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ONE NUMBER CENSUS STEERING COMMITTEE

Practicalities of the Census Coverage Survey

1. This paper describes some of the practical issues relating to the proposed Census Coverage Survey (CCS) following the 2001 Census.

2. **Members of the Steering Committee are asked to:**
 - a) **note the paper;**
 - b) **endorse the approach; and**
 - c) **provide comments at the meeting on 27 April 1998 or in writing by 10 May 1998.**

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Introduction

The Census Coverage Survey (CCS) following the 2001 Census will be a postcode based survey with postcodes stratified by 'hard to count' as defined by a derived index. The CCS will involve a complete re-count of all households and people in a sample of postcode units. Interviewers will collect information believed to be associated with underenumeration from all households and residents within households in the selected postcodes, by completing a short questionnaire for each household. The precise sample size of the CCS has yet to be decided but it is likely to be in the range of 250,000 to 600,000 households. It is unlikely that any one survey organisation will be able to provide the numbers of interviewers required (perhaps as many as 10,000). Therefore, the most likely strategy will be, in the main, to re-use the best Census enumerators, albeit in a different area to that they enumerated in the Census itself.

Management structure for the CCS

Following discussions with Peter Lynn (SCPR) and Patrick Heady (ONS) a management structure for the CCS in 2001 is being developed.

The CCS can be considered to be 25 (say) small surveys taking place across the country at the same time. Each small survey can be locally managed by an experienced social survey manager. A number of assistant managers within each area can then be responsible for small teams of interviewers.

The quality of the interviewers will be variable due to the large number required for such an intensive fieldwork period. Therefore, it is necessary to have in place a quality check in the CCS. Current thinking is that a high level survey within the CCS will be conducted using a small force of survey interviewers in order to obtain high quality estimates of underenumeration at the national level. This will also act as a quality check with which to compare the work of the retrained enumerators.

Developing the practical aspects of the CCS

A further Census Coverage Survey Pilot will be undertaken in Hampshire in September 1998. The purpose of this study is to further develop the practical aspects of the undertaking a postcode based CCS, taking forward lessons learnt during the small pilot survey of 20 postcodes carried out in Brent following the 1997 Census Test. This study aims to build on the practical issues highlighted by this pilot. These include:

- production of postcode maps in large numbers
- methods to indicate where not to enumerate
- using members of the public as interviewers
- recruiting members of the public to manage the fieldwork locally

- developing interviewer training requirements and techniques
- using pre-warning postcard to inform public of the survey
- investigating the optimum timing of fieldwork to maximise response.

It is proposed to enumerate completely 100 postcodes, four from each of 25 selected enumeration districts (EDs) in Hampshire. This equates to approximately 1500 households. EDs will be allocated a hard to count index and EDs will be selected to represent the full range of hard to count areas.

The survey will be carried out by 20-25 interviewers working in pairs. Interviewers will be recruited from the local area together with a person to manage the survey locally reporting back to staff at ONS. Interviewers will undergo training prior to the survey and will sign census confidentiality declarations and carry identity cards.

The survey will take place from Thursday to Wednesday, 10-30 September. The majority of the fieldwork should be completed in the first week with the final two weeks for interviewers to try and contact those who were previously away or out.

During the survey, postcodes will be allocated to different treatments in order to investigate whether pre-warning postcards should be used and whether just date of birth should be asked instead of both name and date of birth. Groups will be balanced for hard to count areas.

Pairs of interviewers will either be given postcode maps or annotated maps which will indicate where not to enumerate. It is also hoped to investigate the possible use of electronic data loggers instead of traditional methods.

It is planned that the CCS will be part of the Census Dress Rehearsal in 1999.