

All about the Census

What is a Census?

A Census is a count of all people and households in an area on a particular day. In the UK, censuses are held every ten years and the last ones were held on Sunday 29 April 2001. The next round of UK censuses is planned for 2011.

The Census is important because it is the only survey to ask every person and every household the same core questions. This provides a detailed picture of the whole population and makes it easy to compare different parts of the country.

In Northern Ireland, the Census is planned and carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), a government agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel. Elsewhere in the UK, responsibility lies with the Office for National Statistics and the General Register Office for Scotland.

Why do we have a Census?

Central and local government, health boards and many other organisations use the information that the census provides to target their resources more effectively. Funding and planning for housing, education, health and transport services rely on this accurate information on people's needs for years to come.

Therefore every ten years the Census provides a critical snapshot of the nation. It counts the numbers of people living in each city, town and rural area. It tells us about each district and its population, including the balance of young and old people, what types of work people do, and the type of housing they live in.

The Census gives us invaluable facts about:

Population

This accurate count of the population in each local area helps central and local government determine how much money is needed to pay for the important services that you may use, such as schools, hospitals, transport, police and refuse collection.

Health

Using statistics produced on people's general health and age, government authorities will be better able to plan and fund social services and other associated Health resources.

Housing

Recording information on housing and the people who live there draws attention to inadequate accommodation. Used with details about the way we live as households, this points towards the need for new housing and future regeneration projects.

Employment

The Census shows how many people work in different occupations and industries throughout the country. Government and businesses can then plan jobs and training policies and highlight areas that need attention.

Transport

Information collected on travel to and from work, and the number of cars per household, contributes to the understanding of pressures on transport systems. From this, planning for roads and public transport can improve.

Ethnic Groups

Data on ethnic groups helps central and local government allocate resources and plan programmes to take account of the needs of different groups. It also helps with the monitoring and evaluation of equal opportunities policies.



Telephone (Northern Ireland)
0845 607 2011



Textphone (for hearing impaired people)
0845 608 2011



www.nisra.gov.uk/censustest

Why is there a Test?

Counting everyone in the UK is a big project. To make the most of this opportunity to learn about changes in society and the needs of the population, we must be sure that we will ask the right questions. In 2005, NISRA began developing new questions and revising some of the questions asked in the 2001 Census. This took account of the views of people, government departments, local authorities and other users of Census data.

The 2007 Census Test will enable us to determine which questions gave us the most useful information. This is why your answers are crucial to shaping the final 2011 Census questionnaire and why your participation is so important.

What happens next?

In autumn 2008, the government's proposals for the Census, including the questions to be asked, will be published. In 2009 there will be a Census Rehearsal using questions likely to be included in the 2011 Census. The final set of questions will ultimately be approved by the legislature early in 2010.

Who will see my information?

Information collected in the Census is confidential under the terms of the Census Act and will not be shared with any other Government Departments. It will only be used for statistical purposes. No information that identifies individuals or households will be disclosed to anyone outside the Census organisation.

For privacy reasons anyone aged 16 years and over may complete their questions on a separate questionnaire. Please telephone the Census Helpline to request an individual questionnaire.

Contact Details

If you have any questions or comments about the 2007 Census Test or require assistance in one of the languages listed on the 2007 Census Test Information leaflet delivered with your questionnaire, please contact the Northern Ireland Census Helpline:

by phone on: **0845 607 2011**

Alternatively you can write to: -

Census HQ
PO Box 1048
McAuley House
BELFAST
BT1 9DS

A Textphone is available for people with hearing impairment: **0845 608 2011**

Large Print and Braille booklets are available to help people with a visual impairment to complete the questionnaire.



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