

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	Census (Wales) Regulations 2020
Department:	Health & Social Services
Minister responsible:	Minister for Finance and Trefnydd
Start Date:	01/01/2020
Email:	stats.info.desk@gov.wales

What action is the Welsh Government considering and why?

The census takes place every 10 years and is a count of all people and households in the United Kingdom. It provides essential information from national to neighbourhood level for government, business, and the community. It is the only survey that provides a detailed picture of the entire population and is unique because it covers everyone at the same time and asks the same core questions everywhere.

The census questionnaire will be completed online or by paper questionnaires, providing information on a variety of topics.

The Census Act 1920 governs the conduct of the census, making provision for the taking of a census for obtaining statistical information with respect to the population. Secondary legislation in the form of a Census Order and Census Regulations is required before a census can be taken. The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007¹ made the UK Statistics Authority and its executive office, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), responsible for carrying out the census in England and Wales.

This integrated impact assessment is in relation to the Regulations for delivering the census in Wales on 21 March 2021.

Census data is used by a variety of users in many different ways. For example:

- Data is used by the government for resource allocations to major public services such as local authorities and health boards.
- Local services, such as local authorities and health boards use the data to meet local needs in health, education, transport and planning.
- Data on population and household composition is used by the government in preparation of population and household projections, which are published to support planning at national and local level.
- Small area data is used to identify areas of deprivation and inequalities amongst population groups, allowing the government to target services to the right areas and people.

Extensive user research has been conducted to support and inform the development of the topics and questionnaires, involving users from a wide range of backgrounds.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/contents>

Conclusion

How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

Extensive user research has been conducted to support and inform the development of the topics and questionnaires, involving users from a wide range of backgrounds.

The Office for National Statistics have held a number of formal public consultations, supported by roadshows and open meetings as part of the planning and design for the 2021 Census. They have also worked with community groups, charities and other third-sector bodies to ensure that, as well as meeting the statistical needs of users, the census is supported, and completed, by all segments of the community. This has included a range of activity specifically in Wales.

Further information can be found in the census white paper '[Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#)'.

What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The census is a decennial survey of all people and households in the United Kingdom. It provides essential information from national to neighbourhood level for government, business, and the community.

Participation in the census is compulsory (enforceable under these Regulations). It is essential that every effort is made to include everyone in the census as it is the only data collection which provides a detailed picture of the entire population and is unique because it covers everyone at the same time and asks the same questions everywhere. This makes it possible to obtain data for small population groups and small geographical areas.

Supporting better policy through better evidence will mean Welsh Government and public bodies' resources will be more effectively targeted. Without updated Census data, public bodies will be making planning and investment decisions based on outdated or less robust information, which has a significant impact on the efficiency of public expenditure. It significantly supports the evidence base we have on small groups of the population and protected characteristics, allowing a better understanding of inequalities and to support planning that is inclusive of all groups.

Completion of the census will cause a small burden to households, in terms of the time taken to complete it.

There are strict requirements on the UK Statistics Authority, and consequently on the ONS, to protect the confidentiality of the information collected. The information collected in the census will only be used for the production of statistics and statistical research. In all cases access to, or use of, census data must comply with requirements set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and data protection legislation (such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018), as well as the standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Further information about data protection can be found in the White Paper [Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#) and the privacy impact assessment published in 2015 at the initial research stage – [The Census and Future Provision of Population Statistics and England and Wales: Privacy Impact Assessment for the Initial Research Stage](#). A comprehensive Data Protection Impact Assessment is due for publication before the 2021 Census operation takes place. It will take account of the full technical design to be used during the census, as well as how data are to be processed and protected.

In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,
- avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

The data collected from the census will allow better policy and local well-being objectives to be developed through better evidence, meaning resources can be more effectively targeted, be as inclusive as possible and supporting our measurement of progress towards the seven well-being goals.

The burden of completing the census will be kept to a minimum by providing supporting documentation to help individuals when completing the questionnaires and using questions that have been tested, and are easily understood. Individuals will also be able to complete the questionnaire online or via returning a paper questionnaire.

How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

The ONS will produce a post-census report, reviewing the entire operation, which will be published alongside census outputs. ONS are also planning to bring forward proposals for how future census type data will be collected in the years following the 2021 Census and will make a recommendation to Government on the future of the census.