

**Other factsheets:**

- 1. *The Census*
- 2. *Why We Need a Census*
- 3. *Census 2001 – What's New?*
- 4. *Counting Everyone in – the Big Challenge*
- 6. *Census Jobs*
- 7. *The Census and the Law*
- 8. *Census Taking Through the Ages*
- 9. *The Census Questions*



**The Census timetable – Key Milestones**

- September 2000 Census Area Managers in post.
- End October 2000 Census District Managers in post.
- Mid February 2001 Census Team Leaders in post.
- Mid March 2001 Census Enumerators in post.
- Early April 2001 Census forms delivered to all homes  
Census advertising campaign begins.
- April 29 2001 CENSUS DAY.
- Early May 2001 Post back of Census forms.
- May-June 2001 Census Coverage Survey conducted to check on any under-count in main Census.
- June 2001 Electronic scanning of returned forms, data capture and coding begins.
- March 2002 Electronic scanning, data capture and coding completed.
- Summer 2002 The main national and local results will be released to a pre-announced timetable.  
to Summer 2003



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# The Census organisation

## Organising the 2001 Census



**A major endeavour**

Carrying out a census of the population is a huge undertaking. Every household in the land – some 650,000 in Northern Ireland – must be visited and everyone must be counted.

This factsheet gives a glimpse into the organisation behind an exercise on this scale.

Work on the 2001 Census began almost as soon as the last census in 1991 had been taken and since then significant planning and testing has been carried out at each stage of development. The Registrar General, an official of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel, is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for conducting the Census.



**Census testing – ‘trial runs’**

In June 1997 a major Census Test was carried out to evaluate new collection and processing methods, alternative styles of Census form and to test public reaction to a number of new and revised questions.

As a result of the test several changes were made, including a new form design and the introduction of the post-back method for the return of completed Census forms, rather than personal collection of forms by enumerators.

In April 1999 a full Census Rehearsal covering some 148,000 households was held in nine areas across the UK including Northern Ireland. This tested Census form delivery and collection procedures and is also testing the systems for processing data and producing outputs. It was also a final opportunity to test people's reaction to the questions.



**Planning and recruitment**

For the full Census the first major task is to divide Northern Ireland into some 2,600 areas known as Enumeration Districts. Each district contains an average of about 250 households (or about 650 people). Maps showing the boundaries of each district are produced to help the enumerators (Census-takers) plan their work.

About a year before Census Day (29 April 2001) the recruitment of a 3,000 strong temporary field force began. These are at the heart of the operation and comprise Census Area Managers, District Managers, Team Leaders, and roughly 2,600 enumerators. Each Team Leader will be responsible for up to 10 enumerators.



### **Publicity**

Beginning in April, a publicity campaign will be undertaken to raise awareness of the Census using TV, poster, radio and newspaper advertising. Every household in Northern Ireland will also receive an advance information leaflet.



### **Delivering the Census to your door**

The enumerators are the people who take the Census to the public. Up to three weeks before Census Day the enumerators will begin delivering the forms to every household. Enumerators will try to make contact with each householder when they first call. If they cannot, the enumerator will make a second visit. If there is still no response, he / she will post the Census form/s through the letterbox.

It is then up to every household to post back their completed form as soon as possible after Census Day. Any household which does not do this will be visited again by the enumerator.

Enumerators can give advice on a variety of situations and will know what to do if, for example, someone is away on holiday, a house is empty, or the property is a communal establishment such as a prison, hospital or school. They will answer queries and help people who may have difficulty filling in their forms.

A telephone helpline (calls charged at local rate) will be open every day during the Census enumeration period to answer public enquiries. Bilingual helpline advisers will be available to answer questions in a number of languages other than English. Special assistance will be provided for the blind and deaf communities.



### **The processing of data**

Once forms have been posted back, the massive task of producing Census statistics begins. The forms will be electronically scanned, the data captured and the textual responses coded. The images will then be written to microfilm for long-term storage. This phase of the operation is due to be completed by March 2002.



### **Checking the figures**

Once the Census has been taken, a check will be made in May-June 2001 on how well the Census counted people. This is done to ensure that the final count is as accurate as possible. During this exercise – the Census Coverage Survey – interviewers will revisit a sample of 300,000 households across the UK (10,000 in Northern Ireland) and carry out a doorstep interview. The responses are compared with the returns for the main Census.



### **Census results**

The first results from the Census will be published in late Summer 2002. The main core Census results will be published in a series of products over the subsequent year and will largely be electronic based, making use of the internet. Paper publications will also be made available following consultation with users on their requirements.

The proposed outline order of publication or supply is:

- Initial release of populations by age and sex for District Council areas.
- Reports with standard statistics concurrently covering all areas in Northern Ireland at ward level and above.
- Summary publication for the UK as a whole.
- Census Area Statistics (statistics for small areas).
- Statistics on migration and workplace.
- A service for customised output/workplace and migration statistics.
- Topic theme reports, focusing on specific subjects like the labour market or health.



### **Secret and safe**

The information written on a Census form is only used to produce statistics and to facilitate research. The Registrar General and his staff are bound by law to make sure that no personal information which enables individuals or households to be identified is disclosed. The information will only be used to produce information about the population in general.

There is only one exception to this rule. The Census is compulsory. If an individual refuses to complete his or her form properly, the form could be produced as evidence in court.