

Jen Woolford, Director Population Statistics

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation
Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR)
(by email)

9 October 2023

Dear Ed,

Review of 2021 England and Wales Census data on Gender Identity: Interim report

Thank you for your letter dated 9 October 2023 in which you set out your expectations of what is needed from ONS to provide assurance on the gender identity data collected as part of the 2021 Census of England and Wales and the harmonised gender identity question.

The interim report published today provides helpful guidance which we will consider and action. One early reflection is that we strongly welcome your finding that the ongoing quality assurance we are undertaking should be regarded as a routine part of ongoing statistical production for a new area of data collection, and that users should be confident in the overall robustness of census data.

Our ongoing work has considered a range of questions, including those asked by our users. We have approached these in several ways to be as thorough as possible. We have been talking to a wide range of users about their needs, as well as international colleagues about best practice.

Examining the larger set of census data makes it possible for us to explore patterns in the data, tackle the complex task of understanding how people responded to the question and consider whether it did not work well for some.

We want to provide a package of information that will be helpful to inform the practical use of the data. This work has taken longer than we had first intended but we believe it should not be rushed. Our work so far has confirmed just how complex a task it is and getting this right is our main priority.

Our next steps, as recommended in your interim report, are to set out our plans detailing what we are exploring, what the research might show and when the results will be published. We will set out this plan within the next four weeks.

My teams remain committed to providing public value with our innovative work as we seek to understand better the full implications of the quality of the data and how this can best be communicated to users.

We look forward to working with you and our range of users on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

Jen Woolford

Director Population Statistics