

**Scotland's Census 2021
Focus Group – African Ethnic Groups**

May 2018

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1. Main Points

NRS shared a number of alternative question designs at the focus group on 9 March 2018. The focus group suggested a preferred option but expressed a need for additional changes to this design.

NRS propose to take alternative Ethnic Group Question designs forward for testing to ensure that these are fit for purpose for the census. Two potential alternative designs for the African category are proposed for testing.

NRS received additional feedback and comments about the Ethnic Group Question as a whole and about other specific sections of the question.

2. Introduction

2.1 Topic Consultation and Follow-up Events

National Records of Scotland (NRS) invited views on [Scotland's Census 2021 – Topic Consultation](#) (PDF) between 8 October 2015 and 15 January 2016.

In the Topic Consultation, NRS outlined the next steps for each topic or sub-topic where question changes or new questions may be required. For Ethnic Group this included further discussion with stakeholders in light of a limited number of requests which were made for additional information to be collected and to better understand the exact nature of user need.

A follow-up event to gather more information about requirements was held in April 2017. At this event, and in the survey that ran alongside this event, NRS invited views on the content of the Ethnic Group question. A summary of this event is available on the [Scotland's Census website](#).

NRS are continuing to work with stakeholders and undertake research, question testing and consideration of acceptable burden. The final decision on the content of Scotland's Census 2021 questionnaire will ultimately be made by the Scottish Parliament. NRS will make recommendations on content to parliament, likely in late 2018.

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

2.2 Focus Group on African Ethnic Groups

A focus group on African ethnic groups and how the census can capture more detailed data to meet requirements was held on 9 March 2018. As well as attendance at the focus group, stakeholders were invited to submit comments and feedback by email in an iterative process. This report summarises the discussion and outcomes of this work.

3. African Ethnic Groups

3.1 Introduction

A range of stakeholders expressed an interest in obtaining more detailed data about African ethnic groups to meet requirements for data for health analysis, for equality monitoring and also for increased consistency with how data is collected across the ethnic group question. The 2011 Ethnic Group Question is shown in Figure 1.

The 2011 Ethnic Group Question had a higher level category "African" which contained the response options "African, African Scottish or African British" and "Other, please write in".

Figure 1: Scotland's Census 2011 Ethnic Group Question

15 What is your ethnic group?

◆ Choose **ONE** section from A to F, then tick **ONE** box which **best** describes your ethnic group or background.

A White

Scottish

Other British

Irish

Gypsy / Traveller

Polish

Other white ethnic group, please write in

B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in

C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British

Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British

Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British

Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British

Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British

Other, please write in

D African

African, African Scottish or African British

Other, please write in

E Caribbean or Black

Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British

Black, Black Scottish or Black British

Other, please write in

F Other ethnic group

Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British

Other, please write in

In 2011, 29,638 people in Scotland identified as having an African ethnic group. A breakdown of this figure, including information written in by individuals is shown in Table 1.

A larger number of people reported an African country of birth in 2011. While it is not expected that the numbers by country of birth and ethnic group would be identical, the richer detail collected by the country of birth question, as shown in Table 2, illustrates how having a tick box for “African, African Scottish or African British” limited the data collected about African ethnic groups in 2011.

Table 1: Scotland's Census 2011 African ethnic group

African	29,638
African, African Scottish or African British	29,186
African	28,577
Nigerian	336
Scottish	20
Somali	238
Other ¹	15
Other African	452
Moroccan	34
Multi-ethnic islands	50
North African	292
Other Western European	56
Other ¹	20

Footnote

1) Ethnic group categories not specified elsewhere, including categories with 10 or fewer people.

Table 2: Scotland's Census 2011 African country of birth

Africa	46,742
North Africa	5,985
Libya	1,327
Egypt	1,322
Algeria	895
Sudan	749
Morocco	530
Tunisia	267
North Africa (other) ^{1,2}	895
Central and Western Africa	14,377
Nigeria	9,458

Ghana	1,658
Congo	856
Cameroon	406
Sierra Leone	377
Gambia, The	370
Angola	314
Congo (Democratic Republic)	298
Ivory Coast	195
Guinea	74
Senegal	73
Liberia	71
St Helena	59
Togo	25
Cape Verde	20
Chad	20
Gabon	19
Benin	18
Guinea-Bissau	14
Sao Tome and Principe	14
Equatorial Guinea	13
Central and Western Africa (other) ¹	25
South and Eastern Africa	26,380
South Africa	10,607
Zimbabwe	4,666
Kenya	2,743
Zambia	1,637
Somalia	1,591
Uganda	986
Malawi	818
Tanzania	681
Mauritius	571
Eritrea	399
Botswana	337
Burundi	316
Ethiopia	258
Rwanda	215
Namibia	135
Swaziland	129

Mozambique	97
Seychelles	89
Lesotho	62
South and Eastern Africa (other) ¹	43

Footnotes

- 1) Includes country of birth categories with 10 or fewer people.
- 2) Includes Africa (not otherwise specified).

3.2 Alternative Question designs

NRS shared a number of alternative question designs at the focus group on 9 March 2018. The focus group suggested a preferred option but expressed a need for additional changes to this design.

NRS shared a number of alternative question designs at this focus group to gather feedback and prompt discussion. The African categories within these questions are shown in Figure 2 and the full questions with these design changes are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2: Alternative African category designs

<p>A) 2011 Question</p> <p>D African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p>	<p>B) Write in – no prompts</p> <p>D African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any African ethnic group, please write in</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p>
<p>C) Write in – with prompts</p> <p>D African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any African ethnic group, please write in (for example, NIGERIAN, SOMALI)</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p>	<p>D) Write in – combined categories</p> <p>D African or Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any African or Caribbean ethnic group, please write in (for example, NIGERIAN, SOMALI)</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p>

Some stakeholders strongly felt that it is important to enhance the 2011 question rather than making large changes, building on the previous work of NRS and the Scottish Government from 2006 onwards.

Those present expressed that African and Caribbean culture are very different. The focus group were in agreement that the African and Caribbean categories should remain separate in 2021 and ruled out Option D.

Figure 3: Alternative Ethnic Group Question designs

A) 2011 Question	B) Write in – no prompts	C) Write in – with prompts	D) Write in – combined categories
<p>What is your ethnic group? ♦ Choose ONE section from A to F, then tick ONE box which best describes your ethnic group or background</p> <p>A White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish <input type="checkbox"/> Other British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British <input type="checkbox"/> Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>D African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>E Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British <input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>F Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p>	<p>What is your ethnic group? ♦ Choose ONE section from A to F, then tick ONE box which best describes your ethnic group or background</p> <p>A White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish <input type="checkbox"/> Other British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British <input type="checkbox"/> Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>D African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any African ethnic group, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>E Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British <input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>F Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p>	<p>What is your ethnic group? ♦ Choose ONE section from A to F, then tick ONE box which best describes your ethnic group or background</p> <p>A White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish <input type="checkbox"/> Other British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British <input type="checkbox"/> Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>D African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any African ethnic group, please write in (for example, NIGERIAN, SOMALI) <input type="text"/></p> <p>E Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British <input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>F Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p>	<p>What is your ethnic group? ♦ Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick ONE box which best describes your ethnic group or background</p> <p>A White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish <input type="checkbox"/> Other British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British <input type="checkbox"/> Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p> <p>D African or Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any African or Caribbean ethnic group, please write in (for example, NIGERIAN, SOMALI) <input type="text"/></p> <p>E Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <input type="text"/></p>

Option C was the preferred alternative question. The focus group agreed with the prompts including, that were based on the largest write in groups from 2011. However, additional changes were proposed to this question:

- rather than including the text “Any African ethnic group, please write in...”, it was suggested that this should simply state “Please write in...”
- to remove “African Scottish or African British”
- to have two write in categories: the prompts on the first text field are for nationalities, a second field was felt to be necessary to allow respondents who wish to enter an ethnicity or ethnic heritage rather than a nationality to clearly do so, and/or for those who wrote into the “African: other” text box in 2011 to have an equivalent space.

3.3 Proposed Alternative African categories for testing

NRS propose to take alternative Ethnic Group Question designs forward for testing to ensure that these are fit for purpose for the census. Two potential alternative designs for the African category are proposed for testing.

NRS propose to take alternative Ethnic Group Question designs forward for testing to ensure that these are fit for purpose for the census. A number of alternative designs will be tested to ensure that the question included in 2021 is suitable. This process will consider:

- how acceptable this question is;
- whether the question produces reliable answers; and
- continuity with previous census data collected and UK harmonisation.

NRS will be making recommendations to the Scottish Parliament on question content, likely later this year. The Scottish Parliament will then make the final decision on which questions to include in the 2021 Census in Scotland.

NRS have developed a series of African categories for testing, based on the feedback from this event. These are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Proposed alternative African categories for testing

<p>A) 2011 Question</p> <p>D African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in</p> <p><input type="text"/></p>	<p>E) Alternative – two write ins</p> <p>D African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please write in (for example, NIGERIAN, SOMALI)</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other African ethnic background, please write in</p> <p><input type="text"/></p>
<p>F) Alternative – one write in</p> <p>D African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please write in (for example, NIGERIAN, SOMALI)</p> <p><input type="text"/></p>	

While this focus group was looking at changes to the African category in the Ethnic Group Question, NRS are also considering changes in other areas of the Ethnic Group Question which are out of scope of this project. Additional changes to the question may also be included in question testing following discussions with other groups.

3.4 The Ethnic Group Question in the census

NRS received additional feedback and comments about the Ethnic Group Question as a whole and about other specific sections of the question.

At the focus group there were a number of comments about the Ethnic Group Question generally, or about other sections of the question. Feedback and comments have been collated in Table 3.

There were a number of common themes to this general discussion. In particular:

- A lack of understanding about what is meant by “ethnic group”. Confusion about what is being asked for and what data is required from this question, including that the 2011 question contains a mix of colour, ethnicity and nationality but asks about “ethnic group”.
- Unacceptability of the inclusion of colour terminology and the application of this terminology to specific groups only.

It was suggested that NRS should include a glossary of terms alongside the census questionnaire, and that for ethnic group and national identity specifically:

- additional guidance that explains the definition of “ethnic group” and “national identity” and what these questions are asking for, and
- information about why the Ethnic Group Question is asked, should be included.

It was felt to be very important that this guidance should be accessible to all groups, whether responding online or on paper to the census. In particular, that if this extra guidance is accessible online by following a link, that this information should also be included alongside the paper questionnaire.

Suggestions for the wording of guidance and what to include or not include in guidance were made at the focus group and are included in Table 3.

Table 3: Comments and feedback on the Ethnic Group Question

<p>Comments on the Ethnic Group Question in general</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong need for comparable data over time and for comparable data across the UK • There are many places some respondents could tick box, and this can be confusing. It can be unclear which category should be ticked when multiple boxes could apply. • Nationality is different from ethnicity, the examples in the ethnic group question are mostly nationalities not ethnic groups • <i>“the government wanted race”</i> [so the framework and terminology reflects this rather than ethnicity] • We should be asking about ethnic heritage • Everyone should be recognised in the same way • There is a concern that not all views across the community are being heard
<p>Comments on colour terminology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wording “Caribbean or Black” is confusing and this would be clearer if this said “Caribbean” • Remove the tick box for “Black, Black Scottish or Black British” • Replace “White” with “European” • <i>“the apartheid question”</i> • Around 2,500 people chose to identify with ‘Black’ by selecting ‘Black, Black Scottish or Black British’ or by writing in in 2011. These individuals did identify in this way. There is concern about removing this option.
<p>Comments on other terminology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of “Scottish” and “British” was considered to be troubling by some groups, who would prefer this expression of nationality/national identity to be kept separate from the ethnic group question and captured only in the national identity question (which precedes the ethnic group question in the census). • Being asked about nationality may change how this

	<p>question is answered and if nationality is asked first, there is no need for “Scottish” and “British” (a national identity question immediately precedes the ethnic group question in the census, however, national identity is different to nationality).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not including ‘Scottish’ and ‘British’ consistently across categories is a concern.
<p>Suggestions for guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To capture the needs of each community, for planning services • To capture information about the community • Do not mention “equality monitoring” • To capture information about ethnic heritage • To inform about community • To capture diversity of cultural background, heritage and origins • To capture ethnic diversity • To help fulfil your service needs • To inform policy • To capture diversity of needs • To allow government to plan and provide services • To tackle discrimination (to be included last on a list of reasons for capturing data)

NRS agreed to review what guidance was provided outside the question text in 2011 and to take these suggestions into consideration. This is not part of the scope of this project, and will form part of a larger piece of work that NRS are undertaking to look at the design of the 2021 census and how guidance is provided to respondents.

4. Next Steps

NRS plan to take forward a small number of alternative question designs for cognitive testing, to ensure that the question is understandable and acceptable to the population and collects high quality data.

NRS are continuing to engage with stakeholders in planning for Scotland’s Census 2021. NRS will be updating users on progress as this process continues.

More information 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](#).