

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

## General Report on the 2001 Census in Wales

ONS is carrying out a review and evaluation of the 2001 Census in England and Wales which will culminate in a Data Quality report and a General Report being published.

Plans for individual reports on specific aspects of the Census operation and a timetable for release have been published.

Each report is written in isolation and is subject to amendments as processing progresses and further information comes to light.

Reports will be released on the ONS website in the form of a high level Executive Summary and a more detailed Evaluation Report.

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# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

## Introduction

The census in Wales is carried out under the same statutory authority as for the rest of Great Britain, namely the Census Act 1920, as amended by the Census (Confidentiality) Act 1991 and the Census (Amendment) Act 2000. Unlike the situation in Scotland, however, under the provisions of the Government in Wales Act 1993, the census is not a devolved matter and thus, by virtue of the Census Act, the Registrar General for England and Wales has statutory authority for conducting the census in Wales.

The White Paper setting out the Government's proposals for the 2001 Census (Cm 4235), which was published in March 1999, recognised the importance of gaining the support of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) for the arrangements for the 2001 Census in Wales, and the need to ensure that the Assembly was fully informed of all such arrangements.

A number of arrangements were made for the 2001 Census that were particular to Wales. These included:

- (a) the appointment of a Welsh speaking Census Manager for Wales;
- (b) consultation with Welsh census users, the Welsh Language Board and liaison with the Welsh Assembly Government;
- (c) the recruitment of bilingual field staff;
- (d) the inclusion of a Welsh language question;
- (e) offering the choice of Welsh language census forms;
- (f) bilingual publicity material;
- (g) Welsh language helpline;
- (h) publicity to encourage people in Wales to record their ethnic identity as Welsh if they wished to do so; and
- (i) the publication of bilingual reports on the results of the Census in Wales to be presented to the National Assembly for Wales.

## Welsh language census forms

In Wales, enumerators were instructed to offer to each household a choice of a census form either in English or in Welsh. Individual forms and Communal Establishment forms were also available in both languages. There were, nevertheless,

some reported incidences where enumerators did not always have an appropriate Welsh language version of a form readily available on request. While such reports were much reduced compared with the previous census, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is aware of the need to further improve the availability of, and access to, forms in either language version in any future census.

To meet the commitment to make Welsh language census forms available, 1,720,000 were printed. Of these some 43,800 forms were returned.

## Publicity

Wherever possible, information leaflets and publicity material were produced either in bilingual format or in separate Welsh/English language versions.

Radio and television advertising was provided in Welsh and English versions and live and recorded interviews with the Registrar General were also broadcast. Following consultation with the Welsh Language Board a separate Census slogan was developed. A Welsh version of the 'Count Me In' slogan – 'Cymru'n cyfrif' (Wales Counts) was used for the general advertising campaign and in all Census promotions and public relations activities.

Working with the Census Manager for Wales (see *Census Manager for Wales* below) and a Cardiff-based public relations company specialising in Welsh media, the advertising campaign was designed to underline the ONS commitment to running a successful and user-friendly Census in Wales, sensitive to linguistic and national differences. As part of the general publicity campaign television advertisements included a Welsh scene, Welsh language voice-overs, Welsh captions and end frames. These were supplemented by additional advertisements in both the pre-Census and post-back phase on the HTV and S4C television channels, and in Welsh and English language radio advertising in the post-back phase, as well as the use of Welsh posters.

In the event, extra measures were needed to counteract adverse publicity generated by the concerns over a lack of a 'Welsh' tick-box in the ethnic group question (see *Welsh identity and the Welsh tick-box issue* below). A combination of advertising, public relations events and briefings helped to provide reassurance and underline the importance of the Census to Wales. A special advertising campaign was mounted based on the simple concept and headline 'Tell Us You're Welsh and We'll

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*Count You As Welsh*. This was designed to draw attention to the Welsh write-in option. Advertisements were placed in some 25 English and Welsh language national and regional titles. In addition, sheet posters and banners were produced to support individual photo-opportunities. The Registrar General also pledged to undertake a special report on Welsh identity.

At the same time prompt and decisive action to the unfolding Foot and Mouth crisis, particularly in Wales, enabled ONS to deal effectively with this potentially difficult and damaging situation.

Two particular initiatives provided an opportunity to engage the Welsh media with the Census.

The first, *CensusAtSchool* was an educational project sponsored jointly by the Royal Statistical Society, Nottingham Trent University and ONS. It was designed to stimulate interest in statistics, encourage discussion, debate and understanding in the classroom, capture media interest and prompt benign or even fun coverage of the Census two months in advance of Census Day. The project enjoyed a good level of participation by Welsh schools and offered a Welsh language version of questionnaires and worksheets.

The second, *The Census Bicentenary2001* exploited the media interest in the 200th anniversary of the census in England and Wales and the association of previous censuses with social, local and family history, the links with which were felt to be particularly strong in Wales.

All these activities helped to promote the particularly high level of post-back of census forms in Wales. But although the publicity campaign was seen as a success in Wales it is recognised that it would have been more helpful to have had a locally based press officer for Wales working more directly with, and for, the Census Manager in Wales.

## Question on the Welsh Language

As in previous censuses, the 2001 Census in Wales included a question on Welsh language for the purpose of collecting information to measure the knowledge of the language, the planning of bilingual education provision and to monitor the effect of support for the language.

The wording of the question was changed slightly from that adopted in the 1991 Census in order to provide greater consistency with the corresponding question on Gaelic in Scotland and Irish in Northern Ireland.

Despite calls from the Welsh Language Board and others to do so, the 2001 Census question was not extended to England, primarily on the grounds that there was an insufficient policy requirement to do so. The information was not shown to be necessary, for example, for the purposes of resource allocation or the provision of services outside Wales.

The wording of the question was:

Can you understand, speak, read, or write Welsh?

- all of the boxes that apply.
- Understand spoken Welsh
- Speak Welsh
- Read Welsh
- Write Welsh
- None of the above

This reflected a slight difference to the question in 1991 and attempted to measure an *ability* rather than the *practice* by changing from a 'Do you .....?' to a 'Can you.....?' question, since it had been generally accepted that such a question provided a better general measure of knowledge of Welsh.

## Recruitment of bilingual field staff

Emphasis was put on recruiting, wherever possible, field staff who were bilingual, particularly in areas with greater proportions of Welsh-speaking population.

Enumerators in Wales had more difficult task, with the extra responsibility of working in two different languages and dealing with two different versions of the Census form. It was observed that Welsh enumerators had to have particularly strong shoulders to bear the weight of a Census bag that necessarily contained twice the number of forms than those in England.

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## Census Manager for Wales

In addition to the recruitment of a traditional, bilingual field force to conduct the Census in Wales, the Registrar General appointed, for the first time, a Census Manager for Wales, who was effectively in charge of the census operations in Wales, but with Census HQ retaining full responsibility for the policy and direction of the Census. The appointment was partly in response to calls, since the 1991 Census, for a separate Registrar General for Wales.

The role and functions of the Census Manager for Wales were to:

- be the first point of contact with the media on the Census in Wales;
- join in discussions with the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Language Society;
- advise ONS on language issues in respect of the need for bilingual field staff and their recruitment, and their instructions and training material;
- assist with recruitment and training of Census Area Managers in Wales;
- take both a proactive and a reactive role on Welsh issues; and
- to respond immediately to problems and questions arising before, and during, the enumeration.

Thus the Census Manager for Wales played a key public relations role in Wales, including contact with central and local government organisations and the National Assembly.

The post was advertised in January 2000 through Chief Executives of Unitary Authorities and Health Authorities, Chief Constables and the Chief Statistician at the National Assembly for Wales. It was also advertised through the press in the *Western Mail*, *Liverpool Daily Echo* (both bi-lingual adverts) and in Welsh in *Y Cymro* and *Y Golwg*.

English and Welsh application forms were issued to the 93 applicants who could choose which language version to complete. However, it was mandatory to complete the question on what the applicant would bring to the post, in Welsh, to prove their ability to communicate effectively in Welsh. This quality was considered to be essential. Twenty-six completed applications were returned. The Welsh versions were translated by the Welsh Language Board.

The interview panel, including a representative from the Welsh Language Board, saw seven candidates. The successful candidate was in post from 3 April 2000 to 30 June 2001.

## Consultation with users in Wales

As part of its extensive consultation programme on the 2001 Census, starting in 1995, ONS conducted both joint and separate consultation with census users and other interested parties in Wales.

Consultation covered data needs, the plans for the content and format of the census questions, definitions and classifications, the conduct of the Census, and output requirements, with emphasis on those issues of particular relevance and importance to Wales.

The key players in the consultation programme were the then Welsh Office, subsequently the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Census Users Network Group and the Welsh Language Board. Consultation was conducted through a mix of Advisory Group, Working Group and User Group meetings, Workshops, public 'Roadshows' and bilateral meetings.

Arising from the concern about the perceived lack of public consultation in Wales on the 'Welsh' tick box issue (see below), discussions are currently in progress between ONS and the Welsh Assembly Government on how the National Assembly for Wales can be given a more formal consultative role in deciding the form and content of the census in Wales (see below).

## Census Rehearsal in Wales

For previous censuses it has been necessary to conduct major census tests in a selected sample of areas in order to assess both public reaction to the wording of questions and developments in enumeration procedures. For the first time, testing prior to the 2001 Census included test areas in Wales. Parts of Ceredigion (some 8,100 households) and Gwynedd (9,200 households) were included in the 1999 Rehearsal sample, where the effects of new field procedures and questions were assessed.

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The selected areas were chosen to represent a wide range of household types but particularly because the population there contained higher than average proportions of Welsh speakers. This enabled the use of both Welsh and English language forms to be thoroughly tested.

## Welsh identity and the Welsh tick-box issue

Shortly after the approval of the 2001 Census questions in Parliament (March 2000), articles began to appear in the *Daily Post* and the *Western Mail*, and representations were made to ONS, expressing concern and dismay that the wording of the ethnic group question did not provide a tick-box response category to enable people in Wales specifically to indicate their national identity (in a way similar to that which was being offered to people in Scotland to allow them to record themselves as 'Scottish').

A case for such a 'Welsh' tick-box had not arisen during the extensive consultation process on questions to be asked in the Census nor as a result of the proposals in the White Paper published in March 1999, and neither during the Census Rehearsal held in parts of mid and north Wales in 1999 nor during the Parliamentary process. However, ONS took account of the issues raised and responded promptly and positively by underlining the importance of the Census to the people of Wales and encouraging them to take part.

Though it was then too late to change the question on the 2001 Census form, in response, the Registrar General and National Statistician issued a statement in October 2000 acknowledging the concerns expressed by the people of Wales and offering to organise a publicity campaign to alert people in Wales to the option of writing-in 'Welsh' in answer to the ethnic group question. The Registrar General assured the people in Wales that if they indicated on the Census form that they were Welsh they would be counted as such (see *Publicity* above) and the results would be published. He held meetings in Wales with key users and also promised to reconsider the wording of the ethnic group question in consultations on future censuses.

He also stated that ONS would undertake to collect information on Welsh identity – in addition to the ethnic group information - as part of an expanded Labour Force Survey in Wales starting at around the same time as the 2001 Census. This information, he announced, would be combined with the information to be collected from the Census to give an unprecedented level of detail about Welsh identity across every

part of Wales. (Subsequently a report *Focus on Wales: Its People* was published in January 2004.)

Nevertheless, some public and political concerns remained, and, in particular, the *Western Mail* continued their campaign by promoting and making available a sticker with their own version of the ethnic group question which included a separate 'Welsh' response tick-box.

ONS had indicated that it would not be possible to process automatically any forms with such a sticker but that it would accept any such forms as being compliant with the spirit of the statutory requirements of the Census Act. ONS, however, did not want to lose the otherwise proper information recorded in these returns, and assessed the feasibility of alternative means of processing, separately, the information recorded on these forms - and, in fact, subsequently did so by contracting for an additional service at a cost.

In the event, 3739 forms were returned with the 'Welsh' stickers attached, and ultimately the census response rates in Wales were generally very high – indeed a little higher overall than in England. There was no evidence to suggest that there was any significant reduction in response as a result of the tick-box issue.

Since the 2001 Census, ONS has prepared advice and guidance on the classifications to be used, generally, in collecting information on identity and ethnicity from national and local surveys and ethnic monitoring exercises. This includes a recommended question that contains separate tick-box categories for respondents in Wales to indicate their national identity as:

- Welsh
- English
- Scottish
- Irish
- British
- Other

The same categories, but in different orders, are recommended in England and Scotland. The user requirements for information from such a question in the 2011 Census will be considered when consultation on the content of the questions starts in 2004.

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## Census output for Wales

Reports on the Census in England and Wales are published under section 4(1) of the Census Act and are required to be laid before Parliament at Westminster.

There is no such statutory requirement or obligation to lay reports with respect to Wales similarly before the National Assembly. However, arrangements were made for NAW members to be advised of the release of all such reports and for copies to be made available, simultaneously, through the NAW Library.

All such reports are produced in bilingual format, and include to date:

- First results for Wales;
- Key Statistics for Local Authorities in Wales;
- Key Statistics for National Assembly for Wales Constituencies; and
- Report on the Welsh Language.

In addition, the National Report for England and Wales (in English only) was similarly presented to the National Assembly.

Summary information on the Welsh language and ethnic groups was published as part of the Key Statistics for local authorities in February 2003. Further counts on Welsh language and ethnic group followed in June 2003 with Standard Output Area level tables.

The bilingual *Report on the Welsh Language* was published and laid before Parliament on 10 February 2004. It brought together a range of published Census results on the Welsh language and provided profiles of Welsh language skills for Communities, which is key information for policies on the Welsh language.

The ONS Ethnicity and Identity Branch have also issued a paper comparing sources of information on Welsh language skills. The paper compares the data [Welsh language skills](#) collected in the 2001 Census with those collected in the Welsh Local Labour Force Survey (WLLFS), and provides possible explanations for the differences between the two sources.

The report that was announced in the National Statistician's statement in October 2000 was published on 8 January 2004 statement as the *Focus on Wales: Its People*. The report combines information from the Welsh Labour Force Survey and the 2001 Census and paints a picture of the people of Wales, their characteristics, sense of national identity, ethnic diversity and Welsh language skills, as well as looking at the Welsh-born living elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Additionally, bi-lingual templates for the Standard Tables for Wales - which had not been published in Welsh - were prepared in collaboration with the Welsh Census Users Network Group so that the tables could be generated in Welsh.

## Welsh devolution

Welsh devolution does not extend to census matters as it does in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Consequently there will be some need to clarify why certain census issues, in addition to those related to the ethnic group classification, which may be treated differently in Scotland and Northern Ireland (such as, for example, disclosure control, use of unadjusted figures, etc) are not similarly handled in Wales.

ONS and the Welsh Assembly are considering the means of establishing how best the Assembly may take a more formal role in agreeing the format and content of future census forms in Wales. ONS' preferred means is to revise the Statistics Concordat between ONS and the National Assembly to provide for such a formal role without recourse to new census legislation, but a number of alternative options are also currently being explored.

However these more formal arrangements develop, there will continue to be close liaison with the Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh local authorities and other utility/ service providers, and the Welsh Language Board to define the requirements for information from, and the form and content of, the 2011 Census in Wales. Open channels of communication will be maintained with all key contacts in Wales, and particularly the National Assembly, in the intercensal period, to ensure that data needs are best met through appropriate form content and design.