

Use of Census Data

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Why is it important to understand the use of census data?



MAINTAIN
UNDERSTANDING
ABOUT USE AND
POTENTIAL USE
[V1.1]



When should you understand the use of census data?



census
2021

The first Census 2021 results are here

Explore the population of England and Wales

Office for National Statistics

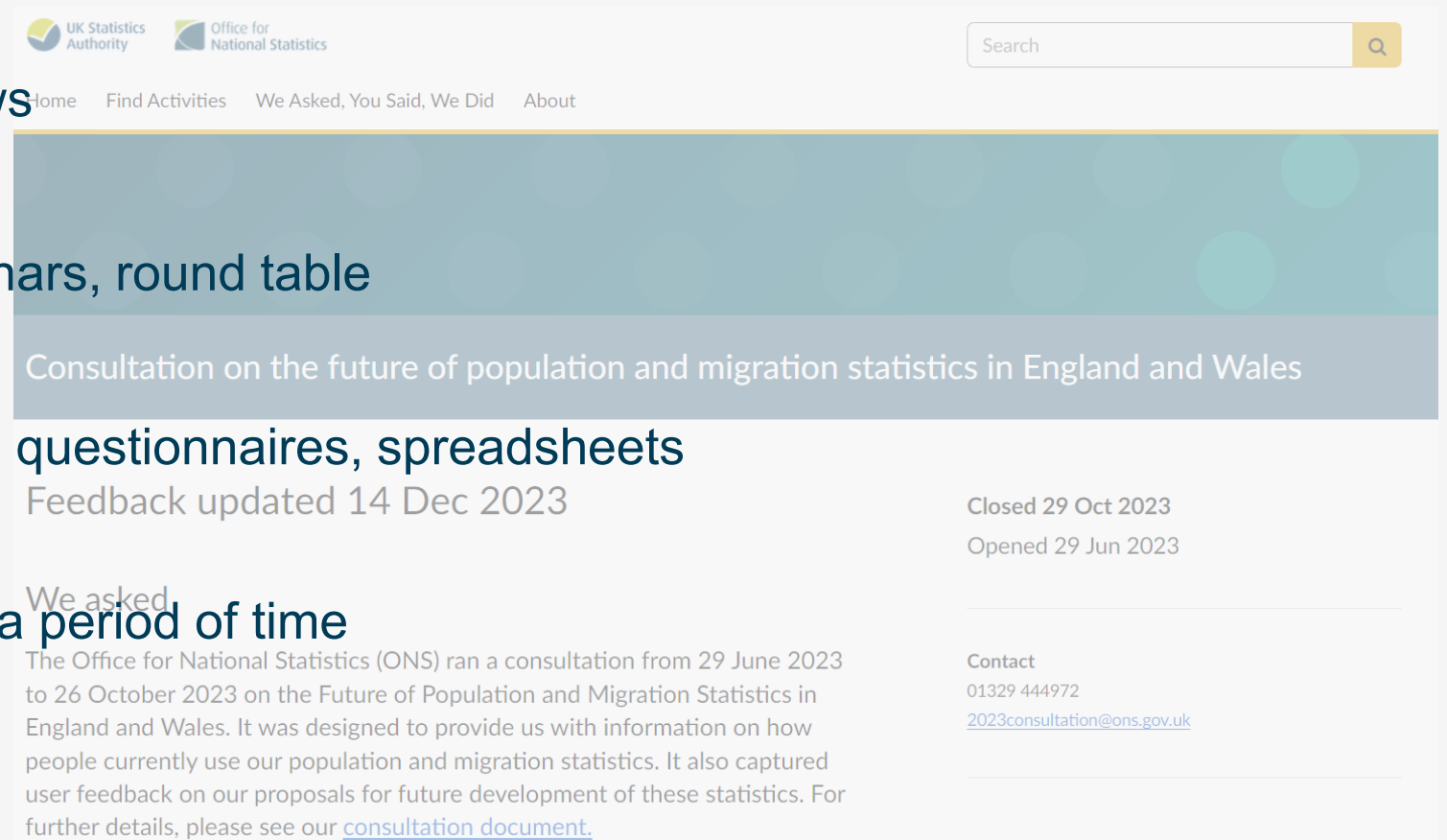
How do you understand the use of census data?

We ask these questions:

- Is anyone using the data?
- Who is using the data?
- How are they using the data?
- What are they using the data for?

Data Collection and User Engagement

- Meetings
 - One to one meetings, interviews
- Events
 - Seminars, presentations, webinars, round table
- Surveys
 - Online, feedback mechanisms, questionnaires, spreadsheets
- Consultations
 - Large questionnaires run over a period of time
- Web-metrics
- Queries
- Citations



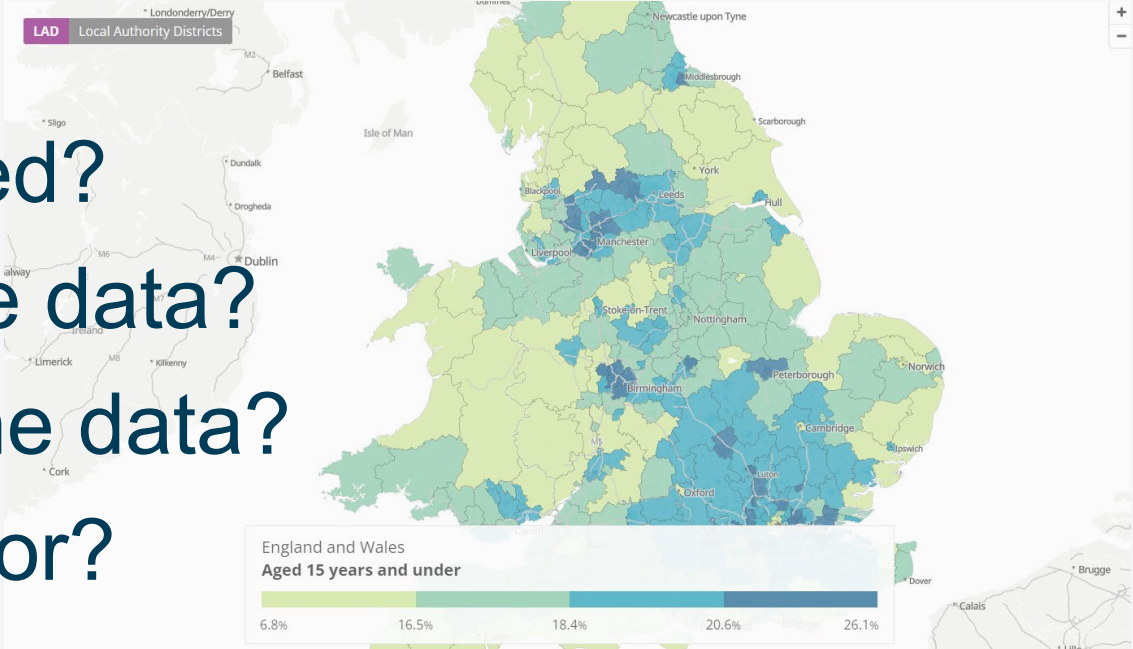
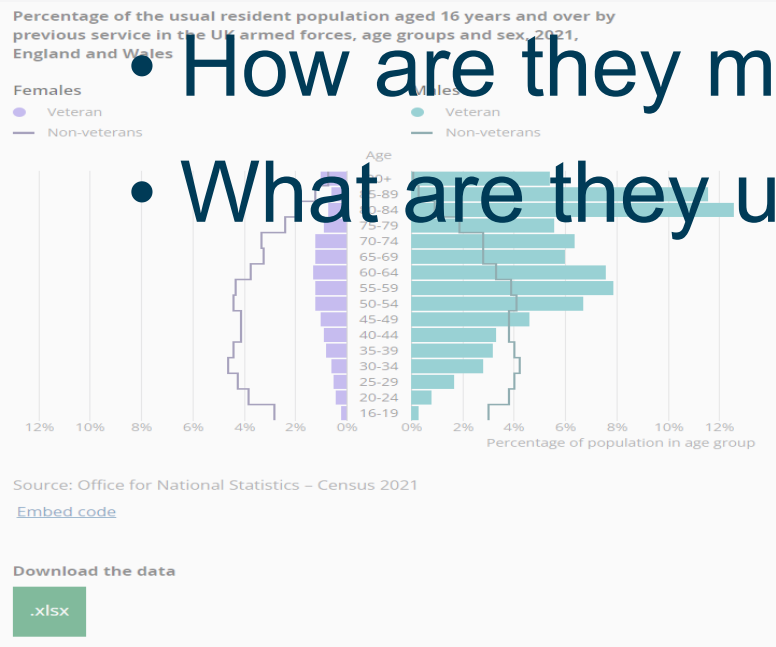
The screenshot shows the UK Statistics Authority website. At the top, there are logos for the UK Statistics Authority and the Office for National Statistics, along with a search bar. Below the logos is a navigation menu with links for Home, Find Activities, We Asked, You Said, We Did, and About. The main content area features a large teal banner with the text "Consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales". Below the banner, it states "Feedback updated 14 Dec 2023" and "Closed 29 Oct 2023" / "Opened 29 Jun 2023". A section titled "We asked" contains a paragraph: "The Office for National Statistics (ONS) ran a consultation from 29 June 2023 to 26 October 2023 on the Future of Population and Migration Statistics in England and Wales. It was designed to provide us with information on how people currently use our population and migration statistics. It also captured user feedback on our proposals for future development of these statistics. For further details, please see our [consultation document](#)." To the right of this text, there is a "Contact" section with the phone number "01329 444972" and the email address "2023consultation@ons.gov.uk".

Types of users

- Stakeholder types or classifications
 - Government users (Central and Local Government)
 - Public bodies
 - Private sector
 - Academics
 - Third sector (charities and think tanks)
 - Umbrella organisations (representing smaller groups or individuals)
 - Individuals (Census respondents)
- External and Internal users

How are they using the data and what are they using the data for?

- How is the data being accessed?
- What format are they using the data?
- How are they making use of the data?
- What are they using the data for?



About this Dataset

Characteristics by previous service as a regular or reserve in the UK armed forces from Census 2021.

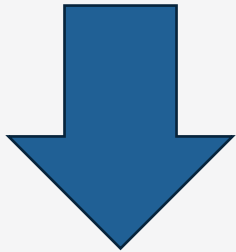
Edition in this dataset

2021 edition of this dataset

.xlsx (164.6 KB)

How do you process and store the information?

- Meeting notes
- Meeting recordings
- Emails
- Survey or consultation response forms



Processing

- Spreadsheets
- CRM/Databases
- Documents

How often do you collect this information?

How the census is created and developed

The census involves a lot of planning, research and testing. We have more detailed information on:

- [how the census questions are developed](#)
- [how we run, process and quality assurance the census](#)
- [how we test the census](#)
- [what products we plan to produce from Census 2021 data](#)
- [the legislation and policy behind the census](#)
- [how we work with Scotland and Northern Ireland to produce UK statistics](#)
- [stages involved in organising Census 2021](#)

Question
design



Outputs
design



After
publication



Sharing what you know!

Our changing population is there for all to see

Rich Pereira | April 12, 2024
Categories: Education, Health, migration, Office for National Statistics, ONS, Population, Wellbeing



Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration>



Assessing the benefits of Census 2021, England and Wales

There are many benefits associated with **Census 2021** in relation to reusable functionality, from census collection through to dissemination. The census **benefits** project will be specifically...

Methods

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will be assessing the benefits of Census ...

2011 Census benefits evalua...

To evaluate the actual benefits achieved from the 2011 Census, we met with a ...

Example: Census Benefits Data Collection

- Understand the use of Census 2021 data within selected user groups: Central Government, Local Government and Private Sector.
- Contacts within each of those user groups/representation of sectors.
- Meetings arranged with Central Government and Private Sector
- Workshops arranged with Local Government

Example: Census Benefits Data Collection

- Documents sent in advance to allow for preparation
- Semi structured interview style and Q&A
- Meeting recorded and notes taken
- Final record of the meeting agreed
- Charting and logging
- Summary of the use of census data organised into user type and type of use
- Benefit identified and value calculated
- Going forward: surveys, desk-based research and further meetings

Assessing the Benefits of Census 2021 data- Department for Education
Notes of meeting 220623

Present:
Emily Knipe (ONS)
Kerry Earnshaw (ONS)
Ian Knowles (DfE)
Apologies: Laura Selby (DfE)

Policy Research

The uses for policy research outlined in the forecast are quite old (first captured as part of the post-2011 work). Although census data might be used in the sampling frame, little other reliance on census data was identified. Children and parents would be sampled from the National Pupil Database, which comes from school census collections. This database existed when the evidence was collected, so this does not reflect a change in the sources of data used; it is unlikely that census data rather than school census data were ever relied upon, and may reflect a mistake or misunderstanding in the original survey response from the department.

It was confirmed that although we are looking to validate the forecast, if these uses are outdated or incorrect then our priority is to understand what, if any, current uses of census data exist within DfE policy research and to reflect these in our benefit calculations. Any incorrect uses will be removed.

Action: IK to go back to research team to verify whether there are genuine uses of Census 2021 data, rather than the school census data. If they do, then further discussion may be required re the value of this research and analysis, how much of this value might be attributable to census data and what would be done if this data were not available.

Use of Data	Value of Data	Counterfactual	Qualitative evidence/long tail	Requires follow up
Value of research dependant on census data Although census data might be used in the sampling frame, little other reliance on census data was identified.		Children and parents would be sampled from the National Pupil Database, which comes from school census collections. This database existed when the evidence was collected, so this does not reflect a change in the sources of data used; it is unlikely that census data rather than school census data were ever relied upon, and may reflect a mistake or misunderstanding in the original survey response from the department.	If minor use is identified, for example to sense check a sampling frame drawn from NPD data against a particular characteristic, this would still be counted. It was agreed, however, that it would not be reasonable to attribute 100% of the value to Census 2021 data in this circumstance. Depending on the extent of reliance on the data, we might attribute a portion of the value, as has been done in the assessment of some other benefits, or we might consider it too small to quantify and just wrap it up into a long tail of benefits that are harder to quantify. If the value of census data is quantified, it may be useful to consider the time or cost of sourcing alternative data, or the additional risk carried as a result of not having census data.	Action: IK to go back to research team to verify whether there are genuine uses of Census 2021 data, rather than the school census data. If they do, then further discussion may be required re the value of this research and analysis, how much of this value might be attributable to census data and what would be done if this data were not available.
In terms of evaluations, the NPD provides pupil related information and pupil home address but not the characteristics of the parent beyond does the child have eligibility for free school meals. In some cases, there may be a need to link to national census data, but there may not.	For those evaluation pilots outlined in the forecast, we assume those are past and so would not have made use of Census 2021 data.			Action: IK to identify if any current or planned evaluations will use 2021 Census data, and if so, how? The value attribution for this use can then be discussed. We have had some feedback regarding the figures for funding allocation. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for responses regarding the genuine use of census data and upcoming evaluations. Any information received has been recorded.
Complaints and Appeals IK confirmed that census data is used for pupil projections but had reservations about the rationale for the benefit identified.	Unlikely that they would be related to use of the census data or not; appeals can happen even when census data are used, if an LA does not agree with the census data.			
Teacher training				

Table 3: Data uses and methods used to calculate total benefit values of 2011 Census data , 2011 to 2012

Title of use	Description	Method
Central government: macroeconomic policy making	The Bank of England uses population estimates (particularly of the working age population) to inform economic policy making, including the setting of interest rates.	Without the census, there would be deterioration in the quality of population estimates which could lead the Bank Of England to make a different (sub-optimal) decision on interest rates than they otherwise would (given accurate data). The benefit of the census is the cost avoided to the economy of this occurring. This is very hard to estimate. We assumed there was a 50% chance of a 0.25% error in interest rates for one year in every 25 years.
Central government: policy making (social/other)	Census data are used to inform policy making by the Welsh Government and across central government departments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for Transport Government Equalities Office Department for Education Department of Health Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs Department for Work and Pensions 	Estimated using various methods. These include estimates of the costs saved through less delay to the delivery of transport schemes which rely heavily on small area data to assess the social and distributional impacts of transport interventions. It's especially important for the use of data to identify groups who may suffer from poor accessibility.

Benefit Num	Type of Ben	Category of Ben	Department Sector	Benefit	Description	Data Source	Starting Value for Benefit Estimatio	available data
1	Central Government	Policy Research	DfE	Value of research dependant on census data	Census data is used in the sampling frame to support policy research	Department completed a survey in 2012-13 identifying public policy research that is dependent on Census data.	£12,211,000.00	2012-13
I/AK	Central Government	Policy Research	DfE	Complaints and Appeals	Benefit from avoiding spend on assessing complaints and business cases on appeals about pupil projections	BV2011 Data Source - could not find as part of FBC refresh	£100,000.00	2013-14
I/AL	Central Government	Evidence Based Investments	DfE	Teacher training	Census data is used to inform decisions about funding for teacher training investments. The benefit of Census data is based on an estimate of the value the data has in this decision process and how much of this can be allocated to Census	Data has been provided through consultations with Department (led by Deloitte in 2017/18)	£400,000,000.00	2013-14

Example: Future of Population and Migration Statistics Consultation

- Understand the use of Census 2021 data to inform the user needs for any future statistical system
- Consultation for 17 weeks
- Pre-engagement
- Questionnaire online
- Events, meetings, round tables, media, social media, emails, newsletters etc
 - Meeting notes and recordings

Consultation questionnaire:

What sector does the organisation belong to?

Required

- Central government
- Devolved administration
- Local government
- Other public body, for example health, transport, or emergency services
- Academia or research
- Religion or faith
- Charity or voluntary
- Business, industry or commercial
- Journalism or media
- Think tank
- No sector, I am responding in a personal capacity
- Other

Which of these geographies do you mainly use ONS population statistics for?

If you use more than one, please select all that apply.

- England and Wales
- Wales only
- England only
- UK-wide
- None of these

Your population and migration statistical needs

1a. Please explain how you currently use ONS population and migration statistics.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1b. Throughout the consultation document we have outlined our proposals for changes to our population and migration statistics, with detail provided in Section 3.

To what extent do these proposals meet your needs?

- The proposals meet all of my needs
- The proposals meet some of my needs
- The proposals do not meet any of my needs

In the last 12 months, approximately how often have you used or referred to statistics from the ONS?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- A few times a year
- Less frequently than a few times a year
- Never

What do you currently use the ONS's population statistics for?

- Academic research
- Service provision or business planning
- Personal use
- Public policy
- Other

Example: UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)

We want your feedback

If you use the England & Wales and or Northern Ireland Census 2021 outputs, we would very much welcome your feedback on these statistics, including their strengths and potential areas for improvement, via our [online survey](#).

Our questionnaire focuses on the following themes:

- Output delivery: We would like to get users' perspective on the timings, timeliness and communications of the Census 2021 outputs.
- Outputs: We would like to understand which Census 2021 outputs users used and the extent to which users' needs (coverage, breakdowns, and additional data etc) were met.
- Accessibility: We would like to know how easy or difficult users found accessing and using the Census data, as well as navigating the ONS and NISRA websites.
- Quality and methodology: We would like to know to what extent users are satisfied with the quality of the statistics, as well as the methodological information provided alongside Census 2021 outputs.
- User engagement: We would like to know about users' experience of engagement and communication conducted by ONS and NISRA about the Census 2021.
- Impact of Covid: We'd like users to share their experiences of the impact of the pandemic on their use of the Census 2021 data, as well as their thoughts on the communication and engagement conducted by ONS and NISRA about the impact of the pandemic on Census 2021 outputs.

If you would prefer to provide us with your feedback via email or if you have any questions then please contact our assessors via regulation@statistics.gov.uk.

We look forward to receiving your survey response by 16th August 2024, 11pm.

Considerations

- Data protection and privacy
- Stakeholder burden and fatigue
- Coordination of data collection
- Non-response or gaps in data collection
 - Coverage
- Inappropriate use of census data
- Sentiment
- Cost of consulting and processing

User need

- ‘Use’ versus ‘User Need’
- Build on understanding the ‘Use’ to understand ‘User Need’
- Best use and value of the data
- Inform improvements and developments
- Competing ‘User Need’ and priorities
 - Ranking and scoring/Prioritisation
- [Service Manual](#) – Users and User Needs.

Example: Census 2021 Topic Consultation

News and reports

26 June 2020, [Armed Forces Community \(veterans\) — Census 2021 question development report.](#)

This report provides information on our research on the armed forces community topic for the 2021 Census.

19 October 2017, [Update on meeting information needs on the armed forces community \(veterans\)](#)

This note provides an update on our research on the armed forces community topic for the 2021 Census.

June 2017, [Update on meeting information needs on the armed forces community \(veterans\)](#)

This note provides an update on our research on the armed forces community topic for the 2021 Census.

27 February 2017, [Updated news on requirements for information on the armed forces](#)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) have been working together to meet user needs for data about people who have served in the UK armed forces and their dependents. On 8 November 2016, we held a workshop to better understand the user need for the data. Since then, we've met regularly to find the best way to meet that need. This report provides an update on progress towards meeting user needs for data on the armed forces community.

9 January 2017, [Armed forces workshop: summary of discussions](#)

The ONS and the MoD held a joint workshop on 8 November 2016 with important stakeholders

- UK armed forces veterans – user need for data
- 2015 consultation – user need for ‘Military veterans’ information.
- 2017 – ‘Armed forces community’ – Evaluation score = low – not recommended for collection
 - Commitment to review other sources and link administrative data
- Continued to monitor and collect user need, explore other sources and question testing
- Final Decision: to include a question on previous service in the UK armed forces.



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ons.gov.uk

16 September 2024

