



## Census Advisory Group

AG (07)04

### 2011 Census questionnaire development

#### Summary

- 1 This paper summarises the user consultation that has taken place on the content of the 2011 questionnaire since the last round of advisory groups in November 2006 along with the ongoing work on developing questions for the 2011 Census.
- 2 **Advisory Group members are invited to note the outcome of the consultation and the timetable for future development.**

#### Consultation

##### *March 2007 open meetings*

- 3 A series of one-day open meetings were held during March 2007 in Sheffield, London and Cardiff to present ONS's current view on the likely content of the 2011 Census with the afternoon focusing on the topics of ethnicity, identity, language and religion.
- 4 There was general agreement on the core content proposed by ONS. However, for the remaining available space on the questionnaire, very different views were expressed on the relative importance of 2001 topics (industry, qualifications and carers) and new topics (second residence, language, citizenship and year of entry into UK). There was generally little support for the inclusion of income.
- 5 There was strong demand for extra tick boxes within the ethnicity question, in particular, for Black British, Kashmiri, Cornish, and Gypsies/Travellers. There was also demand for an extra tick box in the religion question for Pagans and to broaden to non-faith based beliefs such as Humanism.
- 6 There was a general understanding that ONS had some difficult decisions to make. A summary of the open meetings and a record of all the questions asked along with answers will be published during the summer.

### *Census Senior Government Advisory Group*

- 7 The Census Senior Government Advisory Group consists of statistical Heads of Profession (or their representatives) from key central government Departments and the Local Government Association. A second meeting took place in June 2007 to discuss ONS's current thinking on the likely content of the 2011 Census.
- 8 There are different priorities from Departments on the content of the 2011 questionnaire especially with regard to second residences, citizenship, carers and qualifications. There was little support for the inclusion of the industry question, although more information was requested on the quality implications for the derivation of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC).

### *Consultation on ethnicity, identity, language and religion topics*

- 9 A three-month consultation took place on the ethnicity, identity, language and religion topics between December 2006 and March 2007. Over 500 responses were received. These responses are currently being analysed and the findings will be published in the summer 2007.
- 10 Specific stakeholder meetings have also taken place with a number of communities where meeting user requirements would pose the greatest problems for question design and/or comparability. This included meetings with representatives of the Cornish community, the Sikh community, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the British Humanist Association. A meeting also took place with various community groups to discuss the acceptability of colour terminology within the ethnicity question.

### **Question development**

- 11 Cognitive question testing is ongoing. Two waves of testing have taken place over the last six months involving around 90 respondents.
- 12 Focus groups have taken place in England to discuss the acceptability of colour terminology within the ethnicity question. Similar focus groups are planned for Scotland in July.
- 13 A postal questionnaire test took place in April. Some 10,400 questionnaires were posted out to random addresses across England. Half of the households received a 24-page questionnaire (with three pages of individual questions per person) and the other half received a 32-page questionnaire (with four pages of individual questions per person). A third of the questionnaires were returned within four weeks of the test. Return rates for the postal test showed no difference in return rates between the two types of questionnaire. The responses are currently being keyed and further analysis will be undertaken.

## Equality Impact Assessment

- 14 ONS is working with independent diversity consultants to ensure compliance with legal obligations on equality. Work has taken place to produce an Equality Impact Assessment on the development of the questions for ethnicity, national identity, language and religion. This will be finalised over the coming months.

## Timetable

- 15 An updated timetable for the development of the Census questionnaires is outlined below:

| Year | Date                 | Event   |
|------|----------------------|---|
| 2007 | May 13 <sup>th</sup> | Census Test   |
|      | Summer               | Decision on length of questionnaire for 2011  |
|      | Summer               | Publication from open user meetings   |
|      | Summer               | Evaluation of April postal test   |
|      | Winter               | Publication of Equality Impact Assessment on the development of the questions for ethnicity, national identity, language and religion |
|      | Winter               | Evaluation of Census Test   |
|      | Ongoing              | Question development and testing  |
| 2008 | Spring               | Topics for 2009 Rehearsal selected  |
|      | Summer               | Questionnaires for 2009 Rehearsal finalised   |
|      | Autumn               | Topics for 2011 Census announced in White Paper   |
|      | Ongoing              | Questionnaire testing   |
| 2009 | Spring               | Census Rehearsal  |
| 2010 | Spring               | Census questionnaires approved by Parliament  |
| 2011 | Spring               | Census day  |

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