

Census Advisory Group (CAG)
McAuley House
Thursday, 6th October 2011.

<u>Present:</u>	Mr R Beatty	Census Office, NISRA - Chair
	Mr B Green	Census Office, NISRA
	Dr I Shuttleworth	School of Geography, Archaeology & Palaeoecology (QUB)
	Dr T Dignan	Economic Research and Evaluation
	Mr J Frey	Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
	Mr J Power	NI Assembly
	Mrs J McCarley	Electoral Office NI
	Mr N Rogers	Independent Consultant
	Mr R Ramsey	Ulster Bank Capital Markets

<u>Apologies:</u>	Dr A Marshall	Queens University, Belfast (QUB)
	Mr C McIlheney	PricewaterhouseCoopers
	Mr S Bloomer	NI Council for Voluntary Action
	Mr D McKinstry	Equality Commission for NI
	Dr Dermot O'Reilly	School of Epidemiology & Public Health (QUB)
	Prof D Martin	University of Southampton

<u>Secretary:</u>	Joanne McHugh	Census Office, NISRA
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr Beatty welcomed members to the meeting, thanked those present for their attendance and recorded apologies for those unable to attend.

Mr Beatty welcomed Richard Ramsey, CBI representative, to his first CAG meeting. Mr Beatty also advised CAG that Siobhan Watson (SOLACE representative from Belfast City Council) was leaving her post and that SOLACE had been contacted about a replacement - reply still to be received.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted. Mr Beatty also confirmed that both actions were closed but apologised to CAG in respect of action 2 - it had not been possible to arrange a demonstration of the internet response channel prior to the system going live.

3. Census Update

The meeting was structured around a presentation given by Mr Green. The presentation provided CAG members with a further update in respect of 2011 Census preparations and also information on follow up action post Census Day.

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Arising out of the presentation the following points were raised:

- Over 20k 'new addresses' found as part of address check.

Mr Green, in response to a query from Mr Dignan as to whether there was a pattern to the 'new addresses' advised that the addresses were scattered across Northern Ireland.

Mr Green also confirmed to Mr Frey that although, from a 2011 Census Address Register perspective, the addresses were referred to as 'new addresses' this did not necessarily mean they were all new build.

Dr Shuttleworth queried whether use could be made of the information gathered in respect of the 'new addresses'. Mr Green advised that legal advice received stated that under current census legislation (Census Act (NI) 1969) no use could be made of the information - it was Census Office's intention, however, to challenge this advice.

- Briefing held with parties at Stormont.

Mr Beatty, in response to a query from Dr Shuttleworth, advised CAG that the political parties had been very supportive, with the number of attendees varying from meeting to meeting as other business priorities allowed.

- Publicity / Media Appearances

CAG were informed about the media appearances undertaken by Census Office managers during the publicity campaign. Mr Beatty also played CAG the main 30 second TV advert and went on to explain that, post Census Day, a series of 10 second TV adverts had been used. The 10 second adverts became 'harder' in message as the campaign progressed, with the possibility of a fine not being mentioned until the end of the campaign.

Mr Beatty also advised CAG that savings had been made in respect of the TV advertising as the 30 second TV advert used had originally been commissioned by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Census Office had only to make minor amendments for the advert to be appropriate for NI. Mr Rogers stated it was good to see movement towards community based advertising.

Mr Beatty advised CAG that during his appearance on 'On Your behalf' (Radio Ulster) it had become clear that the public confused the Electoral Office with the Census Office as he had received several questions about a booklet the Electoral Commission had issued the previous day.

Mr Beatty also advised CAG that press releases were issued on a fortnightly basis and that these were mainly picked up by the more local papers. Newspaper adverts also appeared in the main Belfast papers (Belfast Telegraph, New Letter & Irish News) but only on Census weekend.

- Advertising Campaign - Evaluation

Following a query from Mr Dignan, Mr Beatty updated CAG on the evaluation of the publicity campaign. Millward Brown had been commissioned, through the advertising agency, to measure awareness of the campaign. Awareness of the poster campaign in particular was judged to be above industry standards.

Mr Dignan asked whether there had been a positive response to the completion of the questionnaire. Mr Beatty advised that the research suggested a more positive response amongst the older generation but that the younger generation's view was they would complete the questionnaire if they had to. There was anecdotal evidence that some in their 20s tended to assume that the questionnaire would be completed by their parents.

CAG confirmed that they were content with the advertising campaign.

- Internet Response Rate

Mr Frey asked about the rate of internet response and was advised that it was at the predicted level of 15% (ie 15% of all returns were made through the internet) - up from 9% at the time of the Rehearsal, although there was no publicity campaign for the Rehearsal. Mr Beatty advised that on line completion was regarded as a big success and that even though a "graceful deferral" facility had been in place it had not been required. Mr Rogers suggested that the geography of the Internet response would be valuable information.

- Irish Language

Mr Beatty confirmed that Irish language groups had lobbied for the questionnaire to be available in Irish but that Peter Robinson, then the Finance and Personnel Minister, had advised in response to an Assembly question that the questionnaire would be in English only. This had been confirmed in the Census Order and Regulations.

During field operations the issue of completing the questionnaire in Irish was raised through the media. Mr Beatty informed members that, through media interviews, Census Office had explained that the legislation required an English response, but that non-compliance action would focus on those who had not responded.

Mr Green advised CAG that there were actually very few write in boxes on the questionnaire and that, as far as possible, all responses would be coded. The number of questionnaires involved was not available as yet. Mr Beatty advised CAG that, by a clear margin, the Polish translation information leaflet had been the most used.

Mr Beatty informed CAG that the telephone Contact Centre had been shared with ONS. There had been some initial teething problems, but these had been resolved very quickly. Mr Beatty also informed members that the Contact Centre was able to provide assistance in 60 languages.

- Follow Up Letters

Mr Green advised CAG that, in addition to enumerators in the field, Census Office had issued large volumes of reminder letters. With forms being returned at the same time, this had led to a period when customer services were inundated with queries. While processes were put in place to deal with the situation, important lessons have however been learned.

- Security

Mr Beatty enquired whether any members of CAG had been aware of the "Lulzec" incident that had taken place on 21 June 2011 – an internet group claimed to have possession of all UK Census returns. Only Mr Shuttleworth had been aware at the time, and he had quickly realised it was a hoax. Mr Beatty stated that it had similarly become clear to the Census Offices that the allegation was completely unfounded. ONS had released a statement, re-assuring the public that the data were safe, and the story had faded rapidly.

- Non Compliance

Mr Green described the non-compliance process and noted that prosecution was difficult as, for example, the name of the individual refusing to complete the questionnaire had to be established in order for an interview under caution to take place. However, Mr Green suggested that the non-compliance process could be regarded as successful if it led to more questionnaires being returned.

Mr Green also advised that a partial response follow up team (using the phone number supplied on the questionnaire) had been in place during field operations and that this had proved successful.

- Outputs

The first results (numbers by age / sex) are scheduled for summer 2012. Mr Power queried why it took so long and was advised that, unlike the Republic of Ireland, adjustments for under enumeration are made during downstream processing.

In a response to a query from Dr Shuttleworth Mr Green advised that although it was too early to quantify a response rate, it was expected to be comparable with 2001 (i.e. around 95%) and in line with that for the other regions of the UK.

4. Independent Information Assurance Review (IIAR)

Mr Beatty informed CAG that the three Census Offices had jointly commissioned a team, led by John Dowdall recently retired Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland, to examine information assurance procedures and governance across the UK.

CAG members had received a link to the IIAR provisional report (published February 2011) and been provided with a paper copy of the Executive Summary. The conclusion of this report was that "the public can be assured that the information they provide to the 2011 Censuses will be well protected". The Report also made no further requirements of the Census Offices regarding information assurance. The final report from the IIAR team was due to be published in 2012.

CAG were advised that Census data would be held on a standalone secure server closely modelled on the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) server. NISRA was currently working towards accreditation for this system - due in November 2011.

Mr Beatty advised that Census Office were the first part of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to undergo such a review. Mr Frey advised that an Information Assurance Compliance Unit had been set up within the NIHE.

5. United Kingdom Statistics Authority (the Authority)

Mr Beatty informed CAG that the Authority were responsible for assessing all statistics produced by central government including the 2011 Census. The Authority report on the assessment of the Census, published in June 2011 (link provided), had confirmed that, subject to certain actions being taken by Census Office (see below), the Authority was content to designate 2011 Census outputs as National Statistics.

Mr Beatty also advised CAG that although the Authority had made 10 requirements of Census Office, these requirements were not about statistical quality, rather that Census Office should better communicate its intentions to users.

To meet one of the Authority requirements (about disseminating information about the CAG) it was Census Office's intention to place CAG member's names / organisation details on the NISRA website

along with copies of minutes of CAG meetings and the group's Terms of Reference. CAG were asked to agree to this and those present provided their consent. It was also agreed that an email would issue to those members not at the meeting seeking their agreement. It was also agreed that all future CAG minutes (including this meeting) were to be signed off within one month of the date of the meeting so the minutes can be placed on the NISRA website as soon as possible.

Action: Joanne McHugh

6. Outputs

A number of output events have already been held for users and future events are planned. On the current timetable a full list of table specifications is to be available later in the autumn (working closely with ONS / NRS in respect of harmonisation). The Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) is to be the primary dissemination platform for 2011 Census results. Census Office will issue a paper about table specifications to CAG, and feedback from CAG was encouraged.

Action: Mr Beatty / Mr Green

Census Office is also aware that users considered the release of metadata in 2001 to be slow. Accordingly, it is planned that 2011 supporting metadata is to issue along with outputs. CAG were also advised that the microdata project was gathering momentum and that proposals in respect of Samples of Anonymised Records (SARs) had been received from the Cathie Marsh Centre. Again, in 2001, there had been complaints about the late release of SARS.

Agreement has been reached in principle for the UK Census database to be managed by ONS with the feasibility of one unit providing UK output being investigated. Mr Green advised CAG that a commissioned service would be available although the timing is still to be established.

Mr Rogers questioned whether polygons would continue to work on their current basis - he stated that this was a technical issue but that polygons needed to be geolocated to a common system. Mr Beatty stated that Census Office use the Irish Grid which is different from that used by ONS; this would be an interesting point for ONS to consider in creating a UK database.

Mr Green advised CAG that the NINIS system is being revamped with development work on track to be available before the 2011 Census outputs are released. The intention is to populate the new NINIS system with some 2001 Census outputs, before the release of the 2011 outputs.

7. Geography

Mr Beatty confirmed to CAG that Census Office would proceed with 2011 Census outputs using current wards and that a paper would issue shortly to that effect. The paper will cover NISRA's planned response to the introduction of new local government boundaries, now scheduled for introduction before the 2015 local elections.

Action: Mr Beatty

Both Mr Rogers and Mr Frey stated that comparability over time was very important along with usability in relation to deprivation.

Mrs McCarley advised CAG that a Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review is out for consultation at the moment.

Mr Beatty also informed members that Dr Caven (Registrar General), Dr Gillan (NISRA, Labour Market and Economic Statistics) and he had attended the Finance and Personnel Committee on 28 September 2011. The briefing was in respect of NISRA, not just Census Office, but that Committee members had been very interested in the Census (the future of the Census) and small area geography.

Mr Dignan advised Census Office that 2001 Census small area outputs were hard to use and that they needed to be flattened out in 2011. This referred to the structure of the Excel spreadsheets with embedded titles. Census Office are aware of this and willing to meet separately with Mr Dignan to discuss.

Action: Mr Beatty / Mr Green

7. Beyond 2011

Mr Beatty advised CAG that Beyond 2011 was a formal project being taken forward by ONS although both NISRA and NRS were on the Steering Group. Formal consultation is to take place in November 2011. The Consultation paper will reference both NISRA and NRS (CAG members to be provided with the relevant link when available).

Action: Mr Beatty

Mr Beatty confirmed that the Beyond 2011 project at ONS will run through until 2014. NISRA plans to maintain a watching brief on the ONS led work and, at the appropriate point undertake a similar project for NI. It is anticipated that the projects in England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be closely co-ordinated.

8. AOB

There were no items of other business. Mr Beatty closed the meeting and thanked members for their attendance.