus variability at local levels - Delayed start of Field Follow Up Contingency Plan - Collection Operation Extension Contingency Plan
4	Restrictions prevent effectiveness of KPG completion events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the event of virtual completion events only being possible, completion events will be conducted and used to build trust and motivation and then signpost to respondents to other services/support - This is likely to significantly impact the effectiveness of these events
5	Public willingness in the context of COVID-19	Wave of contact much stronger with more channels than 2011: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online response - More CEMs/CAs - More reminder letters - Strong national and KPG campaigns - 500k Telephone Capture - Flexible and targeted digital marketing

#	Table 4: Area of concern	Mitigations/Contingencies
		Reassurance through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary campaign - Field safety videos - Webinars with LAs
6	People not at their usual residence, including students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved guidance - Secondary campaigns - Engagement with Vice Chancellor, Lecturers, NUS