

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

December 2002

## Publicity: Evaluation Report

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.

Content	Page
Introduction.....	2
Objectives.....	2
Methodology Development of Campaign Strategy.....	2
Implementation of the Publicity Campaign...	3
Campaign Support.....	9
Lessons Learned.....	10
Conclusion.....	12

Census Customer Services  
ONS  
Titchfield  
Fareham  
Hants PO15 5RR

**Telephone:** ++44 (0) 1329 813800  
**Fax:** ++44 (0) 1329 813587  
**Minicom:** ++44 (0) 1329 813669  
**E-mail:** census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk  
**Website:** www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

## Introduction

The 2001 Census publicity campaign in England and Wales covered both paid and free media activity during the period October 2000 to May 2001. The main aims of the campaign were:

- to ensure that there was a critical level of awareness of the Census throughout the population; and
- to influence positively those who might be suspicious or resistant to taking part.

As well as the mainstream campaign effort, tactical initiatives were run to target those groups known to be especially liable to underenumeration. Campaign activity promoted the key messages of confidentiality and the social benefits of the Census, which had been shown by research to be the most influential and important to the public.

The information presented in this report has been written in isolation and takes no account of other aspects of the Census programme.

## Objectives

The 2001 publicity campaign was designed to facilitate maximum coverage and to reduce differential underenumeration. Although the Census includes everyone, those thought to be apathetic were identified as primary targets. As a result media and public relations activities concentrated on those aged 18 to 34 and over 55, underenumerated groups such as students and babies, as well as people living in inner city areas. Welsh speakers and 'Good Citizens' constituted other key groups.

In all cases the main aims were to achieve awareness, understanding and commitment in order to ensure that as many people as possible answered the questions accurately and posted back their Census forms.

## Methodology: Development of Campaign Strategy

The development of the strategy was based on experience from the 1991 Census, results of strategic research and a pilot publicity campaign in Lincoln as part of the 1999 Census Rehearsal. This early work highlighted the importance of a number of key factors which were to become an integral part of the campaign including:

- the link between awareness of the Census and public participation;
- the need for a uniform and integrated approach combining both a core message and a creative concept; and
- the importance of the local dimension.

The importance of developing a clear and consistent message was recognised from the outset. Staff from the Census Media Initiatives Unit were keen to develop a concept or Census brand that would link the advertising campaign with all aspects of the Census operation thereby triggering public recognition and acceptance. The Census brand was included on the public forms, the information leaflet, enumerators' shoulder bags and the Census webpages. At the same time they realised the advantages of using a multiplicity of communication routes and promotional activities to widen access and penetration. In particular, they were keen to develop partnerships that would help multiply the Census message and give extra reach and impetus to compensate for budgetary constraints. This approach allowed us to spread activity across a range of media, target light or alternative media users, influence groups resistant to the Census, as well as gain credibility through association.

National and regional media coverage were given equal priority. The emphasis on regional media took account of practical issues most notably the ability to command more space, lead the story more effectively, take advantage of high aggregate readership figures as well as the fact that people tend to trust the regional media more than the national. In addition, the Census lends itself to a local perspective and a key part of our strategy was to underline the importance of the Census and to illustrate this using stories of local human interest

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

and meaning. The fact that local media would be likely to give a more factual less partisan account of Census activities inspired a systematic approach to regional coverage. This included the preparation of information and materials with a regional focus, training and support for Census Area Managers to enable them to take on public relations activities, development of national press events with regional possibilities and a partnership with local radio.

The main elements of the campaign were:

**Advertising** - a concentrated burst of national television advertising designed to complement and support the enumeration process throughout April 2001 and stimulate the post-back of forms in the immediate aftermath of Census Day;

**Regional Public Relations** - local media coverage of the Census in the period running up to Census Day through the organisation of a public relations calendar with which Census Area Managers in the field could coordinate local public relations activities;

**National Public Relations and Promotions** - overlaid the regional public relations events and consisted of a centrally organised push on field force recruitment as well as other public relations initiatives tied to key events in the Census operation;

**Partnerships** - included work with the media in the form of BBC Local Radio and Coronation Street as well as collaboration with a range of public sector and commercial organisations;

**Wales Counts** - a special mix of media designed to support the write-in of 'Welsh' in response to the ethnic group question, to reinforce the positive aspects of the Census in Wales and to underline the importance of the Census for the people of Wales.

These activities were supported by the preparation of factsheets, information packs, question and answer briefings, regional data, historical facts, photographs and other material.

The basis of the strategy was to organise a series of events that would keep the Census in the news, promote its virtues as a community enterprise, highlight its benefits and focus on the local dimension. The cumulative effect of these activities would increase awareness and help to shape attitudes.

## Implementation of the Publicity Campaign

The main elements of the publicity campaign will be considered in turn together with an overall assessment of their impact and effectiveness.

### Advertising

The key features were the development and implementation of the 'Count Me In' slogan, the raised hand and the 'handprint' logo put forward in a series of proposals by M and C Saatchi. The 'Count Me In' slogan was designed to present the Census in upbeat celebratory terms in the form of an invitation to take part in a big national event. A key role of this creative idea was to engender a climate of mass and willing participation in which each and every person counts. The slogan in conjunction with the raised hand provided a unifying theme reflecting community diversity as well as the areas of life affected by the Census. These devices were used to convey the social benefits messages and provided a focus for the advertising campaign as well as being used on the Census forms and other key documents.

A comprehensive advertising package using television, radio, print and other media was designed to increase levels of public awareness, complement and support the enumeration process and the post-back of forms. At the same time advertising focusing on specific groups and areas was used to support the community liaison programme, reinforce coverage of ethnic groups and stimulate response.

Television was the key component and advertising was designed to raise awareness and underline social benefits without provoking cynicism or being seen as too worthy or governmental. One of the main requirements was to use real people rather than actors in situations which

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

were interesting and represented national diversity. Our proposals were designed to reach mainstream and niche audiences using a range of terrestrial, satellite and cable channels. Special attention was given to scheduling in order to secure air time during programmes popular with key groups.

Other complementary activities included a poster campaign. The raised hand posture was translated into a series of freeze-frame photographic portraits of representatives from key groups. In addition poster executions were used as a basis for insertions in the ethnic press including Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, Turkish, Greek and Irish titles. In addition, a significant amount of free coverage was generated by the ethnic minority media most notably during the recruitment period.

**Impact** - no research was undertaken to assess the public's reception of the advertising campaign. Nevertheless, we believe the television advertisements with their specially commissioned theme tune had an upbeat and motivating feel. Dominic Mills paid tribute to them in the media section of the Daily Telegraph on 10 April 2001 for being a 'simple and visual reminder of everyone's public duty'. The Census advertisements were delivered across the full range of television media. The initial burst of advertising, designed to coincide with the first visit from enumerators, is estimated to have reached two thirds of the population. Whereas there were 3,080 showings of the initial ad in the period up to Census Day, a further 1,305 spots were recorded in the subsequent post-back phase. In addition, there were particular scheduling successes when the ads appeared during popular programmes such as 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire', 'Coronation Street', 'Emmerdale', 'London's Burning' and 'The Bill'. In view of limited resources this level of exposure was greater than anticipated.

The poster ads had a positive effect in underlining the participation of key groups such as elderly ladies and young Afro-Caribbean males. The imagery used for the posters transferred well to the ethnic press. The scale and promptness of the post-back response throughout the country suggested that the weight of advertising and its concentration during April were sufficient. Moreover, the range of advertising underlined our commitment to inclusiveness.

## National and Regional Public Relations and Promotions

National and regional publicity events were used to extend the campaign. Our approach was to invest heavily in the planning and implementation of set piece events but also to exploit any opportunities that arose to reinforce news coverage. This involved a close working relationship with the Press Office, the active participation of Census Area Managers at regional level and, where appropriate, deployment of specialised public relations agencies.

Our strategy was to use a series of public relations events to increase the public's awareness of the Census and the general perception of its aims. These activities were designed to have a cumulative effect by keeping the Census name and brand in the public eye. These milestone events were pitched at a level that would command national media interest but were also designed to be used locally by Census Area Managers or the local media. Each event or initiative was designed to gain coverage and to communicate key messages. Every story was used to inform people that the Census was coming, to emphasise the importance of being counted in and to explain that it was confidential.

A public relations calendar was developed, built around a series of key events including the recruitment of Census Area Managers and Census Enumerators, the Census at School, Census Bicentenary, Census Campaign Launch and Census Babies Initiative. Each of these will be examined in turn.

**Recruitment of Census Area Managers (September - October 2000)** - the appointment of Census Area Managers was used to inaugurate the series of key events, to encourage applications for Census District Manager posts and to initiate contact with representatives of the local media.

**Impact** - between 150 and 200 feature articles appeared in local papers. These were complemented by 20 local radio interviews.

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

## **Recruitment of Census Enumerators (January 2001)**

- this was designed to exploit media interest in the job creation aspect of the Census, to advertise 63,000 vacancies for Census Enumerators and to increase general awareness. Media coverage was promoted through the organisation of media events in London and in areas throughout the country. The 'recruitment blitz' adopted the pink Census hand as the 'hero' of photo and filming opportunities. At each major event professional 'sales' teams dressed in corporate canary yellow posed for the camera and distributed information. For each locality the media were provided with regionalised information packs.

The main launch in London was designed to be highly visible to newspapers and media owners at Canary Wharf. National media and press agencies were well represented. Meetings with reporters from The Times and the Daily Telegraph were supplemented by telephone briefings for other national newspapers. Local London media were invited to specific recruitment 'cold spots'.

This formula was repeated with local Census Area Managers and other Census staff at thirteen venues across the country including Cardiff, Swansea, Southampton, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds and Birmingham. Events were promoted to local television and newspapers, covered by BBC Local Radio, commercial radio and the ethnic media. Regionalised information packs provided Census Area Managers with a ready-made opportunity to generate further publicity.

**Impact** - we estimate that print media coverage of this initiative generated over 300 individual articles which reached over 19,000,000 people in England. This was reinforced by radio and television broadcasts including extensive coverage by BBC Local Radio and commercial radio. The recruitment issue was highlighted in all major local papers as well as by the ethnic minority media which emphasised the need to recruit from ethnic minority groups and used this opportunity to feature general items on the Census in a positive and factual way.

In terms of public response over 250,000 calls were made to the recruitment hotline number and over 1,000,000 requests for enumerator application forms

were received. As a jobs news story and the first real shot in the Census campaign the launch was effective in obtaining a positive mass media focus on the Census and generating extensive coverage. The roadshow provided a strongly branded and entertaining spectacle which the media liked. In addition the work undertaken by the Central Office for Information in promoting the story to ethnic news outlets and commercial radio was a success.

**Census At School (February 2001)** - an educational project sponsored by the Royal Statistical Society, Nottingham Trent University and the Office for National Statistics. 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. Analysis of results of a carefully designed on-line questionnaire provided both national and regional information and a news release was prepared reflecting the differences in findings. All Census Area Managers were sent details and encouraged to explore local news stories with participating schools. Arrangements were made with BBC Local Radio, Independent Radio News and the Press Association to ensure that we were fully able to exploit a national story with a strong local dimension.

**Impact** - national media coverage exceeded our expectations. The story was carried in most daily national newspapers including The Sun and The Daily Mail. In addition, regional newspaper and radio coverage was extensive and it was reported by the BBC children's programme Newsround as well as by BBC Look East.

**The Census Bicentenary (March 2001)** - this was designed to exploit media interest in the 200th anniversary of the England and Wales Census and the association of previous censuses with social, local and family history. This was achieved by the preparation and presentation to both national and regional media of high quality historical information from old Census forms and public records. Working in partnership with the Family Record Centre, three specially commissioned Census historians and Census Customer Services, a body of information was generated and made available

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

on the website and in pack form. Census Area Managers responded positively to requests for names of locally famous nineteenth century celebrities and properties. This enabled us to obtain historic Census forms for a range of famous individuals and properties which provided a focus for local photo-opportunities.

As part of the BBC Local Radio partnership the bicentenary was highlighted as an upcoming event in the Census calendar providing local colour and interest for BBC local radio stations. Close liaison and a meeting with the Press Association ensured their interest in a rich source of local news. At the same time direct mail techniques were used to distribute information to major regional media outlets, other interested organisations and to Census Area Managers. In addition, researchers were commissioned to provide interesting facts and anecdotes about the conduct of previous censuses and to explain their importance for social history. This was reinforced by a number of radio interviews by Census historians, Census users and genealogists including Sir Donald Sinden.

**Impact** - we were initially disappointed at the failure to replicate the national coverage achieved by the Census At School initiative. Nevertheless, The Times and The Daily Express both ran substantial pieces and The Daily Mirror ran their planned feature at a later date. Most national titles used the material at least once in the run up to Census Day and the story was carried by Independent Radio News and BBC Radio 4. In addition, there was widespread coverage in the regional media.

**Census Campaign (April 2001)** - this was a major event designed to publicise the beginning of the Census enumeration process and the start of the national advertising campaign with an eye-catching publicity stunt representing our core values of teamwork and inclusiveness. The main event was designed to attract national media interest but was also intended to roll-out into the regions. Key elements included a giant cake in the shape of England and Wales, baked by members of the armed services (representing team work and professionalism), using ingredients provided by the project sponsors Asda and fronted by celebrity chef Ainsley Harriot.

The national launch at the ONS in Drummond Gate London took place on 2 April 2001. A well attended media briefing preceded the main filming and photo-opportunity with Ainsley Harriot and the 1991 Census baby Jade Whitelaw. The event was replicated in ten Asda stores across the country including Gateshead, York, Wolverhampton, Peterborough and Plymouth. These regional events, involving local Census Area Managers, service personnel and local dignitaries, were publicised and photographed in the local media.

**Impact** - although the national event was well attended with four television crews and representatives from the main national papers the event was denied its true potential by other news stories including the cancellation of the local elections. Some national papers ran articles inspired by the event and a notable success was a full-page item on Jade Whitelaw in The Daily Mail.

**Census Babies Initiative (April 2001)** - a series of events designed to exploit the public relations potential of the estimated 2,000 babies born on Census Day by offering each of them a free 'Count Me In' sleepsuit and arranging mother and baby photo-opportunities at both the national and local levels. Apart from raising general awareness, this initiative was designed to ensure that babies born on Census Day were included on a Census form. National and regional events were set up to capture local television interest.

The national event, at the maternity unit at St Thomas's and Guy's Hospital in London, was used as a forum for many interviews with the Census Director. In addition, Census baby photocalls were held in a number of maternity hospitals across the country including Southampton General Hospital, The Royal Victoria Infirmary Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham City Hospital and St Mary's Hospital Manchester.

**Impact** - the event at St Thomas's received national television coverage and three national daily papers included baby photos. In Southampton our initiative became part of a live 'docu-soap' broadcast nationally. Regional coverage included both television and press. In addition, a number of Census Area Managers liaised with local hospitals and set up photo-opportunities. Of the 2,000 baby sleepsuits produced, 1,300 were given away.

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

These key events were supplemented by a number of other activities designed to overcome recruitment problems in particular areas, publicise the distribution and post-back of Census forms. Despite the limited success of the recruitment initiative, the delivery and post-back of Census forms as well as follow-up activities by Census enumerators received extensive coverage. Furthermore, the creation of a special Census poem by the Poet Laureate Andrew Motion together with details about Census processing technology generated some useful publicity.

## Partnerships

Partnerships were essential for extending coverage and overcoming budgetary constraints. Agencies, mainly in the public relations field with established contacts and specialist knowledge played a decisive role in making and exploiting connections. Key partnerships included those with BBC Local Radio, Coronation Street and The Sun.

**BBC Local Radio** - the partnership with BBC Local Radio enabled us to exploit the potential of the Census as a local story and make effective use of specially selected 'Radio Census Area Managers'. At the same time it allowed the BBC to enhance its reputation as a community based broadcaster and to use their corporate branding on the Census Information Leaflet. A carefully co-ordinated campaign was conducted involving 38 stations in England as well as stations in Wales. This included the briefing and training of Census Area Managers as well as a presentation to the annual conference of BBC Local Radio station managers in January 2001.

The partnership guaranteed 11 Census slots across the network at set times, including 9:15 am during the period around Census Day (26 April to 3 May 2001). In addition, there was coverage of the recruitment campaign and the Census Bicentenary as well as regional BBC Ceefax information providing supporting Census material. Project leaders within the BBC facilitated regional coverage by providing centrally produced source material in the form of two pre-recorded packages containing trails and features such as interviews with key Census personnel on aspects of the Census operation, humorous sketches using celebrities, awareness raising mail-outs to stations on key events including the Census At School, the Census Campaign

Launch and the Census Babies Initiative. These events were supplemented by 'down-the-line' live interviews organised by the BBC General News Service in London, connecting Census spokespersons with stations around the country on specific topical issues.

**Impact** - stations made full and repeated use of package material. Broadcasts covered general issues, topical events such as foot and mouth, questions from the public and interviews. Records assembled for April alone indicate 250 separate occasions where a sustained reference to the Census was made on BBC Local Radio. Census coverage included drivetime news, breakfast shows, phone-ins, live interviews by presenters with regular slots and magazine programmes. In addition to addressing mainstream issues, individual stations adopted a local angle as in the case of the effect of foot and mouth on the Census in the North East and the South West, the concern over recruitment in London as well as high and low post-back response in specific areas.

BBC Local Radio reaches an estimated 19% of the population and has a demographic make-up that corresponded with our strategic aims of reaching older people and those from lower social groups. We believe that this initiative helped to reach elderly women who were previously under-enumerated.

This was an extremely worthwhile and productive partnership in terms of the large volume of air-time generated, the platform offered to Census Area Managers to get across corporate messages, address local issues and counter media disinformation as well as respond to unexpected issues of legitimate concern such as the non-receipt of Census forms. It conferred a real sense of the Census being an open and community based organisation.

## The Soaps

We wished to introduce a Census story line or product placement of Census publicity material in one or more of the mainstream television or radio soaps and appointed Entertainment Marketing to secure the relevant contacts. This company was able to secure major exposure on the nation's main soaps including a storyline and scripted references which featured in ten episodes of Coronation Street between 28 March and 4 May 2001.

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

**Impact** - Each episode of Coronation Street commands audiences of up to 17,000,000 and Census references and other material accounted for over 13 minutes of air time. In addition, Census material featured on Brookside, EastEnders, Emmerdale and Hollyoaks.

## The Sunsus

Following signs of interest from The Sun, public relations agency Bell Pottinger were commissioned to implement their proposal to encourage the editorial team to run their own 'Sunsus'. While readers were encouraged to fill in the 'Sunsus' by a £30,000 prize kitty of 'Great British holidays for life', the Office for National Statistics was able to influence coverage of the Census and editorial comment. There were two key stages to this partnership. On Saturday 21 April a double page feature was included in the paper and on its website. This included the 'Sunsus' form asking readers to express their preferences on a number of issues including 'Sex versus TV', 'Fish and Chips versus Chicken Tikka Masala' and 'Monarchy versus Republic'. Over 8,000 readers completed the questionnaire. The feature also included positive endorsement of the national Census including an item based on copy we provided headlined 'April 29th Don't Forget To Fill In Your National Census'. On 28 April the Sunsus results were published, with a front-page reference to the Sunsus, a double page news spread and a top item leader column in the paper and on the website. At our request the paper featured answers to frequently asked questions received by the Census Helpline including what number to ring to obtain a Census form.

**Impact** - this initiative provided significant exposure of key Census messages. We estimated that the features could have been read by over 12,000,000 people, around 30% of the adult population of the United Kingdom. However, this makes no allowance for the added value of the supportive editorial and the visibility on the front page. There was no negative Sun coverage about the Census in the six to eight week period leading up to Census Day. Other benefits included spin off broadcast coverage on Jack Dee's Happy Hour and copycat activity by The Mirror on 28 April 2001. The partnership produced a massive net gain in exposure and enhanced credibility.

These major partnerships were complemented by links with the public, private and voluntary sectors including central and local government and employers' organisations. A number of promotions were designed to enlist support, encourage awareness of the Census and publicise job opportunities. Among the techniques used to disseminate information were presentations, direct contact, mailshots, placement of feature articles in professional or in-house magazines and newsletters. These activities were complemented by the production and distribution of thousands of leaflets, posters and briefing packs as well as the preparation of a CD-ROM providing guidance on key employment questions. This communication process was developed further in partnership with a number of internet providers who displayed Census banner advertisements, features and hyperlinks on their sites. There was widespread take up of material by central and local government as well as employers' organisations including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

## Wales Counts

Although it was always our intention to run a parallel campaign in Wales which underlined our commitment to running a Welsh friendly Census, sensitive to linguistic and national differences, extra measures were needed to counteract adverse publicity generated by the exclusion of a 'Welsh' tick box in the ethnic group question.

Following consultation with the Welsh Language Board a separate Census slogan was developed. A Welsh version of the 'Count Me In' slogan - 'Cymru'n cyfiri' or 'Wales Counts' was used for our general advertising campaign, all Census promotions and public relations activities. Working with the Census Manager for Wales and a Cardiff-based public relations company specialising in Welsh media the advertising campaign was designed to underline our concern for, and commitment to, a successful Census in Wales as well as our scrupulous bi-lingual policy. 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 HTV and S4C, Welsh and English language radio advertising in the post-back phase as well as Welsh posters.

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

Publicity about the inadequacies of the ethnic group question and the marginalisation of Wales combined with concern that the media campaign would endanger the Census in Wales necessitated other measures. A special advertising campaign was mounted based on the simple concept and headline 'Tell Us You're Welsh and We'll Count You As Welsh'. This was designed to draw attention to the Welsh write-in option and honour the Registrar General's pledge to undertake a special report on Welsh identity. Advertisements were placed in 25 English and Welsh language national and regional titles. In addition, sheet posters and banners were produced to support individual photo-opportunities. Extra money was made available to cover the cost of this publicity which was designed to address public perception problems in Wales regarding the Census.

These activities were complemented by a series of public relations events including press conferences, briefing meetings and photo-calls, designed to draw the sting of media comment, influence prominent officials and political figures in Wales, put across our position on the 'Welsh' tick-box, reassure people about the Census, our commitment to Wales and general concern. In addition, individual elements of the public relations calendar including the Census At School, the Census Bicentenary, Census Campaign Launch and the Census Babies Initiative were promoted from a Welsh perspective in order to attract non-partisan, human interest media coverage. Editorial staff of the major newspaper groups across Wales were briefed about the Census and the importance of a good return.

**Impact** - the 'Welsh' tick-box was at the top of the news agenda intermittently over a nine month period. Our role was to shape rather than to generate news coverage and in this we succeeded, regaining the initiative in the New Year and creating a series of opportunities that served as an alternative focus to the anti-Census orchestrations. Although not placated on the point of principle the media came to accept the inevitability of the proposed 'British' only tick-box and to recognise the write-in option.

The public relations calendar material was taken up by many local papers and this helped to bring Census-friendly elements into Welsh media coverage. Moreover, the well-attended press conference at Cardiff City Hall in early January 2001 contributed to the success of the

recruitment campaign which was largely unaffected by the tick-box debate. Post-back radio transmissions on 10 English and Welsh speaking stations reached 30% of the population. In addition, live and pre-recorded interviews with the National Statistician on 28 April 2001 received extensive coverage at a critical time.

The Census must be deemed a success as Wales was one of the highest responding areas. This may in part be attributed to the high level of media coverage associated with the tick-box issue and our co-ordinated campaign of advertising and public relations activities.

The Census was challenged on a number of other fronts most notably its potential to contribute to the spread of foot and mouth disease. However, prompt and decisive action proved effective. By providing a clear explanation of procedures for restricting field force movement in rural areas using a press notice, illustrative photograph, television and radio interviews, we were able to offer reassurance and avoid criticism of the Census operation.

## Campaign Support

A substantial investment was made in materials and activities to support the campaign. This included print items, promotional materials, fact sheets, educational information and the Census web pages.

An important element of the campaign was the coherent suite of public print items, including the Information Leaflet, Post-It Note and Reminder Leaflets. These were designed to reinforce core Census messages and the 'Count Me In' campaign concept using a unified and easily recognisable house style. Whereas the Information Leaflet provided the right amount of information on issues of special interest, the distinctive yellow envelopes proved to be effective in filming the post-back operation including the processing of sealed envelopes.

Fact sheets and fact packs including the special educational resources provided for schools were an integral part of the communications strategy. In particular, the Census In School pack proved to be a rich educational resource and was universally praised. Similarly, there was widespread support for the Census At School project with 50,000 pupils completing the

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

on-line questionnaire. This successful idea has been taken up by other countries including Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa.

These activities were complemented by the development of campaign specific web pages whose design and content incorporated standard house colours as well as the 'Count Me In' branding. The site received much positive anecdotal feedback, was a useful adjunct to the recruitment blitz and a vital source of information for journalists and members of the public.

Special promotions were designed to encourage students to complete the Census form at their term-time address and to support the disabled. At the same time other resources were developed including a video, backing footage and photographs. These were used extensively by both the national and regional media. In particular, the video was used as a filler in 2,915 transmissions between January and April 2001 and received widespread critical acclaim being nominated for the 2001 International Visual Communications Association awards.

Despite the time and effort involved the availability of a range of supporting materials was a vital component of the campaign. The consistent use of Census branding, house colours and the 'Count Me In' slogan were vital unifying factors which linked these individual items to the wider publicity programme.

## Lessons Learned

Despite the overall success of the campaign, the value of the innovative approaches adopted and the success of the partnerships with radio, television and the press, there are a number of issues which should be considered in the planning and implementation of future Census public relations activities. Key points include:

- the difficulty of developing a creative concept for the Census which informs, convinces and entertains both mainstream and niche audiences;
- the advertising campaign showed that a simple but positive idea delivered with frequency was the most successful formula. Timing was well judged. The early appointment of the agency

enabled us to produce a core concept that could be introduced into key items like the Census form. At the same time the late production of advertising meant that we were able to keep our options open and take account of current events as demonstrated by the inclusion of a Welsh scene in the television advertisement;

- there was some confusion over our call to action to fill in and send the form back on, or as soon as possible after, 29 April 2001. 4,500,000 forms were returned before Census Day and there were many enquiries to the helpline requesting clarification. Although operationally this was no bad thing it generated a lot of unnecessary public concern about missing the deadline and the possibility of being fined which was picked up by the media;
- researching facts and figures, historical information and points of special interest stood us in good stead throughout the campaign. This helped ensure that much of the coverage was interesting and helpful to us rather than leaving a space which the media filled with negative angles. In addition by offering information broken down to a local level we increased the regional coverage considerably;
- the value of identifying fixed events within the public relations calendar and the combinations of information, interest, fun and local people, stimulated a steady stream of positive coverage in advance of the Census. The regional press and local radio stations devoured the information we produced - many running double page spreads around more than one event. We estimate that we achieved up to 50 regional television interviews and features. This not only raised awareness but also helped to shape the Census story as Census Day approached;
- a centrally co-ordinated and clearly branded public relations initiative is more cost effective than low key independent local activity;
- there was insufficient time for the preparation of information to support individual news stories and as a result material for Census Area Managers was delayed. This hampered local media activities. The campaign would have benefited from recruitment of key individuals at least two to three months earlier with more time to take forward detailed projects;

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

- it is possible that earlier consideration of publicity plans would have yielded more television programming opportunities;
- we failed to develop feature material specifically for the weekend papers on 28/29 April 2001 - a possible upshot of this was that The Times on Saturday, in the absence of usable new material, ran a story about tens of thousands of undelivered forms. The Sunday papers picked this up and exaggerated it;
- we found the logistics of proactive publicity a challenge when this involved the 103 Census Area Managers. Not only does publicity planning need to be highly integrated but also it must be a reiterative process with Census Area Managers regularly updated and kept in the loop. The Census Media Initiatives Unit needed to devote more attention to this aspect and the processes (via Regional Management) were not direct or rapid enough. In future motivating and communicating with Census Area Managers on publicity matters should be carried out by the publicity team;
- highly defined areas of responsibility and reporting lines for Census Publicity and the Press Office are important. An initial session including the newly recruited publicity team, ONS Press Office representatives and senior Census officials one year ahead of Census Day could help to build relationships in advance of the first story;
- the Census becomes a focus for a wide variety of concerns and special interest campaigns and can be used to draw attention to a range of political issues. For example, in Wales it became a rallying point for the devolution campaign and the Royal National Institute for the Blind used the Census to highlight their campaign to change the Disability Discrimination Act;
- in hindsight ONS could have predicted some of the disquiet about the options in the ethnic group question. One possibility is to include the Press Office as part of the consultation on public acceptability during the development of the Census form;
- the importance of identity should not be underestimated at any stage in taking the Census and is liable to become even more complex. Attitudes to the write-in options in the 2001 Census will be shaped by the availability of results. If outputs are not made available, or are deemed to be worthless, attitudes may change;
- it would be helpful to have a press officer for Wales based at the Newport office working with, and for, the Census Manager in Wales;
- the use of public relations agencies both as a source of new promotional ideas and as a route to outside partnerships was more than vindicated by the results. Although these partnerships were extremely successful in focusing our activity on broad demographic groups they did not deliver the opportunities for precise targeting of ethnic or life style groups originally hoped for;
- relaxing our inhibitions about the degree of risk inherent in both the BBC Local Radio and Sun partnerships paid off not just in terms of the size and quality of the audiences they provided but in the credibility both organisations conferred on our message;
- our independent attempts to infiltrate the soaps although imaginative and persistent were to no avail but the use of a specialist agency brought us audio conferences with scriptwriters and windfall exposure in the major soaps;
- an important ingredient in the success of the BBC Local Radio partnership was the use of Radio Census Area Managers specially selected for this role on the basis of their performance in media training.

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

---

## Conclusion

The Census publicity campaign achieved its main objectives of generating public awareness and promoting a rapid return of forms. This was accomplished by:

- a successful advertising campaign;
- using a co-ordinated approach to ensure that key public relations events were covered at both the national and regional level;
- the effective use of partnerships, most notably with BBC Local Radio and PR agencies;
- researching facts and figures in advance.

Furthermore, the 'Count Me In' slogan in conjunction with the handprint logo and raised hand provided a branding or unifying device which conveyed the underlying ethos of the Census and invoked the power of inclusion. These devices were successfully translated into a range of products that had a cumulative effect on our audience, press, poster and television executions. The logo with its bright yellow background formed one of the most striking and recognisable aspects of Census publicity.

The biggest test was to respond to the sustained campaign for a Welsh tick box. A combination of advertising, public relations events and briefings helped to provide reassurance, underline the importance of the Census to Wales and regain the initiative. At the same time prompt and decisive action to the unfolding foot and mouth crisis enabled us to deal effectively with this potentially difficult and damaging situation. In general, reactive media handling was undertaken on a case by case ad hoc basis.

All aspects of the campaign were facilitated by excellent support from the ONS Press Office, the ability to respond effectively to interview bids and the availability of comprehensive briefing material. Both planned and reactive media strategies were designed to support an upbeat and positive publicity campaign.

# Census 2001 Review and Evaluation

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