

Why We Need A Census

How the Census benefits us all



Why a Census?

We all use public services at various times – including schools, health services, roads and libraries. These services need to be planned, and in such a way that they keep pace with the fast-changing patterns of modern life. Yet it is impossible to plan services for ‘invisible’ people. We need accurate information on the numbers of people, where they live and what their needs are.

Every ten years the Census sets the record straight. Uniquely, it gives us a picture of the entire population. It counts the numbers of people living in each city, town and country area. It tells us something about each area and its population, including the state of their health, what jobs they do, and the type of housing they live in.

Because the same questions are asked and the information is recorded in the same way, the Census allows us to compare different groups of people across Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

The information it provides enables billions of pounds of taxpayers' money to be targeted effectively. The Census gives us invaluable data in the following areas:



People

The numbers and age of people affect the amount of money allocated for a range of services including health services at regional and local level. The information will also be used to help plan for schools and the needs of the elderly.



Housing

Questions about your home will help in assessing current and future demand for housing and the housing needs of particular groups such as families with young children and the elderly. Measures of inadequate housing and overcrowding will also assist in planning for the future.



Other factsheets:

1. *The Census*
3. *Census 2001 – What's New?*
4. *Counting Everyone in – the Big Challenge*
5. *The Census Organisation*
6. *Census Jobs*
7. *The Census and the Law*
8. *Census Taking Through the Ages*
9. *The Census Questions*



Employment

Knowing how many people work in different jobs and industries in particular areas means that skill shortages and training needs can be identified and jobs for the future planned. We ask about your employer's address to allow measurement of travel-to-work flows. No contact will be made with your employer.



Transport

Information on how you get to and from work and how many people own cars helps to identify future transport patterns and in the development of schemes to improve public transport and relieve traffic congestion.



Health and Caring

Getting a picture of people's health helps in planning the right services for your area. Information on general health will help predict the GP and other health services needed in your community in the future. Similarly, information on the amount of unpaid caring will help social services provision to be assessed.



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