

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

## Data Collection Support: Executive Summary

March 2002

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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

## Project Objective

The aim of the project was to support the enumeration of the population of England and Wales by:

- specifying and developing operational systems and procedures for the recruitment and payment of Census field staff;
- promoting and raising awareness of the 2001 Census through a community liaison initiative which would also ensure that those with practical difficulties and concerns were assisted.

This executive summary is written in isolation from other evaluation reports. The lessons learned so far from data collection support will need to be reviewed against the final outcome of the results of processing the data collected.

## Methodology

### Recruitment

The process of delivery and collection of completed Census forms was conducted by a temporary field work force. The Census Office directly recruited 103 Census Area Managers (CAMs) in England and Wales and facilitated the recruitment of over 70,000 other field staff. CAMs recruited their Census District Managers (CDMs) who were then responsible for recruiting their Census Team Leaders (CTLs), Enumerators and support staff. The Census Office also recruited the Census Manager for Wales.

Websites were used for the first time to recruit posts below CAM level.

The CTL and Enumerator recruitment was supported by a high profile publicity launch, which covered ten London Boroughs and 13 cities in England and Wales.

### Pay

The fees for each field staff grade were calculated using an estimate of the hours the job was expected to take and the agreed hourly pay rate. Separate rates were set for London, Metropolitan and National areas. A

piece rate or payment based on hours worked was paid for tasks for which the fee could not be determined in advance. Provision was also made for additional payments where extra tasks were undertaken or where significantly more hours had been worked than had been estimated.

In accordance with the Working Time Directive, CAMs, CDMs and CTLs, i.e. grades employed for over 13 weeks, were entitled to paid leave.

Provision of the 2001 Payroll Services was contracted out for the first time in a Census. The payroll system was based on the submission of properly authorised claim forms at specified points during the operation. The claim forms were processed using scanning and keying from image.

### Community Liaison

The Community Liaison initiative was set up in 1997 to make contact with community and minority groups in order to:

- promote and raise awareness of the 2001 Census;
- provide reassurance about the aims of the Census;
- encourage participation;
- identify ways of providing assistance with form completion.

A large number of supporting documents and materials were produced as a result of the consultation exercise and were well received. Census literature was reproduced in 26 languages, the Census Helpline provided advisors conversant in 13 languages and other documents were printed in Braille and Large Print. Additionally, audio and video tapes provided information about the Census and the Census questions to those who had aural, visual and learning difficulties.

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## Assessment and Lessons Learned

### Recruitment

Overall, the field staff recruitment exercise can be considered a success because it resulted in sufficient people being recruited to enable the Census to be taken. However, recruitment in London and other city areas proved very difficult and some staff were recruited very late. In some cases, field staff had to take on additional workloads because suitable recruits could not be found. There was also a higher than expected turnover of field staff at the local managers' and Enumerators' levels.

The principal lessons learned can be summarised as follows:

- the need for flexibility to review pay rates and fees to help resolve recruitment problems in "difficult" areas;
- the need to review the timing of local advertising;
- there are key areas of the recruitment process, such as closing dates for applications, one-to-one interviewing and recruitment of spouses, relatives and friends, which need to be addressed.

### Pay

Payments were made on time to over 80% of the field force, but this significant achievement was overshadowed by the fact that the remaining field staff were not paid on due dates. The problems could be attributed to a number of causes.

The principal lessons learned can be summarised as follows:

- the need for a thorough options study in advance of advertising the Payroll Services;
- the need for comprehensive discussion with Inland Revenue prior to finalising the pay strategy;

- that Payroll Services should be procured earlier to ensure that the system is fully tested, potential problems and solutions are identified and robust contingency plans are in place.

### Community Liaison

The scale and diversity of organisations representing groups within the community meant that it was not possible to consult every group separately, however, the Census Office tried to ensure that information was available to all.

Feedback to the initiative was generally very positive and it was seen as a success in that it covered a very wide range of community and minority groups and national charities who represented many different sectors of the population. However, there was strong feeling from within the RNIB that consultation had begun too late and that the arrangements which had been made did not go far enough to ensure that the needs of the visually impaired had been catered for.

## Conclusion

### Recruitment

Based on previous experience there was an expectation that recruitment would prove difficult, particularly for Enumerators in inner city areas, and this was the case. However, the difficulty was much more widespread than expected at Enumerator level despite a large publicity campaign.

Changes in society, employment law and public perceptions are likely to exacerbate problems associated with the recruitment of field staff (particularly at Enumerator, or equivalent, level). These problems will have to be addressed in the context of the Census field operation in any future Census.

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## Pay

Overall, the payment of fees and expenses to Census field staff can be considered a success as all staff were eventually paid through the payroll, however, the problems with the operation of the system will need to be addressed for the future. In particular, the pay system design and accompanying forms were perceived as too bureaucratic and will need to be reviewed. The pay strategy also needs to be in place much earlier so that the design of the Payroll Services can be finalised with a minimum of subsequent change.

The budget for field staff pay was too tight. If a larger field staff pay budget is unlikely to be forthcoming for a future Census, a complete review of Census procedures will need to be undertaken to simplify and reduce the tasks to be undertaken.

## Community Liaison

The Community Liaison initiative was successful and will need to be repeated in the future.

However, the 2001 experience has highlighted the need to initiate contacts much earlier. In particular, the Census Office will need to review its procedures for the enumeration of minority groups, working closely with relevant organisations to adopt a best practice approach and to ensure that no sections of the community are disadvantaged by the Census methodology.

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Census Topics	Target Dates for Release
Legislation	Published
Non-Compliance (Executive Summary Only)	Published
Data Needs	Published
Geography	Published (Executive Summary)
Publicity	Published
Data Collection Development	Published
Data Collection Support	Published
Census Coverage Survey	Published
Processing	Published
Annex: Quality of Data Capture and Coding	Published
Downstream Processing	Published (Executive Summary)
Data Quality	
- Question non-response rates	Published
- Disclosure Control (Executive Summary only)	Published
- Data Validation (Executive Summary only)	Published
Edit & Imputation	Published
One Number Census	
- Quality Assurance	Published
- Lessons learnt (Executive Summary only)	Published
Output Policy	Published (Executive Summary)
Output Production	
- Part 1: Review of Output Released to date	Published (Executive Summary)
- Part 2: including Sample of Anonymised Records (SARs)/Origin Destination Matrices	Published
Census Access	Published
Programme Management	Published (Executive Summary)
Quality Report	Published
General Report	Published

Please note that the dates for release of individual evaluation reports noted above are target dates, and therefore subject to change. For the latest information please visit [www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/reviewevaluation.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/reviewevaluation.asp)