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New estimate for Manchester's population

New provisional population estimates for Manchester are published today by the Office for National Statistics to take account of the findings of additional research carried out over the last year.

As a result of this research, the population estimates for Manchester, published on 26 September, have been increased; 20,000 people have been added to the mid-2001 estimates and 22,000 to the mid-2002 estimates.

- The provisional 2001 estimate is 418,600;
- The provisional 2002 estimate is 422,300.

The estimates for Greater Manchester, the North West region, England, England and Wales and the United Kingdom have all been amended as a consequence.

The research that has led to these amendments involved comparing the list of addresses collected in Census 2001 with administrative address lists held by Manchester City Council. Manchester had been identified in the Census Quality Assurance process as the local authority in England and Wales with the greatest difference between its Census-based estimates and administrative address lists. The outcome of this exercise identified 14,000 addresses not included in the Census count.

Using information about the characteristics of households situated near to an address not included, it has been possible to estimate the number, age and sex of people not included in the Census.

There are uncertainties with this estimate and ONS will be undertaking further work to build a fuller understanding of what has happened in Manchester and to reduce these uncertainties.

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Work on a similar exercise is being carried out in Westminster but is not yet complete and it is too early to say whether any adjustment will be needed for Westminster. The results of both exercises will be used to assess possible impact in other areas.

Recent reviews from the Statistics Commission and the Local Government Association have concluded that the methods used in Census 2001 were the best available and no alternative approach would have produced more reliable results overall. However there is greater uncertainty about the estimates in the most extreme of circumstances. These views are shared by the ONS's own evaluation.

ONS has released today the summary of a comprehensive plan of action that has been developed to improve population estimation, for estimates published from next year, in line with the recommendations in the published study 'A demographic service for the 21st Century'. This will also involve improving estimates of international migration following a National Statistics Quality Review of those statistics.

There will also be further studies which aim to improve the accuracy of estimation at local level.

In the longer term, ONS is investigating ways of providing an assessment between censuses that can independently corroborate the population estimates. This is most likely to be in 2007. Looking further ahead ONS is consulting on an integrated population statistics system that might be implemented from 2013.

BACKGROUND NOTES

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