

Scotland's Census 2021 – Topic Consultation

Background and update

National Records of Scotland is planning to conduct a census in 2021.

Scotland's Census 2021 will build on previous censuses and will be designed and managed in Scotland, to best meet the needs of its users. It will be conducted primarily online but will offer support and alternative routes of completion where required. It will aim to make best use of technology, digital services and other existing data.

Scotland's Census is the only reliable source of detailed information for a variety of characteristics of the people of Scotland. A huge amount of data is made available free of charge and we know that many individuals and organisations across Scotland use data from previous censuses to inform a variety of decisions.

But a lot can change in the 10 years between each census. Scotland in 2021 may be a very different place from 2011 so the information collected may need to change too. That is why NRS is currently consulting on the topics which should be asked in the next census to ensure that the information collected meets users' needs. It is all about better statistics to make better decisions.

Topic consultation open until 15 January 2016 - to understand user needs, a consultation on the topics to be included in the 2021 questionnaire is now open. See *Annex A* for more information or visit: www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/consultation-2021. See *Annex B* for examples of responses. Following the consultation, NRS will publish a response detailing the results and outlining a range of activity and further engagement to shape the detailed plans.

Making use of the 2011 Census - NRS has published over 5,000 tables of data from 2011 via www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk. Examples of uses can be found on the site and we would welcome information about other uses that you might like us to promote.

Get in touch - if you have any queries or comments about Scotland's Census, please get in touch with us: ScotlandsCensus@nrscotland.gov.uk

Annex A – further information on Scotland's Census topic consultation

The topic consultation seeks on users' information requirements at topic level rather than the detailed questions that should be asked on the census questionnaire. The detail of the content of the questionnaires will only be finalised after a comprehensive programme of research, testing and further discussion with users.

Views and detailed information is requested on the specific topics noted below but any topics suggested in response to the consultation will be considered by NRS.

Topics asked in Scotland in 2011:

Accommodation type	Self-contained accommodation	Tenure and landlord (if renting)
Number of rooms	Type of central heating	Cars or vans
Sex	Age	Marital or same-sex civil partnership status
Student status	Household and family relationships	Country of birth
Address one year ago	Date of arrival in the UK	Method of transport
Address of place of work	Address of place of study	Ethnic group
National identity	Gaelic language	Scots language
English language	Other languages	Religion
General health	Long-term health problem or disability	Unpaid care
Long-term health conditions	Qualifications held	Economic activity
Occupation	Industry	Year last worked
Supervisory status	Hours worked	

Topics asked elsewhere in the UK in 2011:

Number of bedrooms	Second address	Type of migration
Citizenship	Voluntary and unpaid work	

Topics not asked in 2011 but which have already been suggested for 2021:

Sexual orientation	Income
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Annex B - example responses

The topic consultation seeks views on:

- Strength of user need - purpose
- Need for small geographies or populations
- Requirement for UK comparability
- Requirement for consistency over time
- Need for multivariate analysis
- Suitability of alternative sources
- Meeting user needs

Some example responses

- Strength of user need / purpose:

“information on X is crucial to inform the spending on housing provision in town Y; grant allocations amounting to £Z were based on the projections made using this data”

“we use X data to assess the labour market activities of people with a long-term illness or disability, and to determine where policies should be targeted to help people overcome this potential barrier to work”

“the ability to compare information on how people travel to work or place of study and how the length of their journey has changed over time is essential to inform planning for future transport systems”

- Need for small geographies or populations:

“fine geographical detail (output area data) is needed for transport modelling/planning”

“although some of the groups are small, they form key minority groups whose needs need to be accurately assessed if planning for language and other support services is to be effectively undertaken”

- Requirement for UK comparability:

“we undertake comparative research and analysis of local labour markets across the UK and so having labour market information available on a consistent basis through the UK is essential to enable valid comparisons to be drawn”