

Julie James AC/AM
Arweinydd y Tŷ a'r Prif Chwip
Leader of the House and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

10 January 2018

Dear Elin,

Scrutiny of preparations for the 2021 Census of Population

The decennial Census of the population is critical for our understanding of the nation and for setting a once in a decade benchmark to produce accurate demographic statistics to ensure the statistics we have effectively inform planning, resource allocation and decision making. The Census is also vital for our detailed understanding of, for example, the Welsh language, housing, and equalities in Wales.

Under the Census Act 1920, the Office for National Statistics (the ONS, as the executive arm of the “Statistics Board”) has the responsibility for undertaking the Census in England and Wales.

The ONS are now deep in preparation for the 2021 Census of Population. They have undertaken significant work on the proposed content for the 2021 Census and earlier this year undertook a large-scale test which included parts of North Powys. Furthermore, through the Census Transformation Programme they are undertaking a large amount of research for future improvements to the way census-type data are collected. This includes the use of administrative data from government and other data sources.

Functions in relation to the carrying out of the Census under the Census Act 1920 are essentially non-devolved apart from the fact that Welsh Ministers have the power under section 3(1) (as amended by para 3 of Schedule 1 to the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007) to make regulations relating to the administration of the Census in Wales. Article 4 of the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions)(No. 2) Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/3334) also provides that the Welsh Ministers must be consulted about any Order in Council made under section 1 of the Census Act 1920 directing that a census shall take place.

Welsh Government officials work closely with the ONS at all levels of census governance and seek to ensure that the programme considers the needs of Wales.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I propose it would be beneficial for the ONS to be invited to present an update in early 2018 to one of our Assembly committees on their preparations for the 2021 Census. This would ensure that the Assembly are able to input into discussions on the Census at an earlier stage than the making of regulations would allow, and that ONS have more time ahead of the final preparations to consider the views of the Assembly.

I would be grateful if you could consider this proposal and if you agree, refer to the relevant Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AC/AM

Arweinydd y Tŷ a'r Prif Chwip
Leader of the House and Chief Whip