The Census and future provision of population statistics in England and Wales

*Public consultation*

25th November 2013

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Context

- Census – every 10 years for over 200 years
  Successful 2011 Census
- The Beyond 2011 Programme
  Reviewing future needs and how best to meet them
  A normal part of the census cycle
- The potential for change
  - Rapidly changing society
  - Evolving user requirements
  - Technological advances
  - Improved data sources
  - Improved data access
- Recommendations in 2014
  Final decision for Government and Parliament
Why do we need population statistics?

- **Service planning**
  - where to locate schools, hospitals, etc.
  - housing plans
  - transport
- **Policy making and monitoring**
  - equality – age, sex, ethnicity, disability
  - ageing population – pensions
- **Resource allocation**
  - Health, local govt
- **Commercial planning**
  - location of retail outlets
- **Academic and social research**
Government Spending 2010 – most supported by Population Statistics

Cost of the 2011 Census – approx. £50m / year

Source: guardian.co.uk
Two potential future approaches

• A census once a decade, primarily online

  Provides detailed statistics once every ten years with updated population estimates each year

• A census using existing government data and compulsory annual surveys

  Provides more statistics each year, but less detail than an online census once a decade

• No decision has been made yet
An online census once a decade

- Invitation to all households to respond online
- Compulsory for all households as in 2011
- Support available
  - Field staff on the doorstep
  - Paper questionnaires if required
- Anticipate at least 65% of households would respond online, the rest on paper / via field staff
- ‘Coverage survey’ as in 2011
- Questionnaire content to be determined through future consultations
A census using existing government data and compulsory annual surveys

• Reuse data already provided to government to produce annual statistics about **population size**
  - 1% annual survey to correct coverage problems

• 4% annual survey to produce statistics about the **characteristics** of the population
  - Needs up to 5 years’ data combined to produce the most detailed statistics

- Up to 50% of households included in surveys over a decade
Administrative data and surveys

Potential data sources:

- NHS Patient Register
- DWP/HMRC Customer Information System
- Electoral roll (> 17 yrs)
- School Census (5-15 yrs)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (Students)
- Birth and Death registrations

- Only items such as name, address, D.O.B
- All sources anonymised prior to linkage
Estimating age and sex using admin data

Administrative data estimates compared to census estimates

England & Wales

Male

Admin data

Census

Females

Admin data

Census

population (millions)
Genealogy and the historical record

• Online census provides detailed snapshot once a decade (after 100 years)
• Possibilities with a census using administrative data and surveys:
  • Archive survey responses (40-50% of households over a decade)
  • Archive some data from administrative sources?
• Discussing with The National Archives and Genealogists
• Views invited as part of the consultation
## Comparison of census approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online census once a decade</th>
<th>Administrative data and annual surveys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Statistics once a decade</td>
<td>• Statistics every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More detailed</td>
<td>• Less detailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All households receive questionnaires each decade</td>
<td>• 50% of households receive questionnaires each decade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• c. £625m per decade (£1.10 per person per year)</td>
<td>• c. £460m per decade (£0.80 per person per year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limited reuse of existing data</td>
<td>• Extensive reuse of existing data</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Primary legislation in place</td>
<td>• New primary legislation required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Snapshot every 10 years for genealogy</td>
<td>• Discussing possibilities for genealogy with The National Archives</td>
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Consultation closes 13th December

Responses welcome from anyone with an interest