

**2009 Census Rehearsal Evaluation
Postal Services**

December 2009

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2009 Rehearsal – Postal service Provider

1. Definition and scope for rehearsal

It is likely that around six per cent of the 2011 Census questionnaire packages will be posted out, with the remainder hand delivered by census enumerators. It is expected however that most completed questionnaires (not submitted online) will be posted back. General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) postal services contract will provide a solution for post-out, post-back and sortation of census questionnaires and for handling late return of census questionnaires after the field enumeration exercise has completed.

For the rehearsal, the contracted services were to:

- deliver approx 50,000 advance publicity leaflets to all residential addresses;
- deliver approx 8,000 pre-addressed post-out questionnaire packages to the specified residential addresses;
- sortation and return of all post-back questionnaires to the appropriate field office up until an agreed date; and
- re-direct to Census Headquarters (CHQ) in Edinburgh post-back questionnaires received after that date.

What was tested:

- door to door leaflet drop service;
- standard tariff letter, second class service (post-out);
- business response service including sortation (post-back);
- redirection service; and
- envelope design.

What could not be tested:

- exact format of management information.
- The evaluation points in this report are somewhat anecdotal, given that the solution used for the census was largely a standard service provided nationally, with success criteria and performance monitoring agreed with and regulated by the Office of Communications (OfCom).

2. Evaluation findings

Pre – determined evaluation points

Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
<p>1) Deliveries to field offices</p>	<p>Deliveries to field offices are made: a) On time; and</p>	<p>Achieved:</p> <p>a) All deliveries to CHQ and Stornoway Field Office (SFO) were made on time under the postal service provider’s (PSP) standard delivery service (anytime until two p.m.). However, this did not make best use of Logistics team or field staff resources waiting for returns to arrive to log/record and update management information before the day ends.</p> <p>Conversely, the Edinburgh Field Office (EFO) had ‘timed delivery’ status which allowed for better preparation for receipting deliveries.</p>	<p>a) Review requirement for PSP delivery services after field offices are procured.</p>	<p>June/July 2010</p>

Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
	<p>b) Sorted to Census District (CD)/Enumeration District (ED) level.</p>	<p>b) Sortation of returned questionnaires went well. However, around 32 per cent of questionnaires were incorrectly inserted by the public into the return envelope. This meant that the PSP was unable to sort these returns by CD/ED. These were returned to field offices unsorted and subsequently field staff had to open all unsorted envelopes and sort to CD/ED.</p>	<p>b) Continue with PSP sortation of return envelopes to CD/ED level.</p> <p>A working group will look at re-design of return envelope, taking advice from the PSP and lessons learned from the census rehearsal in England and Wales in late 2009.</p>	<p>August 09 to March 2011</p>
<p>2) Management Information</p>	<p>Clear and accurate management information is available to help manage the operational processes.</p>	<p>There were occasions where CHQ didn't receive managements information within agreed timescales as well as inconsistent figures.</p>	<p>The format/timing of management information will be specified in the postal service contract for 2011.</p>	<p>Autumn 2009</p>
<p>3) Post-out procedures</p>	<p>Absence of complaints from post-out householders about not having questionnaires.</p>	<p>Achieved: No evidence of complaints, but instances of more than one questionnaire being delivered to the same</p>	<p>Carry on with the same solution for 2011, but Geography to work with PSP to review the PAF.</p>	<p>Autumn 09 to March 2011</p>

Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
		household. This was due to the inaccuracy of the Postcode Address File (PAF).		
4) Advance leaflet	Advance leaflet delivered to all rehearsal households.	Partly Achieved: Anecdotal evidence suggested that a number of households did not receive the advance leaflet.	Advance leaflet to be enclosed with questionnaire pack.	March 2011
5) Throughput of returned questionnaires	Absence of anecdotal information from the field about slow throughput.	Achieved: See caveat on success criteria at top of this report.	Carry on with the same solution for 2011, with the possibility of Sunday/special collections.	Autumn 2010

3. Other evaluation points

Description	Outcome/Issues	Recommendation	Timeframe
6) Post-out questionnaire packs	The higher than anticipated levels of undelivered post-out questionnaire packs (returned to CHQ) impacted on resources and available secure storage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSP and Geography colleagues to review the PAF to ensure up to date. • Storage at CHQ needs to be adequate to cope with expected volumes (still to be identified) in 2011. • Helpline staff could log/record (data entry). 	Autumn 2009 to March 2011
7) Re-directions/returns service	The field offices did not have unique Post Office (PO) box numbers which meant the PSP were unable to provide a redirection service to ensure only census rehearsal mail was diverted to CHQ.	All field offices/remote offices and possibly CHQ to have unique PO box numbers for 2011.	July/August 2010