

# **SJR(2)-02-07(p.2) Annex D**

## **Summary of Topic Research and Question Testing**

ONS have established eight separate topic groups responsible for reviewing and evaluating user requirements, prioritising between topics, co-ordinating question testing and taking full account of the need for UK comparability. Census topic group membership includes ONS staff with expertise in the Census, the topics covered by the group, question development and harmonisation. The groups also include representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

### **Population definitions and Bases**

This topic group is responsible for the development of definitions, questions and instructions to ensure that the Census counts the whole population and collects detailed information at the correct address. ). Thus far:

- Significant development work to improve the instructions on who should be included has been done, and more is planned.
- Visitor questions have been developed for the 2007 Test, although further work is needed
- A question on Second Residence has been developed, but testing has shown some problems with the question on time spent at second address so more work is planned.
- Work is underway to establish detailed user requirements for information on communal establishments.

### **Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion**

The key priorities for this group are:

- to consider response categories for the ethnicity question (including the acceptability of colour terms and potential new categories)
- to consider the suitability of a multiple response ethnicity question (possibly incorporating national identity)
- to analyse the interaction between ethnicity, identity, country of birth and citizenship/nationality
- Confirmation of user requirements for religion. i.e. focus on identity rather than practice; whether there is a need for breakdown of different Christian groups.
- UK requirements for information on language (including the level of detail required, and the languages of interest)
- Frequency of use of Welsh

There has been little progress thus far in terms of developing an ethnicity question, and the question

asked in the 2007 Test is a slight variation of the 2001 ethnicity question. ONS is now following up the 2005 general consultation with a detailed consultation on ethnic group, national identity, religion and language running from 4 December 2006 until 2 March 2007. The aim of the consultation is to gain a better understanding of users' and stakeholders; detailed requirements for information. This consultation has been circulated to relevant organisations in Wales, and officials from the Assembly's Statistical Directorate have also arranged a workshop for equality groups on 1 February 2007. The consultation documents are available at:

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/cn\\_155.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/cn_155.asp)

The Scottish Executive have developed a new approach to the ethnicity question, based around geography and dropping the terms 'black' and 'white', which was adopted by GROS for the 2006 Census Test in Scotland. The ONS consultation on this topic area will investigate the acceptability of a similar approach in England and Wales.

In the 2007 Census Test, a matrix-format language question will be asked. This will ask whether respondents can read, write, speak and understand English and Welsh, with a 'write in' space for another language. It will also collect similar information about British Sign Language and other sign languages. However, small scale testing suggests that this question may be difficult for respondents to complete, particularly if English or Welsh is not their first language, and further evaluation is required. This question is only likely to be considered if it is shown to be answered in the same way as the question on Welsh language proficiency used in the 2001 Census, to ensure comparability of the results over time.

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[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/cn\\_155.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/cn_155.asp)

## Labour Market and Qualifications

This group's key aims are to review, update and prioritise the labour market and qualifications questions. The qualification question was poorly answered by some respondents in the 2001 Census, but a clearer format and changes to the response categories have significantly improved understanding of the question. It is likely that some labour market questions will be dropped, although major outputs (Economic Activity and NS-SEC) will still be produced.

## Income

Question testing suggested that an individual income question was the best way to collect this information. For the 2007 Test, half of all households will receive a questionnaire including questions

on sources and level of income, while the other half will receive a questionnaire without these. The effect on response will be examined, together with the quality of the responses received.

Testing has also shown that a household level question would be difficult to answer and may be negatively received by householders.

## Health and Care

Testing has been carried out for new questions to collect information about the type of long-standing conditions that respondents have. However it is unlikely that it will be possible to include questions of this size in the 2011 Census, and further development work may be required.

## Migration

This group was recently established and will focus on establishing and evaluating the user requirements for information on country of birth, address one year ago, citizenship/nationality and month and year of entry to the UK. Migration is a topic area of increasing political interest, and it is likely that more information will be collected in 2011 than in previous censuses.

## Demographics and Household Relationships

The key priorities for this group are the questions to collect information on legal marital or civil partnership status and household relationships. For the 2007 Test, the marital status question has been expanded to include civil partnerships. Initial question testing suggests some confusion over the understanding of the term 'civil partnership', although it is likely that this issue will reduce over time, as the term is more widely used

## Housing

This group was recently formed and will consider the requirements for all the information collected at a household level in the 2001 Census, and identify any new topics required.

A requirement for information on the quality of housing has been identified, and a new question to collect this is included in the 2007 Census Test.