

Scotland's 2011 Census Outputs: Report on Consultation Progress

June 2010

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1. Background

- 1.1 As part of its preparations for the 2011 Census in Scotland, General Registers of Scotland (GROS) conducted a formal 3 month consultation this spring about its initial plans for census output products. The consultation, which ran from 18 February until the end of May, provided an opportunity for users to help shape the main statistical outputs for the 2011 Census and to comment on a range of related issues. It also enabled GROS to give an update to users on the progress being made across a number of areas that bear on plans for producing and disseminating the census results.
- 1.2 The consultation was intended to provide the basis for developing, over the course of 2010, an agreed set of final specifications of the main outputs from the 2011 Census that meet the needs of a majority of users and make the best use of the data collected. It sought views from users on a number of specific consultation points, including:
- pre-defined tabular outputs
 - comparisons of 2001 and 2011 census results
 - data delivery formats
 - outputs geography – including which intermediate geographies users need results produced for
 - release timetable for the 2011 Census results.
- 1.3 The main consultation round was supplemented by a series of four consultation roadshow events which were held across the country, in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness. These events attracted a good turnout – a total of some 160 people attended – and generated a lot of useful comments and suggestions on the developing plans for census outputs. This feedback will be incorporated into the analysis of the responses to the consultation.

2. Consultation response

- 2.1 A total of 42 responses were submitted to the consultation. The profile of respondents is summarised in the table below; and a list of individual respondents is included at [Annex A](#). Both the number and variety of respondents are considered healthy for a consultation of this kind. It should be noted that some respondents were covering the views of a wider community of census users, e.g. the Demographics User Group which represents commercial users.

Type of respondent	Number of responses
Central government	4
Local government	15
Local service provider	7
Business and commercial	6
Community and special interest	6
Other	4

- 2.2 Respondents were asked to consider and comment on 11 specific consultation points. These, together with a preliminary read out of some of the comments made by users, are listed at [Annex B](#).
- 2.3 GROS is in the process of working through the detail of all the consultation responses received and the feedback obtained through the roadshow events. A summary of this analysis will be compiled and published on the GROS website later in the summer. Thereafter a draft outputs prospectus and timetable will be published followed by a possible further iteration of consultation. Work on the detailed outputs specifications will take place in the first half of 2011.

3. Other consultation activities

- 3.1 In addition to the main consultation exercise, GROS is engaged with census users through a number of other channels.

Other United Kingdom (UK) census consultations

- 3.2 Both the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) also consulted their census users in the first half of the year about plans for 2011 Census outputs. It will be important for all the UK census offices to pool their consultation feedback, particularly with an eye to meeting the aim for the 2011 Census of providing users with UK-wide comparable statistics.

Population and Migration Statistics (Scotland) Committee

- 3.3 This committee acts, among other things, as the main Census Advisory Group for Scotland. It will have a strong focus on census issues over the next few years.

Census Outputs Geography Working Group

- 3.4 This working group of relevant experts was established by the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee to review and comment on geographical issues relating to the 2011 Census outputs. It will consider the detailed comments made by users in responses to the consultation about points relating to outputs geography.

2011 Census Outputs Working Group

- 3.5 This working group, which meets 3-4 times a year, provides a forum for the UK census offices to provide updates to, and receive advice from, key census expert users about plans for producing and disseminating 2011 Census results.

Scottish Government

- 3.6 A series of bilateral meetings were held earlier this year with Analytical Services Divisions (ASDs) in Scottish Government. These were successful in stimulating some early thinking by ASDs about ways in which census data can contribute to the priorities for their analytical work over the next few years. ASDs will also provide a source of topic expertise and advice for quality assuring the census statistics.

Annex A – profile of consultation respondents

ID	Name	Response for individual/organisation?	Organisation name
1	Iain Bell	Organisation	City of Edinburgh Council
2	Tina Callan	Organisation	Glasgow City Council Social Work Services
3	Simon Whalley	Organisation	Beacon Dodsworth
4	Keith Dugmore	Organisation	Demographics User Group, representing commercial users
5	Dr Laurence Gruer	Organisation	NHS Health Scotland
6	Lindsay Bennison	Organisation	Scottish Government - Justice Analytical Services
7	Peadar Morgan	Organisation	Bòrd na Gàidhlig
8	Gavin Miles	Organisation	Cairngorms National Park Authority
9	Richard Price	Organisation	Experian
10	Fiona Collie	Organisation	Carers Scotland
11	Florence Edmond	Organisation	Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) Scotland
12	Andy Dobson	Organisation	David Simmonds Consultancy
13	Jan Freeke	Organisation	Glasgow City Council
14	Andrew Ballingall	Organisation	Fife Council/NHS Fife
15	Lin Murray	Organisation	Inverclyde council Directorate of Public Health and Health Policy, Lothian NHS Board
16	Mette Tranter	Organisation	Board
17	Donna Hosie	Organisation	GROS Customer Services
18	Jennifer Boag	Organisation	Falkirk Council
19	Tom McCann	Organisation	Angus Council
20	Dr Barry Leventhal	Organisation	MRS Census & Geodemographics Group
21	Heather Smith	Organisation	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
22	Alastair Macbeth	Organisation	Helensburgh Study Group
23	Tom Snowling	Organisation	Aberdeen City Council
24	Fiona Geddes	Organisation	Housing Strategy Officer, The Moray Council
25	Kenneth Emmerson	Organisation	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
26	John O'Dowd	Organisation	Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
27	Hannah Jones	Organisation	The Open University in Scotland
28	Lesley Mann	Organisation	North Lanarkshire Council
29	Louise Gall	Organisation	Shetland Islands Council
30	Gordon Dickson	Organisation	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
31	Stephen Cragg	Organisation	Transport Scotland - Technical Analysis Branch
32	Kathleen Shirkie	Organisation	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
33	Chris Carr	Organisation	Argyll and Bute Council
34	Diane Stockton	Organisation	Internet Services Division (ISD) Scotland
35	Leah Granat	Organisation	Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
36	Alistair Gemmell	Organisation	West Dunbartonshire Council
37	Ludi Simpson	Individual	n/a
38	Mark Keenan	Individual	n/a
39	Prof Michael Anderson	Individual	n/a
40	John Rae	Organisation	CACI
41	Alison Clark	Organisation	Highland Council
42	Anne Jackson	Organisation	Locah Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority

Annex B – consultation points: sample of responses

Consultation Point 1: do you have any continuing difficulties in accessing or working with 2001 Census outputs? Are there any specific points you want to (re-) make in connection with the set of 2001 Census output products?

- No continuing difficulties with 2001 outputs.
- Lack of detailed information on ethnicity and religion on Scottish Census Results Online (SCROL).
- Bulk delivery - version of Comma Separated Values (CSV) created through SuperTable is not user friendly - requires a lot of manual intervention to get the data into a form that could be used.
- Poor quality/availability of metadata.
- SUPERTABLE software is very difficult to use for the preparation of Census Tables for special/non-standard geographies - SASPAC more intuitive.

Consultation Point 2: you are invited to review the list of tables and then (with supporting reasons please):

- a) identify any tables you think are no longer useful;
- b) suggest changes to existing tables to improve their usability;
- c) comment on any 2001-2011 comparability issues envisaged.

- Retain all tables at Output Area (OA) level where the questions allow.
- A few specific suggestions for tables that are no longer useful or could more helpfully be redesigned.
- Univariate (UV) Tables: these proved very useful in 2001 and should be repeated for all questions and classifications of questions.
- Key Statistics (KS) tables: these would be more useful showing counts rather than percentages.
- Some potential comparability issues due to changes in the question set, for example on ethnic background/ national identity, housing amenities and qualifications.

Consultation Point 3: thinking particularly of census questions that will be new in 2011. Please put forward your suggestions for additional tables to include in the pre-defined set, identifying (with supporting reasons) those you would like to see included as a priority.

- All new questions should be included in the UV tables.
- Variety of suggested cross-tabulations against the new questions on central heating type, long-term health conditions, level of English language ability, month/year of arrival into the UK and national identity
- Internet / paper completion suggested as another output variable - valuable for understanding channel preference.

Consultation Point 4: are there any specific data delivery requirements that you would like to be taken into account?

- Main access to detailed census results online via SCROL (or a successor system).
- Bulk data on DVD in CSV format - to enable offline working.
- Flexible table generation service.

- More census data to be available via the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website.
- Geo-referencing alongside the data so that it can be easily imported into Geographic Information System (GIS) packages.
- Metadata should be linked to the data.

Consultation Point 5: do you foresee any disadvantages with the proposed general approach to geography described for 2011 Census outputs?

- Retain current approach – 2001 worked well.
- Maintain comparability in higher geographies to 2001 Census.
- Postcode to Output Area Index provided the core headcounts for both postcode and administrative geography.

Consultation Point 6: are there any additional intermediate geographies for which you would like to have pre-defined census outputs available, and why? Are any of the existing intermediate geographies no longer useful to you?

- Information required at Community Health Care Partnership level – a key geography for health improvement and for local health care
- User-defined intermediate geographies, eg school catchment areas and Local Authorities (LAs) *excluding* areas within a National Park (because some LA functions are carried out by the relevant National Park Authority).
- SNS datazones
- Multi-member wards - and the higher geographies derived from these including neighbourhood partnerships, neighbourhood management areas and community planning areas Westminster & Scottish Parliamentary constituencies
- Match geographies available on Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) website e.g. Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS), Local Enterprise Companies (LEC's)

Consultation Point 7: subject to its feasibility, would you find value in having available a small area geography for reporting workplace data, and why?

- No strong demand overall.
- Some perceived benefits, eg for the Special Workplace Statistics Origin / Destination tables and for planning workplace-based health improvement.

Consultation Point 8: please note any other specific requirements you have in relation to geographical issues for census outputs?

- Ability to customise and save new geographies.
- Interactive map to self-specify boundaries with disclosure check
- Would be helpful not only save and be able to re-use user-defined geographies but to go further and have a means to sub-divide output area data on a ratio or percentage basis where boundaries do not match with our small areas.
- Opportunity for local authorities and other expert users to comment on any particularly unhelpful existing OAs with suggestions for change.

- Shape files provided in advance of, or in conjunction with, census data releases to allow immediate mapping of the data using GIS software.

Consultation Point 9: do you have any priorities for the order of release of particular census output products?

- The 2001 output timetable was logical and the 2011 Census should follow it.
- Budgets, reports and information given to the public based on the census data require that data be correct. So although keeping to the published output release timetable is important, avoiding the need to re-issue data is more important.
- A fair amount of consensus that order of release should be along the lines of: 1 Population estimates (by age/sex) for Council Areas; 2 Postcode to Output Area Index; 3 Univariate tables at Output Area level; 4 Census Area Statistics tables at Output Area level; 5 Output Area to Higher Area index; 6 look up table for changes to Output Areas between 2001 and 2011, i.e. mergers, deletions, additions; 7 digital boundaries for Output Areas; and 8 Standard Tables.

Consultation Point 10: are there any other points you want to make in relation to the developing GROS plans for the 2011 Census outputs?

- The availability of data at small area level is very important for strategic and service planning for the council, as well as for policy development. Concerned that there may not be another census after 2011. It is important that the type of information, currently available from the census, is kept up-to-date for the period beyond 2011.
- The omission of the household income question is a big concern as so many Scottish Government policies and guidance rely on the availability of household income data by a range of characteristics. The omission of the question will have a significant impact on housing strategy work.
- The pre-defined tables should include those which would be particularly difficult to produce on SCROL, such as employment tables, or the theme tables.
- Registration service within SCROL that allows certain users greater access to detailed data is desirable.
- After the 2001 Census, alerts for new data releases were sent out to users as data were published. These were helpful, and the process should be repeated after 2011.

Consultation Point 11: do you want to draw our attention to new technical solutions which would help us make census data more accessible to you or other users?

- Big demand for comma delimited .csv files with column headers to describe what each column of data represents.
- Hope that GRO will plan to publicise the arrival of the census data to a wide range of users and the public by using mash-ups, including use of Google Earth (and Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping) - perhaps by seeking help now from universities and / or other innovative partners.
- The use of API's as being pushed by EuroStat will increasingly become important, though with two caveats: a) the data should retain primacy over technology and the use of HyperCubes should not prevent the delivery of data; and b) speed of delivery is also important.

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- If feasible, providing outputs in GIS for specialist users would be useful, eg some local authorities have a lot of non-census spatial data already stored in GIS (from a variety of sources) which could then be combined with census data and layered using GIS to get a picture of an area.