

Scotland's Census 2021
Housing and Accommodation Topic Report

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1. Main Points

- Strong user need for information about **type of accommodation, self-contained accommodation, tenure and landlord type** (if renting) has been identified in Scotland. In the [Topic Consultation Report](#) (PDF) National Records of Scotland (NRS) proposed to continue to collect this information in 2021.
- Strong user need was also identified for data to:
 - enable calculations of overcrowding/under-occupancy;
 - estimate property size; and
 - inform housing property and strategy.
- NRS proposed to give further consideration to whether to collect information on **number of rooms and/or number of bedrooms** in 2021.
- Support was received for continuing to collect information on **type of central heating** and **number of cars and vans available** for use by households.
- For type of accommodation, self-contained accommodation and number of cars and vans available for use by households, the 2011 Census questions fully met the majority of user need.
- Research and analysis supports taking the following questions on housing and accommodation further at this stage:
 - Type of accommodation
 - Self-contained accommodation
 - Number of bedrooms
 - Central heating
 - Tenure and landlord type (if renting)
 - Car or van availability
- The digital first approach for 2021 requires further development and user testing to fully understand the best way to present the questions online to maximise response, minimise respondent burden and ensure good quality data which meets user needs. An on-going programme of question development, focusing on sensitive or complex questions will further inform the specific question wording.

2. Introduction

This topic review sets out the evidence gathered in developing housing and accommodation questions for Scotland's Census 2021.

Question development for the 2021 Census began in 2015. An iterative and comprehensive process of user consultation, evaluation and prioritisation of user requirements, and qualitative and quantitative question testing has been carried out to inform decisions on the questions to be recommended for inclusion in the 2021 Census. More information about [research and preparation](#) and [question development](#) for Scotland's Census 2021 can be found online.

The 2021 Census will be digital first. The Census 2021 questionnaire must gather high quality data that meets user needs. More information about [key elements of the design](#) for 2021 can be found online.

Two frameworks have been published by National Records of Scotland (NRS) to evaluate the effectiveness of [question design for existing, alternative and new questions](#) (PDF) and to evaluate the effectiveness of [question design of tick box response options](#) (PDF).

Questions and their response options are evaluated against five main themes:

Strength of user need

- ✓ Data collected by the census must meet a user need for equality monitoring, policy development, resource allocation and/or service planning and delivery.

Suitability of alternative sources

- ✓ Data collected by the census must meet a user need that cannot be met elsewhere.

Acceptability, clarity and data quality

- ✓ Questions asked in the census must be acceptable to the majority of the public, clear and be designed with minimal respondent burden in order to obtain good data quality that meets user needs.

Comparability

- ✓ Data collected by the census should be comparable over time where possible, and harmonised across the UK where reasonable.

Operational considerations

- ✓ Census questions must be considered as part of the census as a whole, where effective digital and paper design, space and financial constraints must be considered. Additionally, some questions may be required for operational purposes in the process of conducting the census.

The final decision on the content of Scotland's Census 2021 questionnaire will ultimately be made by the Scottish Parliament.

As in previous years, there will be separate censuses conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in England and Wales, and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in Northern Ireland. The three census offices work together to develop a set of questions that, wherever possible and necessary, will deliver harmonised outputs across the UK.

3. Understanding user need for 2021

NRS invited views on [Scotland's Census 2021 – Topic Consultation](#) (PDF) between 08 October 2015 and 15 January 2016. The consultation was a key step towards understanding what information users will need from the census in 2021, and helped to build strong cases to justify the inclusion of topics. The focus of the consultation was on information required at topic-level, not the detail of the questions that should be asked on the questionnaire.

Following the consultation, NRS worked closely with stakeholders through follow-up events, meetings, focus groups and online surveys to gather more detailed information about data requirements to ensure user needs were understood. Information about these events can be found on our [Get Involved pages](#) online.

There were 46 responses received through the Topic Consultation on the subject of housing and accommodation. A summary of these responses can be found in the [Topic Consultation Report](#) (PDF).

The housing and accommodation questions from Scotland's Census 2011 can be found in Annex B.

3.1 Type of Accommodation

Strong user need for data on type of accommodation was identified in the Topic Consultation. The 2011 Census questions fully met the majority of user need.

Further information on the background and user needs for this question can be found in Annex A.

3.2 Self-contained Accommodation

Continued user need for data on self-contained accommodation was identified in the Topic Consultation. The 2011 Census questions fully met the majority of user need.

Further information on the background and user needs for this question can be found in Annex A.

3.3 Rooms/Bedrooms

Strong user need was identified for data to: enable calculations of overcrowding/under-occupancy; estimate property size; and inform housing property and strategy.

Question development identified that a question on bedrooms best meets user needs and produces good quality data.

More information on the question development process behind the bedrooms question can be found in the [Rooms and Bedrooms Topic Report](#) (PDF).

3.4 Central Heating

Continued user need for data on central heating type was identified in the Topic Consultation.

Question development has identified a question on central heating that meets user needs and produces good quality data.

More information on the question development process for this question can be found in the [Central Heating Topic Report](#) (PDF).

3.5 Tenure and Landlord

Strong user need for data on tenure and landlord type (if renting) was identified in the Topic Consultation.

Question development has identified a pair of questions on tenure and landlord type (if renting) that meet user needs and produce good quality data.

More information on the question development process for these question can be found in the [Tenure and Landlord Topic Report](#) (PDF).

3.6 Cars or Vans Availability

Continued user need for data on number of cars and vans available to a household was identified in The Topic Consultation. The 2011 Census questions fully met the majority of user need.

Further information on the background and user needs for this question can be found in Annex A.

4. Next Steps

Research and analysis supports taking the following questions on housing and accommodation further at this stage:

- Type of accommodation
- Self-contained accommodation
- Number of bedrooms
- Central heating
- Tenure and landlord type (if renting)
- Car or van availability

The digital first approach for 2021 requires further development and user testing to fully understand the best way to present the questions online to maximise response, minimise respondent burden and ensure good quality data which meets user needs. An on-going programme of question development will further inform the specific question wording.

The final decisions on the content of Scotland's Census 2021 questionnaire will ultimately be made by the Scottish Parliament.

More information about preparation for Scotland's Census 2021 and details about upcoming events can be found on the [Scotland's Census website](#), by subscribing to the [Scotland's Census newsletter](#) and following us on Twitter [@NatRecordsScot](#).

Annex A

1. Type of Accommodation

Information on type of accommodation has been collected in Scotland's Census since 2001.

This question provides information on the amount and type of housing in each area. It identifies changes in the type of the housing stock, and provides a firm basis for informing current and future demand.

This information also helps with calculating whether appropriate types of housing are available in local areas and contributes to the allocation of improvement grants.

The 2001 and 2011 Census questions on type of accommodation are shown in Figure A1. The online version of this question was roughly identical to the paper question in 2011.

Figure A1: Scotland's Census 2001 (left) and 2011 (right) Type of Accommodation – Paper Questionnaire

<p>H1 What type of accommodation does your household occupy?</p> <p>A whole house or bungalow that is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Detached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Semi-detached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Terraced (including end-terrace)</p> <p>A flat, maisonette, or apartment that is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a purpose-built block of flats or tenement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Part of a converted or shared house (includes bed-sits)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a commercial building (for example, in an office building, or hotel, or over a shop)</p> <p>Mobile or temporary structure:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure</p>	<p>H6 What type of accommodation is this?</p> <p>A whole house or bungalow that is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> detached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> semi-detached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> terraced (including end-terrace)</p> <p>A flat, maisonette, or apartment that is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in a tenement or purpose-built block of flats (including '4-in-a-block')</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> part of a converted or shared house (including bed-sits)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in a commercial building (for example, in an office building, hotel or over a shop)</p> <p>A mobile or temporary structure:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure</p>
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Minor changes were made to the question stem between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. However, the data this question provides is comparable over time.

This question provides data that are comparable with the other UK censuses. Images of the questions asked in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland, can be found in Annexes C and D.

Strong user need for information on type of accommodation was identified through the Topic Consultation. NRS therefore proposed to continue to collect this information in 2021.

Stakeholders noted that data on type of accommodation are used in the preparation of Housing Needs and Demand Assessments and Local Housing Strategies. These are used by central government to inform resource allocation and are widely used in other sectors for equalities monitoring, targeting investment, and service planning and delivery. Local Authorities also make use of the data to input into local area profiles.

As the 2011 Census question fully meets the majority of user need, and provides good data quality, no further question development has been considered necessary for the type of accommodation question at this stage.

Research and analysis support taking a question on type of accommodation further at this stage.

2. Self-contained Accommodation

Information on self-contained accommodation has been collected in Scotland's Census since 1971.

Along with the answers to questions on type of accommodation and tenure, information on whether the accommodation is self-contained is used to identify areas of overcrowding. The answers to these questions are used together to help measure housing standards, housing needs, planning and service delivery.

The 2001 and 2011 Census questions on self-contained accommodation are shown in Figure A2. The online version of this question was roughly identical to the paper question in 2011.

Figure A2: Scotland's Census 2001 (left) and 2011 (right) Self-contained Accommodation – Paper Questionnaire

<p>H2 Is your household's accommodation self-contained?</p> <p>• This means that <i>all the rooms, including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet are behind a door that only your household can use.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, all the rooms are behind a door that only our household can use</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>H7 Is this household's accommodation self-contained?</p> <p>◆ This means that all the rooms, including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet, are behind a door that only this household can use.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, all the rooms are behind a door that only this household can use</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
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No changes were made to the question stem between the 2001 and 2011 censuses and so the data provided by this question is comparable over time.

This question provides data that are comparable with the other UK censuses. Images of the questions asked in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland, can be found in Annexes C and D.

Strong user need for information on self-contained accommodation was identified through the Topic Consultation. NRS therefore proposed to continue to collect this information in 2021.

Stakeholders noted that data on self-contained accommodation are used in the preparation of Housing Needs and Demand Assessments and Local Housing Strategies. These are used by central government to inform resource allocation and are widely used in other sectors for equalities monitoring, targeting investment, and service planning and delivery. Local Authorities also make use of the data to input into local area profiles.

As the 2011 Census question fully meets the majority of user need, and provides good data quality, no further question development has been considered necessary for the self-contained accommodation question at this stage.

Research and analysis support taking a question on self-contained accommodation further at this stage.

3. Car and Van Availability

Information on the number of cars or vans available for use by a household has been collected in Scotland's Census since 1971.

This information helps the Scottish Government and local authorities with transport planning, dealing with congestion and assessing the need for investment in public transport and roads.

As car ownership is the single largest component of traffic growth, this data is also used for forecasting traffic growth and planning the need for road building or other possible responses to future demand.

The data is also used to support the provision of accessible services and the development and implementation of transport policy, especially in rural areas.

In addition, data on households without access to a car can be matched with information on people with disabilities. These statistics can then be used to identify local areas where additional public transport might be required.

The 2001 and 2011 Census questions on car or van availability are shown below in Figure A3. The online version of this question was roughly identical to the paper question in 2011.

Figure A3: Scotland's Census 2001 (left) and 2011 (right) Car or Van Availability – Paper Questionnaire

<p>H7 How many cars or vans are owned, or available for use, by one or more members of your household?</p> <p>◆ Include any company car or van if available for private use.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> One</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Two</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Three</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Four or more, please write in number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>	<p>H12 In total, how many cars or vans are owned, or are available for use, by members of this household?</p> <p>◆ Include any company car(s) or van(s) available for private use.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more, please write in number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>
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Minor changes were made to the question between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. However, the data provided by this question is comparable over time.

This question provides data that are comparable with the other UK censuses. Images of the questions asked in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland, can be found in Annexes C and D.

Continued user need for information on car or van availability was identified through the Topic Consultation. NRS therefore proposed to continue to collect this information in 2021.

Stakeholders noted that these data are widely used across central and local government and by public bodies to support transport modelling and policy monitoring. The information is also used in deprivation analysis and users expressed a need for data on car ownership to be available at small area level and associated with household size; hence the census is currently the only suitable source.

As the 2011 Census question fully meets the majority of user need, and provides good data quality, no further question development has been considered necessary for the car and van availability question at this stage.

Research and analysis support taking a question on car or van availability further at this stage.

Annex B: Scotland's Census 2011 Housing and Accommodation Questions

Household questions - accommodation

H6 What type of accommodation is this?

A whole house or bungalow that is:

- detached
- semi-detached
- terraced (including end-terrace)

A flat, maisonette, or apartment that is:

- in a tenement or purpose-built block of flats (including '4-in-a-block')
- part of a converted or shared house (including bed-sits)
- in a commercial building (for example, in an office building, hotel or over a shop)

A mobile or temporary structure:

- a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure

H7 Is this household's accommodation self-contained?

◆ This means that all the rooms, including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet, are behind a door that only this household can use.

- Yes, all the rooms are behind a door that only this household can use
- No

H8 How many rooms are available for use only by this household?

◆ **Do NOT count:**

- bathrooms
- toilets
- halls or landings
- rooms that can only be used for storage such as cupboards.

◆ **Count** all other rooms, for example:

- kitchens
- living rooms
- utility rooms
- bedrooms
- studies
- conservatories.

◆ If two rooms have been converted into one, count them as one room.

Number of rooms

H9 What type of central heating does this accommodation have?

◆ If the central heating is available, please tick the box whether or not you use it.

◆ Central heating is a central system that generates heat for multiple rooms.

- No central heating
- Gas
- Electric (including storage heaters)
- Oil
- Solid fuel
- Other central heating, please write in

H10 Does your household own or rent this accommodation?

◆ Tick one box only.

- Owns outright → Go to **H12**
- Owns with a mortgage or loan → Go to **H12**
- Part owns and part rents (shared ownership)
- Rents (with or without housing benefit)
- Lives here rent free

H11 Who is your landlord?

- Council (Local Authority)
- Housing Association / Registered Social Landlord
- Private landlord or letting agency
- Employer of a household member
- Relative or friend of a household member
- Other

H12 In total, how many cars or vans are owned, or are available for use, by members of this household?

◆ Include any company car(s) or van(s) available for private use.

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more, please write in number

Annex C: England and Wales 2011 Housing and Accommodation Questions

Household questions - continued

H7 What type of accommodation is this?

A whole house or bungalow that is:

detached

semi-detached

terraced (including end-terrace)

A flat, maisonette or apartment that is:

in a purpose-built block of flats or tenement

part of a converted or shared house (including bedsts)

in a commercial building (for example, in an office building, hotel, or over a shop)

A mobile or temporary structure:

a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure

H11 What type of central heating does this accommodation have?

↻ Tick all that apply, whether or not you use it

↻ Central heating is a central system that generates heat for multiple rooms

No central heating

Gas

Electric (including storage heaters)

Oil

Solid fuel (for example wood, coal)

Other central heating

H8 Is this household's accommodation self-contained?

↻ This means that all the rooms, including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet, are behind a door that only this household can use

Yes, all the rooms are behind a door that only this household can use

No

H12 Does your household own or rent this accommodation?

↻ Tick one box only

Owns outright → Go to **H14**

Owns with a mortgage or loan → Go to **H14**

Part owns and part rents (shared ownership)

Rents (with or without housing benefit)

Lives here rent free

H9 How many rooms are available for use only by this household?

↻ Do NOT count:

- bathrooms
- toilets
- halls or landings
- rooms that can only be used for storage such as cupboards

↻ Count all other rooms, for example:

- kitchens
- living rooms
- utility rooms
- bedrooms
- studies
- conservatories

↻ If two rooms have been converted into one, count them as one room

Number of rooms

H13 Who is your landlord?

↻ Tick one box only

Housing association, housing co-operative, charitable trust, registered social landlord

Council (local authority)

Private landlord or letting agency

Employer of a household member

Relative or friend of a household member

Other

H10 How many of these rooms are bedrooms?

↻ Include all rooms built or converted for use as bedrooms, even if they are not currently used as bedrooms

Number of bedrooms

H14 In total, how many cars or vans are owned, or available for use, by members of this household?

↻ Include any company car(s) or van(s) available for private use

None

1

2

3

4 or more, write in number

Annex D: Northern Ireland 2011 Housing and Accommodation Questions

Household questions - continued

H7 What type of accommodation is this?

A whole house or bungalow that is:

detached

semi-detached

terraced (including end-terrace)

A flat, maisonette or apartment that is:

In a purpose-built block of flats or tenement

part of a converted or shared house (including bedsits)

In a commercial building (for example, in an office building, hotel, or over a shop)

A mobile or temporary structure:

a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure

H11 What type of central heating does this accommodation have?

➤ Tick all that apply, whether or not you use it.

➤ Central heating is a central system that generates heat for multiple rooms.

No central heating

Gas

Electric (including storage heaters)

Oil

Solid fuel (for example, wood, coal)

Other central heating

H8 Is this household's accommodation self-contained?

➤ This means that all the rooms, including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet, are behind a door that only this household can use.

Yes, all the rooms are behind a door that only this household can use

No

H12 Does your household own or rent this accommodation?

➤ Tick one box only.

Owns outright ➔ Go to **H14**

Owns with a mortgage or loan ➔ Go to **H14**

Part owns and part rents (shared ownership)

Rents (with or without housing benefit)

Lives here rent-free

H9 How many rooms are available for use only by this household?

➤ Do not count bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage such as cupboards.

➤ Count all other rooms (for example, kitchens, living rooms, utility rooms, bedrooms, studies and conservatories).

➤ If two rooms have been converted into one, count them as one room.

Number of rooms

H13 Who is your landlord?

➤ Tick one box only.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Housing association or charitable trust

Private landlord or letting agency

Employer of a household member

Relative or friend of a household member

Other

H10 Has this accommodation been designed or adapted for:

➤ Tick all that apply.

wheelchair usage?

other physical or mobility difficulties?

visual difficulties?

hearing difficulties?

other, write in

none of the above

H14 In total, how many cars or vans are owned, or available for use, by members of this household?

➤ Include any company car(s) or van(s) available for private use.

None

1

2

3

4 or more, write in number