



Statistics Commission

**PREPARING FOR THE 2011 CENSUS
– INTERIM REPORT**

Statistics Commission Report No 32

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1. Introduction

The Census underpins the annual allocation of billions of pounds in funding for public services. It is a unique source of consistent small-area data that still offers better local information than any other source. And it tells all of us a great deal about society, making it of fundamental importance to good government and democracy.

Unsurprisingly, the scale of an enterprise required to count and categorise some 60 million people is large. Decisions on funding need to be taken several years in advance of the Census and before full information on costs is established. The cost of the next Census seems likely to be of the order of £500 million. That will make it, by a long way, the most expensive statistical project ever undertaken in this country. The cost per head is likely to be in line with some countries known for their good statistical systems, such as Australia and Canada, but significantly lower than for the United States which is arguably a better comparator. It is also worth keeping in mind that it works out at just 80 pence per person per year for the ten years that the funding covers.

That a Census is needed in 2011 seems to be widely accepted both inside and outside government and this is certainly the view of the Statistics Commission. In part, the case turns on the fact that no other source of population information will be good enough by 2011 to replace the count that is the central product of the Census. But also, the 2011 Census will be the benchmark against which alternative ways of estimating population in the future will be judged. In that sense, the Census should be seen as laying the ground for new approaches to population measurement, not as a rejection of those alternatives.

Censuses in the UK, as elsewhere, are by their nature problematic and vulnerable to disruption. The last Census was beset by budgetary pressures, public protests about the questionnaire in Wales, problems with enumeration in Westminster and other hard-to-count areas, poor quality address lists and various other technical difficulties. In Scotland there were Parliamentary changes to questions on national identity occurring after agreement of the England and Wales questions, and throughout the UK, foot and mouth disease constrained enumeration in rural areas. Jointly and separately, these threatened to throw plans off course and, in some cases, led to less reliable results.

Because of the importance of the Census and the inherent potential problems, the Statistics Commission is undertaking an independent assessment of progress with planning for the 2011 Census.

In this Interim Report we have sought to highlight issues on which more might be done by Government, now and in the next few years, to help assure success in 2011. We will discuss our interim conclusions (Section 8 below) with interested parties before finalising our full report.

As part of our review we held a meeting of twenty experts from academia, the private sector, local and central government. The group agreed that the 2011 Census is likely to be the most challenging one for many decades: contributory reasons are the high rate of population mobility and migration, the levels of illegal residency, changing household structures and increase in the number of second homes, reluctance to complete official questionnaires, and the growth of 'gated' residences in already hard-to-count areas such as Westminster.

2. Previous Statistics Commission recommendations

In the Statistics Commission's 2004 report *Census and population estimates*¹ we made a number of recommendations in relation to England and Wales including:

- Government departments, local authorities and other public bodies should commit to work closely together in the planning and the execution of the 2011 round of Censuses.
- Targeted studies or surveys should be pursued in selected areas ahead of 2011 with a view to improving population estimates for the most problematic areas.
- Improvement of the quality of migration data should be addressed urgently by the Home Office and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) together.
- The creation of a robust and continuously updated National Address Register should be a priority for Government.
- Government departments should assess more systematically and publish their own requirements in relation to the Census.

These recommendations pointed to ways to reduce particular risks. Whilst there has undoubtedly been some progress on specific points, these all remain areas of concern.

¹

Census and population estimates and The 2001 Census in Westminster: Final Report, Report No. 22, Statistics Commission, 2004 <http://www.statscom.org.uk/uploads/files/reports/Census%20Report%20Final%2022.pdf>

Various initiatives to produce a definitive National Address Register for England and Wales have failed. Improving the quality of information about migration has been addressed by an ONS-led interdepartmental task force which reported in December 2006, though it is probably unrealistic to expect major progress ahead of 2011. Little evidence that government departments have thoroughly researched their own data requirements has been made public but we understand that ONS is engaging them on this topic. Whilst sources and methods for making population estimates have improved, there is scope for greater sharing of information between public authorities to this end. These points are reflected in the observations in this report.

3. Timetable

Annex 1 presents a timeline identifying key events leading up to 2011. Notable points are:

- The planning period is long – over seven years before Census day.
- Many decisions have to be taken quite early.
- As for the 2001 Census, initial outputs are scheduled to be published 18 months after Census day.
- Taking a Census is, in varying degrees, the responsibility of all four UK administrations but the position is different in each. For example, consultation began at different times and the Census test in Scotland occurred one year before the tests in England and Wales or Northern Ireland.

4. What is success?

We believe that it is essential to establish wide consensus about how the success of the 2011 Census will be judged. We do not think such consensus was ever reached in relation to 2001, leaving uncertainty and division about whether to regard the final product as a success. We see this as something that could now be settled ahead of 2011 and which would help all those involved to focus on a clear goal.

Of course the success, or otherwise, of a Census is at least partly a matter of perspective. Some local authorities regarded the 2001 Census as having ‘failed’ because Census results were at odds with their own estimates. Other bodies have other priorities. Pleasing

everyone is not a realistic goal. However, from the perspective of Government and Parliament, it may be possible to agree some indicators of success:

- I. **Robust population estimates** – the Census population estimates are widely accepted as robust enough for resource allocation purposes.
- II. **All Census questions are ‘effective’** – no major failure relating to an individual Census question (problems can arise if a question is not well understood or people are unwilling to answer it).
- III. **No harmful political campaigns** – political or media campaigns against the Census are not serious enough to have any substantive impact on the estimates or on public perceptions of the value of the Census.
- IV. **Plans cope with external events** – terrorism alerts, public health emergencies and floods are examples of unpredictable events which could disrupt the Census and undermine the credibility of the results. The ability of the Census process to recover in the event of such an occurrence is an important consideration.
- V. **Consistency with other data** – Census results are sufficiently consistent with population estimates made before the Census to avoid loss of confidence. This applies in particular to local area population estimates. In 2001, the results seem to have been reliable for many areas of the country but were less reliable in some inner city, hard-to-enumerate, areas.
- VI. **The Census results are produced in a timely and easily useable form** – the 2001 Census results were made available over a period between 2002 and 2005. Some users may demand the 2011 results earlier than for 2001 but most will understand that a balance must be struck. The ‘one-number’ methodology, which requires all the results to be fully reconciled and does not allow subsequent revision, has advantages for users but takes longer than the previous approach of issuing early results and then amending them. That approach was criticised in 1991, the last time it was used. Research suggests that ease of use of the statistics, good documentation on what they mean, availability in a detailed, disaggregated form and comparability at a high level across the UK are also important for many users.

- VII. **No grounds for audit criticism** – all the planned work is carried out within budget, on time and is compliant with all relevant guidance on financial propriety, contracts, etc.

A Census which satisfied the criteria above would be one that produced timely and reliable estimates across the whole range of questions asked, met all relevant standards of propriety, avoided major disruption or reputation damage and did not surprise the experts. We would suggest that a more refined set of indicators on these lines should be agreed to give both government and the Census offices a clearer target to aim for.

5. A taxonomy of risk

The risk that the Census might not be successful by the above criteria can be sub-divided as follows:

Planning/Contractual – some aspect of the Census operation might be inadequately designed, leading to problems in implementation – for example, the terms under which a contractor is engaged might make it too costly to accommodate needed changes. Though this is a large category of risk, it is also the best understood and most tractable.

Operational – processes or procedures might fail to work adequately despite being well designed, eg due to human error or oversight. An individual might fail to check progress at a critical time, missing an emerging problem and thus failing to trigger corrective action.

Contextual – under this heading, even if the Census itself was faultless, a problem - real or perceived - with other statistics (or inconsistency between administrations) might undermine confidence in the Census results. An example would be where the annual population estimates for an area had been overestimated before the Census (as happened in some areas before 2001) and then, when the Census results emerged, it was the Census itself that was called in to question. Such risks are a threat to the perceived value of the Census and thus to willingness to use Census information in decision-making.

Political – Censuses everywhere attract political or lobbying campaigns, including newspaper campaigns, which are not directly to do with the aims of the Census but which can reduce public willingness to co-operate. It may be a campaign about national identity in

parts of the UK, about identity cards, privacy, or about council taxes. Such campaigns are hard to anticipate but it may be possible to reduce their impact by careful advance publicity and contact with key groups.

External – events unconnected with the Census, such as a major health emergency or natural disaster, might affect capacity to carry out the fieldwork or processing. The foot and mouth outbreak was one such example which occurred in the course of fieldwork in 2001.

6. Existing controls

A number of controls exist to ensure standards and the appropriate use of public money. These include:

- **Statistical standards** – Censuses carried out in the European Union follow European guidelines. For 2011, there may be specific European regulations setting down some common requirements for the next round of Censuses. The UK Census must also comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice which covers principles of consultation and the protection of confidentiality among others.
- **Financial and regulatory controls** – These include government procurement guidance for large-scale public projects and risk management guidelines.
- **Statutory requirements** – The Census is taken in Britain under the Census Act 1920 and in Northern Ireland under the Census Act 1969. Secondary legislation, in the form of a *Census Order* prescribes the date, areas, enumeration base and question items; and *Census Regulations* prescribe detailed arrangements such as geography, appointments and duties of field staff, delivery and collection of forms, and security procedures (for England and Wales).

There will be separate secondary legislation in Scotland and for Northern Ireland. The National Assembly for Wales is being consulted about the (England and Wales) Census Order, and a Transfer of Functions Order has given the Welsh Assembly power to make secondary legislation for the Census Regulations for 2011. The draft Census Order is expected to be laid before the respective legislatures around November 2009; the Regulations to be laid around March 2010.

In addition, the Census is required to comply with other legislation such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (for evidence collected as part of the prosecution process for non-completion of a Census questionnaire), the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

- **Audit, scrutiny and evaluation** – There are a number of authorities that audit, scrutinise or evaluate Census processes, eg National Audit Office (NAO²). Their recommendations are expected to be taken on board either immediately or in planning the next Census.
- **Risk management processes used by Census offices** – ONS and the Census offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland each have specific governance arrangements and a 'risk management strategy' in place for the 2011 Census. ONS published a list of risks in relation to the 2011 Census design in 2004 but a full risk register is not publicly available. We understand this is because it discusses matters relating to commercial contracts. ONS is using the Prince2 project management method – itself designed to ensure risks are well managed. The General Register Office for Scotland has made its risk register available to us. This includes an assessment of risk likelihood and impact, level of monitoring, business areas affected, planned action, progress and the date of next review.

7. Other steps being taken

For each of the five categories of risk identified in Section 5 above, we comment below on the steps currently being taken by the Census offices. These points are brought together in the conclusions which follow.

² See for example: *Outsourcing The 2001 Census*, National Audit Office, October 2002
http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/01-02/01021211.pdf

Planning and contractual risks

This is a large category of risk covering all the planning, funding and contractual arrangements. The box below lists some of the many steps we have been told are being taken by the Census offices. Our review is designed to identify these but not make judgements on their adequacy.

- A published information paper on strategic aims (June 2004).
- Planning began earlier than for 2001.
- Wider consultation than for 2001 (see further comments below).
- A cost-benefit analysis of options for Census design.
- Bids were made for adequate budgets to ensure that sufficient staff can be recruited.
- Payroll services procured earlier to ensure system is fully tested.
- Engaging with local authorities and an agreed Action Plan 2005-2011.
- Local authorities encouraged to appoint formal Census liaison managers to work as agents on behalf of ONS.
- ONS have set up a local authorities steering group, are testing local authorities' engagement in 2007 and will engage with local authority chief executives.
- New service level agreement with the Post Office and central post-back (rather than to regional offices as in 2001) in conjunction with individual form tracking to allow more control over field operations and an earlier start to questionnaire processing.
- As recommended by NAO, all key Census services and supporting systems will be fully tested at the rehearsal stage (for 2001, the payroll system was not tested at rehearsal stage).
- A unique identifier will be linked with each address before post-out and printed on the form to allow earlier tracking and a more robust tracking system.
- Multiple enumeration approaches including sending Census forms out by post.
- Call centres will be able to issue additional forms.
- Follow-up teams targeted on poor response areas.
- Use of new technology in the field.
- Early involvement of geography experts and consultation on geography. (In 2001 there were problems finding suitable staff to develop systems).
- The three Registrars General have together published "*UK Statistical Disclosure Control Policy for 2011 Census Output*" (Nov 2006).
- Census offices analysing impact of post-back on response rates to individual questions (Treasury Sub-Committee 2002 recommendation).
- ONS examining scope to use other national sources to measure under-enumeration.
- More formal role for the Welsh Assembly (as recommended by Treasury Sub-Committee in 2002).
- Scotland project with schools to publicise and engage young people in the Census.

We commissioned Demographic Decisions Ltd to undertake a review of the consultation being undertaken by the Census offices in preparation for 2011. The review report will be published alongside our full report. The review suggests that:

- The consultations have been relatively successful in capturing the opinions of specialist users, particularly in public sector organisations, but have had less success in attracting the views of local authority chief executives, business users or the media.

- The nature of consultations differs between the Census offices; a topic-based approach designed to understand the uses of Census information adopted in England and Wales and Northern Ireland; in Scotland, three formal waves, each covering a wide range of aspects. The review concluded that the Scottish approach probably helped users to have a better sense of involvement and commitment. In addition, the substantially smaller scale of the operations in Scotland and Northern Ireland has resulted in their Census offices having better-developed networks and informal contacts than ONS. However Census offices share the results of their consultations with one another so there is some mutual support.
- Some respondents to the review believed that the consultations so far could have been better targeted and more effective; for example, the roadshow events and meetings were thought to have worked better than the templates for detailed written responses.

The Statistics Commission believes that, viewed overall, the planning arrangements are relatively well advanced compared with the equivalent point in the run up to the 2001 Census. However, four areas cause us some concern:

- Whether the **consultation procedures** have succeeded in capturing the needs of a sufficiently wide range of users and uses. We recognise that it will be impossible to meet all users' requirements. However, there are large numbers of smaller scale users whose needs are important in aggregate but also difficult to pin down many years before the Census. It was suggested to us that presenting users with costed options might be one way to help them understand the necessary trade-offs between different options.
- The adequacy of the steps to **publicise the value of a Census** in 2011 both to the public and public bodies. We have observed a fair amount of negative media comment prompted by publication of the test questionnaires that might have been reduced by more effective early 'marketing'. We note also that the controversies about identity cards and the surveillance society have increased the political risks (see below). Government may need to do more to make the purpose of the Census clear to people: it is partly confirmatory (confirming what may have been known before) and

partly exploratory (finding out new things of national interest) and both roles are valid and important.

- There is still some work to be done on **agreeing which concepts of population to measure**. The definition of ‘usual residence’ in 2001 was problematic. In 2003, ONS published a study called “*A Demographic Statistics Service for the 21st Century*”³ to inform planning for 2011. This identified 15 different concepts of population to meet a variety of uses. These are listed below. The options in terms of which population concepts to focus on are complex and need to take account of changing household patterns and changing user requirements. Increasing the number of questions on the Census form to allow more flexibility on population measures necessarily reduces space for other questions.

Fifteen population concepts	
1. Usual residence <i>(the model used in 2001)</i>	8. Week-day population
2. Household population	9. Week-end population
3. Institutional population	10. Temporarily resident population
4. Out of term population	11. Working population
5. Seasonal populations	12. ‘Average’ population
6. <i>De facto</i> population	13. UK residents living abroad
7. Legal population	14. Non-UK residents living in the UK
	15. Bespoke service populations

- Whether planning and funding can be fully effective when there are still differing views on **what ‘success’ actually means** (see section 4 above).

We will continue to discuss these points with relevant government departments, and consider them further in our full report.

³ *A Demographic Statistics Service for the 21st Century*, ONS, July 2003.
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/Methodology_by_theme/downloads/Demographic_Statistics_Service.pdf

Operational risks

Mistakes can occur even in well-designed procedures. For example, a breach of data security could undermine public confidence and adversely affect enumeration. In 2001, field staff accidentally left 190 Census forms in a waste bag outside their office in east London. This occurred in a hard-to-count area, where difficulties in recruiting enumerators left overstretched staff prone to such mistakes.

The Statistics Commission's main concern in relation to operational risks is the crucial need for the Census offices to have suitably skilled and experienced staff in key posts and to retain them through the long preparation period.

Although the bulk of Census operations for England and Wales will remain in Titchfield (and not be directly affected by ONS relocation plans), ONS is nonetheless moving headquarters to Newport over the period up to 2010 at the same time as making large efficiency gains to stay within forward budgets. The cumulative pressure to deliver change across a broad spectrum, whilst in the midst of a key period of Census planning, presents obvious, though unquantifiable, risks.

Contextual risks

Steps that the Census offices have told us they are taking to mitigate these risks include:

- *Statement of Agreement between the Registrars General* (February 2005) aimed to increase consistency of outputs from the three UK Censuses.
- Examining the scope for improving migration and population estimates.
- Consultation *A Demographic Statistics Service for the 21st Century* (2003), set out proposals for an integrated population statistics system using linked administrative and survey data.

The Statistics Commission believes that high priority should be given to:

- doing everything possible to **improve estimates of population** and of international and internal **migration** ahead of 2011. Substantive progress may not be achieved by 2011 however.
- impressing on all four UK administrations the **value of a consistent approach** wherever possible. There is a possibility of differences which, while

not impacting the quality of each administration's Census, could affect their comparability. The emphasis should be on producing a Census that has UK comparability at aggregate level but at a lower level is able to accommodate local differences.

Political risks

Steps that we have been told about include:

- The Census White Papers in October 2008 will formalise the policy position and be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.
- Communication strategy will be produced (commencing nearer to 2011).
- Consultation with stakeholders.
- Attention to risks relating to migration, disabilities, race issues, sexuality, identity cards, privacy and data sharing.
- Planning to implement the *Statistics and Registration Service Bill*.

The Statistics Commission would like to see all four administrations publicly recognise the value of the Census early on in the planning process and use their authority to build wide acceptance that the Census must not be allowed to become a political football or be seen as an opportunity to flex devolved powers. The elaborate Parliamentary approval processes required ahead of 2011 present both an opportunity and risks. They allow for proper political debate at an appropriate stage – which may help maintain cross-party support – but they also offer special interest groups the chance to promote their causes at a political level, with possible adverse impact on public opinion.

2011 will be the first Census where all the devolved administrations have been in a position to engage actively in the planning and preparation stage. However, there are elections in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2007 and a Westminster election by 2010 at latest. Changes in administration or ministers inevitably increase the risk of late change of policy towards the Census. Cross-party support needs to be sought actively to reduce this risk; the time for political debate is up to and including the White Paper stage in autumn 2008, not afterwards.

While some experts are concerned that the future Statistics Board may have less influence with ministers than the current ONS, the direct engagement that the Board will have with the four parliaments/assemblies may well prove to be an advantage and we would expect the Board to seek to build on that.

External risks

We recognise that external risks – for example natural disasters and national emergencies – will be covered by formal business continuity planning (which is subject to audit). ONS coped well with the difficulties presented by the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. However, we have not seen the full ONS risk register for 2011 and do not know what contingency plans are in place for events such as an influenza pandemic.

8. Interim conclusions

Bearing in mind the points made above and the further evidence of the research that will be published in our full report, our initial conclusions are that:

1. Government and Parliament need to decide, and publicise, how **success will be judged** for the 2011 Census; and do so in terms that are tractable for those planning the Census. Perfection is not an option. We have made some suggestions in this report. We would note again our 2004 recommendation that government departments should assess more systematically their own requirements in relation to the Census.
2. There needs to be wide recognition within government of the challenges and risks of a Census and **the scope for many organisations inside and outside government to help mitigate those risks**. Devolved administrations, government departments, local government, Parliament and the future Statistics Board all have specific roles to play in ensuring the success of the Census. In 1991, the introduction of the community charge ('poll tax') led to public suspicion and problems with enumeration. Government cannot be expected to stop for a Census but it must consider in a 'joined up' way what it can do to create a positive climate and avoid ill-timed initiatives. Similarly local authorities need to respond positively to the efforts the Census offices are making to secure their active engagement and support. This has been a problem area for both local authorities and the Census offices in the past.
3. We are doubtful about the adequacy of the steps currently being taken by the Census offices to **publicise the value of a Census in 2011** both to public bodies and the wider public. We have suggested in this report that the value of the Census, both in

confirming what government thinks it already knows and in exploring new ground, should be explained carefully. The engagement of schools and the education sector more generally may also be an important route to better understanding.

4. We are uncertain whether the consultation procedures have succeeded in **capturing the needs of a sufficiently wide range of users and uses**. There may be large numbers of smaller scale users whose interests are not well understood. 2011 currently lies beyond the planning horizons of many organisations – especially smaller ones – and this needs to be allowed for when communicating with users. It may be more a matter of opening dialogue than asking for views at this stage. Responsibility for this lies with Census offices.
5. We note that there is still some work to be done on **agreeing which concepts of population to measure**. Increasing the number of questions on the Census form to allow more flexibility necessarily reduces space for other questions. The definition of ‘usually resident’ in 2001 was problematic; responsibility for finding the right balance lies with Census offices.
6. Firm and early decisions on the **level of funding for 2011** are essential. An under-resourced Census is a high-risk one. Downward pressure on the costs of contracts, payments to enumerators, the scale of the Census management structure, the quality assurance processes etc is to be expected. But if any of these are short-changed the risks will multiply. We are also cautious about looking to new technology simply to cut costs. There is a place for technical innovation but if it is being driven by cost savings rather than operational effectiveness, the risks may be too high. The largest share of responsibility for this lies with the Treasury (in the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review), but also with all those involved in estimating costs.
7. As well as providing for Census operations, funding must also be targeted at communicating the results and on those statistical processes, **particularly annual population estimates**, with which the Census will be expected to be consistent. Although an interdepartmental working group has recently reported on ways to improve migration estimates, this must now be given high priority by several government departments if significant improvement is to be seen in time to support population estimates around the time of the next Census. In addition, consideration of alternative sources of population information needs to be part of a continuing

process of Census planning so that the Census in 2011 can be used as a benchmark to measure the value of alternative sources for the future. Responsibility for this lies with Census offices.

8. The next Census is likely to be the largest and most complex project ever undertaken in the field of UK official statistics. The **cumulative pressure on ONS management** to deliver change across a broad spectrum of their activities, whilst in the midst of a key period of Census planning, is a cause for concern. Responsibility is primarily with Treasury and ONS.
9. The scope for **political and special interest groups** to use the Census as a political football should be seen as a real risk and approached as such. Those groups – including lobbies, political parties and media bodies that might seek to make capital by disrupting or opposing the Census should be identified and engaged as appropriate. Responsibility for mitigating this risk lies with Parliamentarians of all parties in all four administrations. The time for political debate is up to and including the White Paper stage in autumn 2008. After that, the focus must be on ensuring success.
10. While some experts are concerned that the **future Statistics Board** may have less influence with ministers than the current ONS, the direct engagement that the Board will have with the four parliaments/assemblies may be an advantage and the Board should look to build on it.
11. As we said in our 2004 report, the creation of a robust **national address register** in England and Wales – and ideally a list of where households are living – must remain a priority for Government. In some recent research, discrepancies between an address database and occupied dwellings were as large as 9 per cent. Without a good quality address register, all the Census risks are amplified. Responsibility for this lies with a number of government departments but Communities and Local Government has a central role.

Annex 1. The planning timetable for the 2011 Census

Next Census 2011
2002
Review of the need for a Census 2006 in England and Wales
2003
ONS Census strategic development review on alternatives to a Census papers published
2004
Proposed design for Census 2011 and strategic aims and key research in England and Wales published
Scotland consultation begins
2005
UK harmonization agreed
Scotland consultation and proposals for 2006 test questions
ONS begins consultation
Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice of services and systems contract to be procured by the three Census offices.
2006
April: Census test 2006 in Scotland
Contract for recruitment, pay and training of field staff scheduled to be awarded by May 2006
Recruitment of team leaders and address checkers; address checking begins
Contract for suppliers of systems and services scheduled to be awarded by September (<i>two shortlisted by October</i>)
QA strategy agreed by the UK Census offices
Census Test Questionnaire (2007) published 31 October 2006
Transfer of functions order for Wales
2007
UK statistical disclosure control policy agreed
Enumerator recruitment starts (January)
Internet questionnaire agreed (February)
Possible decision on Census funding (March)
13 May 2007: Census Test (England & Wales)
2008
Draft White paper to Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Welsh Minister for comment.
Postal question test (February)
Draft of White Paper proposals submitted to Westminster Cabinet Committee and to Welsh ministers (April)
Field staff recruitment for rehearsal starts (August)
Rehearsal and final 2011 questionnaire finalised (Summer)
Westminster Cabinet Committee and Welsh Ministers' approval of White Paper (Autumn)
White paper proposals (Wales) debated by Welsh national assembly (by end year)
2009
UK agreement of statistical disclosure control methods begins (April)
May: Census Rehearsal – England and Wales, Scotland
Draft Census Order laid before Parliament
England Draft Regulations submitted to Minister (November)
2010
Draft Census Order approved by Parliament (January)
Census Order made in Council (February)
Regulations made by respective Ministers (in England to the Chancellor, in Wales to the Welsh Assembly Minister; March)
England Regulations and Welsh Regulations come into force (May)
Census field staff recruitment starts (August)
Printing of forms (September onwards)
Address check (September-October)
2011
Recruitment of enumerators (January-March)
May: Census Day
2012 [end of] First results produced
2013 – 2015 Further results produced

Sources of timetable information: Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency publications.