

PREM 19/2215

The 1981 census.

THE 1991 CENSUS

HOME AFFAIRS

AUGUST 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
14.9.79		<del>23.81</del>					
<del>27.9.79</del>		<del>4.3.81</del>					
<del>3.10.79</del>		<del>17.3.81</del>					
<del>4.10.79</del>		<del>24/1/81</del>					
<del>6.11.79</del>		<del>27.6.81</del>					
<del>3.2.79</del>		<del>13.7.83</del>					
<del>11.12.79</del>		<del>29.7.87</del>					
<del>11.12.79</del>		30.9.87					
<del>17.1.80</del>		\ /					
<del>31-1-80</del>							
<del>4.2.80</del>		PT					
<del>6.2.80</del>		CLOSED					
<del>7.2.80</del>		\ /					
<del>14.2.80</del>		—					
<del>20.2.80</del>							
<del>21-2-80</del>							
<del>6.3.80</del>							
19.3.80							
<del>28.4.80</del>							
<del>3.6.80</del>							
<del>10.6.80</del>							

PREM 19/2215

PART 1 ends:-

PAB to DHSS 30.9.87

PART 2 begins:-

DHSS to PAB 16.10.87

TO BE RETAINED AS TOP ENCLOSURE

**Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Documents**

Reference	Date
H(79) 71	01.11.79
H(79)15 <sup>th</sup> Meeting, Minute 1	06.11.79
H(80)4	25.01.80
H(80)8	30.01.80
H(80)3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting, Minutes 3 and 4	04.02.80
CC(80)7 <sup>th</sup> Conclusions, Minute 1 (extract)	21.02.80

The documents listed above, which were enclosed on this file, have been removed and destroyed. Such documents are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. When released they are available in the appropriate CAB (CABINET OFFICE) CLASSES

Signed     *Wayland*    

Date     29/10/15    

**PREM Records Team**

## Published Papers

The following published paper(s) enclosed on this file have been removed and destroyed. Copies may be found elsewhere in The National Archives.

1. Command Paper 8201: "1981 Census of Population: Confidentiality and Computing"  
HMSO [ISBN 0 10 182010 0]
2. Census 1981: Preliminary Report England and Wales  
HMSO, June 1981 [ISBN 0 11 690755 X]

Signed AWayland Date 29/10/15

**PREM Records Team**



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

30 September 1987

*From the Private Secretary*

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 29 September about the 1991 census. She has asked if it is essential that this must be held in 1991, or if there is an option of going longer than ten years with a census, say for twelve years. I should be grateful for a short note on this.

P.A. Bearpark

Bruce Calderwood Esq  
Department of Health and Social Security.

EA

010



CCB9

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

1991 CENSUS

Does it have to be

Content to have a census in 1991?

1991 - could it be

- go longer than 10 years - say to 12 yrs. per 29/9

In 1983, when we decided not to hold a mid-term census in 1986, Norman Fowler announced that planning would proceed on the assumption that the next census would be in 1991. The Census Offices have been planning on this assumption but up to now no firmer decision has been taken.

We need now to take a decision on this because expenditure will start to mount from next year. The precise content, assuming we go ahead, and especially the sensitive issue of whether to include an ethnic question, need not be settled yet.

Earlier this year officials carried out a thorough examination of the needs for census type information across Government Departments, and other possible ways of meeting these needs. Malcolm Rifkind and I concluded that the best option would be to hold a census in 1991, broadly on the lines of the successful 1981 Census, but with the possibility of some extra questions funded by departments who wanted them.

With Malcolm Rifkind's agreement, I put these proposals to H Committee in July with the enclosed paper. The Committee has approved these proposals, subject to some detailed comments by members on the funding arrangements. Tom King indicated that he proposes to hold a Census in Northern Ireland at the same time.

If you are content, I will write to Cabinet colleagues informing them of the decision to hold a census and arrange for a suitable Parliamentary Question and Answer.

*Jm.*

29 September 1987

J M

PROPOSAL FOR A CENSUS OF POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN 1991

Background

1. A census of population has been carried out every 10 years in Great Britain from 1801 to 1981 except in 1941. Planning is proceeding on the assumption that there will be a census in 1991, as was announced in a Parliamentary reply in July 1983 (see Appendix). Most developed countries have censuses every 5 or 10 years and a European Communities Directive has recently been adopted, calling on member countries to hold one in 1991.
2. A decision in principle is needed in advance of the 1987 PES on whether Great Britain is to hold a census in 1991. The estimated cost of the type of census proposed would be £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices, most of it in the years 1990/91 to 1991/92.

The need for information

3. Government, health and local authorities and many commercial firms need reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households at local, regional and national levels to manage their business effectively. The public sector needs the information to form and evaluate policy, to distribute resources effectively (around £11 billion to local authorities and £13 billion to health authorities annually), to plan and target services in a way that meets the most pressing needs of local populations and to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of these services using measures such as performance indicators. The information needs to be authoritative, sufficiently comprehensive at both national and local level and comparable for all parts of the country.
4. This need is currently met by holding a census every 10 years covering the whole population and updating the population estimates between censuses using registrations of births and deaths and estimates of migration based on data such as the number of people



changing their general practitioner, changes in the electorate, and other material from sample surveys. However, over time such data accumulates inaccuracies. Pre-census 1981 population estimates for local authority areas were some 2 per cent in error on average and up to 12 per cent out in extreme cases such as Oxford and South Buckinghamshire. Errors for particular groups such as elderly people were considerably higher in some areas. Without the corrective effect of the 1981 census, the estimates would have gone further adrift, in some cases quite rapidly.

#### Ways of meeting the need

5. OPCS and GRO(S) have examined carefully a wide range of possible alternatives to a full census in 1991 in consultation with user departments, the Central Statistical Office and the Treasury. They have concluded that, although some of these would cost less (at least in the short term), none would produce the full range of required information. The census also provides creditability. If there were no census in 1991, it is likely that some local authorities would collect their own data and use the results to challenge the Government's statistical basis for allocating funds. Postponement or cancellation would also go against the European Community Directive mentioned in paragraph 1 and put us out of step with other developed countries.

6. A full census is therefore recommended in 1991. The Census Act 1920 does not specify the length of the census questionnaire but that in 1981 was short and straightforward. The census met essential government needs without placing an undue burden on the public, was generally acclaimed as a success and is a good model for 1991. A census of the same general size and scope as that in 1981 but with appropriate amendments would cost about £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices. 75 per cent of this expenditure would fall in the years 1989/90 to 1992/93.

7. It is proposed that:

- a. there should be a decision in principle to take a census of Great Britain in 1991;

b. funding should be primarily by:

i. allocation of sufficient funds to the Census Offices to cover a census broadly equivalent to that of 1981; and

ii. additionally by PES transfers from departments if they require extra items.

This has the support of Treasury officials.

It is proposed to seek agreement to this proposal so that the decision can be taken into account in the current PES round. The precise content of the census would then be considered and a White Paper published in 1988. Final decisions would be embodied in the necessary Order in Council in 1990.

010

CUBS



DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY  
1-19 VICTORIA STREET  
LONDON SW1H 0ET  
Telephone (Direct dialling) 01-215) 5147  
GTN 215) 5147  
(Switchboard) 01-215 7877

From the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
and Minister of Trade and Industry

THE RT HON KENNETH CLARKE QC MP

Rt Hon John Moore MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of Health  
and Social Security  
Alexandra Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON  
SE1 6BY

NBM

29 July 1987

Dear John,

1991 CENSUS

*WILL REQUEST IF REQUIRED*

I note the proposals set out in the paper attached to your letter of 3 July. The use made of Census information in my Department is not extensive but I recognise the needs other colleagues will see for the Census. I do hope however that a very serious effort will be made to contain the cost and complexity of the exercise as these have always seemed to me in the past to be excessive in relation to the real practical value of the data.

I am sending copies to other members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KENNETH CLARKE

JY5ABG

file

da

13 July 1983

Date of the Next Census

Thank you for your letter of 12 July. The Prime Minister is content for you to answer this week the Written Parliamentary Question attached to your letter.

W F S RICKETT

C.A.H. Phillips, Esq.,  
Department of Health and Social Security.

SRP

cc/87



Prime Minister  
Content for Mr Fowler  
to announce that  
there will be no  
census in 1986, as  
agreed  
by H.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Willie Rickett Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street

Yes Mr  
12 June 1983  
LH  
12/3

Dear Willie,

DATE OF THE NEXT CENSUS

We spoke this afternoon about a Parliamentary Question we hope to answer this week on the next Census.

On 8 May my Secretary of State secured the agreement of 'H' Committee that there should be no mid-term census in 1986. I attach a copy of the letter from Mr Whitelaw.

The announcement was in fact held up pending the General Election, but I have today been given 'H's approval to the PQ as attached.

May we proceed to put down the PQ for answer by Mr Fowler this week please?

Yours ever,  
Colin Phillips

C A H PHILLIPS  
Private Secretary

DRAFT OF INSPIRED PQ

Proposed Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if a decision has been reached about whether there will be a mid-term Census of Population in 1986.

Proposed Answer:

The Government has decided that the case for a mid-term Census in 1986 <sup>in England, Wales and Scotland</sup> is not sufficiently strong to justify the cost and burden on the public which would be involved. Planning will therefore proceed on the assumption that the next Census will be in 1991. Further consideration will be given in due course to whether alternative sources might help to provide useful information on population and <sup>other</sup> ~~housing~~ matters in the mid-1980s.

RJ  
20/4



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

8 May 1983

2868 CRP  
10/5  
Book  
mail

Dear Norman

DATE OF THE NEXT CENSUS

RECEIVED IN THE  
OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE FOR  
INTERNAL SERVICES

Thank you for your letter of 24 April in which you invited the H Committee to agree that there should be no mid-term census in 1986, and that the next census should be in 1991.

It is clear that a mid-term census would be very useful to the local authorities, but I agree with you that the cost involved and the burden on the public could not be justified, and that we should instead see if alternative sources might help to provide information on population and housing matters in the mid-1980s. I have seen Jim Prior's letter to you of 5 May. He says he has no comment on your proposal to announce a decision, but you may wish to amend the text of the announcement to make it quite clear that it applies only to England, Wales and Scotland. Subject to that, you may take it that H Committee agrees that there should be no mid-term census in 1986.

The submission from the Registrars General refers to the inquiry of the Home Affairs Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration into whether the next census should contain a question on racial or ethnic origin. Their report will probably be published on 11 May. It might be best not to announce the decision before then, though I imagine you will not want to delay it for long after the publication of the report, since that may itself generate speculation about the date of the next census.

I am sending copies of this letter to members of H Committee, to Lord Bellwin, to Sir John Boreham, to the Registrars General for England and Wales and for Scotland, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John Boreham*  
*Walden*

SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE	
COPIES TO	Mr Thatcher (OAS)
	Mr Walden

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler, MP

cjt

Prime Minister ✓ Press 2



Have  
Affair  
WM  
24/6

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY**

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

Willie Rickett Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street

22 June 1981

Dear Willie

I enclose a copy of the Foreword to the preliminary report which gives the first results of the 1981 Census of Population in England and Wales, as requested.

Yours ever  
Mary McVerry

MARY MCVERRY (MRS)  
Private Secretary

encl



12 JUN 1981

## Foreword

This preliminary report gives the first results from the Census of Population in England and Wales which was held on 5 April 1981.

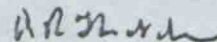
The figures in the report are still provisional, but they are published at this early stage because they provide important new evidence about the population in particular areas. They have been obtained from summaries prepared by each of the census officers for their areas. These provisional figures will be replaced by final corrected figures in the detailed county reports and in county monitors which it is planned to publish from November 1981 onwards. If all goes well, the main priority tables for all the counties will be available by May 1982 in time for the Block Grant calculations for 1983-84. The remaining detailed reports and those on particular topics will be published as soon as possible thereafter, considerably earlier than in previous censuses. The proposed timetable is given in the report.

The provisional figures show that the population of England and Wales on the census night of 5/6 April 1981 was 49.0 million. This is within 0.2 per cent of the number which had been expected from estimates based on the 1971 Census, on the known numbers of births and deaths in 1971-81 and on estimates of international migration obtained mainly from samples of travellers who were interviewed in the International Passenger Survey. However, the preliminary census results show much larger

differences from the previous estimates for some particular local authority areas. This is mainly because there is little information in between the censuses about the internal migration between one local area and another.

For the first time, the preliminary report includes a detailed commentary on the results. This has been prepared at speed in the hope that it will add to the usefulness of the tables by bringing out general patterns and salient features. However, it is not possible to absorb all the implications of so many results in such a short time. Further comments may be published later. A programme for evaluating the quality of the results is also planned.

It is my pleasure to record that the 1981 Census of Population in England and Wales was carried out with comparatively few difficulties in the field or public relations. Great efforts were made to answer potential objections and misunderstandings in advance, and we were particularly helped by the fact that, as a result of decisions by the Government and by Parliament, the census form was the simplest since 1931. Particular thanks are due both to the members of the public for their co-operation and to the field force of census supervisors, census officers, assistant census officers and enumerators and my own staff for their devoted efforts during the census itself. The task of processing the results has now begun.



A R THATCHER  
Registrar General  
June 1981

010  
 Home Office Prime Minister

You may like to see this

1981 CENSUS - BACKGROUND NOTE FOR MINISTERS

MRP  
 24/3

When is the census

Census Day is Sunday 5 April. The 1981 census is the latest in a series of national population censuses which have been taken every ten years since 1801, except during the second world war.

Why a census is needed

The Census is our only means of knowing the number of people living in this country and in each local area.

The census produces a range of statistical information - on people, families, households, housing and workplaces. Its value lies in its being comprehensive - everyone is included.

The census provides a factual basis for management and policy decisions - especially in central and local government, but also in commerce and industry, training and education.

Allocation of central funds

Over £20,000 million is being distributed (in England and Wales) in 1981-82 by way of Rate Support Grant and allocations to health authorities. Central and local government must make decisions about priorities for spending the money available. The census results provide the essential facts. They give up-to-date information on the kind of people living in each local area and enable estimates to be made of the future demand on services.

## Cost

The Census is a cheap and efficient source of statistics. The cost of the Census in England and Wales (at 1979 survey prices) is £50 million - that is only about £1 a head.

## What happens

Between 20 and 23 March Enumerators will deliver an Advance leaflet to every household. This tells people that the Census is about to take place and summarises the reasons for having it. Forms will be delivered between 27 March and 2 April; the majority will be collected on Monday 6 April, and it is expected that all will have been collected by 9 April.

## The census form

The Census form asks eight fewer questions than in 1971. The Government is concerned to keep the form as short as possible, and the cost as low as possible.

The form can be understood easily. Most of the questions simply require a tick in the appropriate box. Anyone who needs help with filling in their census form should ask their Enumerator.

## Parliament's approval

The topics to be included in the 1981 Census were agreed in the Houses of Parliament and the forms were laid before them in the Census Regulations.

## Wales

In Wales householders will have the choice of a form in either English or in Welsh and an additional question asks about ability to speak, read or write Welsh.

### Ethnic groups

In England the form is in English and should be completed in English. For people who have difficulty with the English language, translations of the census questions and an explanatory leaflet will be available in nine foreign languages: Bengali, Hindi, Gujurati, Punjabi, Urdu, Greek, Turkish, Cantonese and Italian. The Census Enumerator will have copies of these. Householders who do not have a relative or friend who can help them complete the form, Enumerators will be able to arrange for an interpreter to help.

There is no question on race or ethnic origin in the census, nor on nationality, nor on year of entry to this country.

### Jobs for the unemployed

A campaign to recruit 103,000 Enumerators in England and Wales was launched through Jobcentres on 5 January. Preference was given to suitable registered unemployed people. Thousands of unemployed people have been offered temporary jobs as Enumerators. The basic fee is £124.

### Confidentiality

The census is not concerned with individuals as such - it is taken solely to compile statistics. No one outside the census organisation sees information about individual people or households - and that includes Government departments - and no administrative use is made of information about any individual person, family or household.

The Census Act 1920 provides legal penalties for unlawful disclosure of information and makes an offender liable to an unlimited fine or imprisonment, or both. No case is known of information given on a census form being used to the detriment of the person who provided it.

Names and addresses from the forms will not be fed into the computer when the data is processed, and the forms themselves are kept locked away in secure conditions for 100 years, when they become a matter of public record. Names and addresses are needed to ensure that a completed form is received from every household.

### The Results

The first population count for the whole country will be out about eight weeks after Census day. Tables of key statistics for individual counties will start coming out in November this year, and results for all counties should be out by July next year (1982). Between February and September next year additional analyses will be published, county by county. By the summer of 1984 all the main results, which include regional tables and comparisons, should be out.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
and Paymaster General  
Privy Council Office  
68 Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

24 March 1981

TOP DOCUMENT



10 DOWNING STREET

Njik

Can you let me know  
when this - or a variant -  
is agreed. I will need  
to warn P.M.

MAP  
10/3

\*

further pp

to 1 NJS

2 MAP please

MJS

1. NTS MS  
2. MAP



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY  
ALEXANDER FLEMING HOUSE  
ELEPHANT AND CASTLE  
LONDON S.E.1

TELEPHONE: 01-407 5522

*Home Affairs*

M A Pattison Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

*cc Press*

17 March 1981

*na*

*MR*

*Dear Mike*

*at 15.03*

*DHSS say*

You wrote to me on 2 March to tell me that the Prime Minister was content with the proposals for publishing a White Paper on the Government's response to the Report of the British Computer Society. You also said that your Press Office was content with 19 March for publication.

I now write to confirm that the White Paper will be published on 19 March and the event will be announced in a Written Answer by my Secretary of State. I attach, for information, a copy of the final confidential revise of the document.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries of members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever*  
*Mary McVerry*  
MARY McVERRY (MRS)  
Private Secretary

ENC



*Mona Khan*  
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AI

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

4th March 1981

*Dear Pen*

*✓ MJD*

*NUS to see*

Thank you for your letter of 27 February about the 1981 Census and publication of the White Paper on 19 March.

I confirm that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is in agreement with your Secretary of State's view that neither the Census launch nor publication of the White Paper requires a statement in the House of Commons.

*✓ MS*

Copies of this letter go to Mike Pattison (Number 10) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office). ✓

*Your sincerely*  
*N P M Huxtable*

N P M HUXTABLE

D Brereton Esq  
Private Secretary  
Department of Health and  
Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON SE1



*Hone  
Affairs*

2 March 1981

Thank you for your letter of 27 February, about the 1981 census.

The Prime Minister is content with the proposals for publishing a White Paper on the Government's response to the Report of the British Computer Society.

I can also confirm that our Press Office is content with 19 March for publication.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Heyhoe (Paymaster General's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

MAP

Don Brereton Esq  
Department of Health and Social Security.

*256*

*u. Jones* L.

PRIME MINISTER (*through NTS*)

Mr Jenkin has now received the British Computer Society's report on the security of census information. Unfortunately, the Society have gone some way beyond their mandate.

He proposes to publish their report and the Government's reaction to their recommendations as a White Paper on 19 March. The census field operation will be launched on the same day. He sees no need for a Parliamentary statement for either.

You may wish to see in particular para. 3 of the draft White Paper, setting out the Government's response to the Society's recommendations - Flag A. The most far reaching of the recommendations are in paragraphs 35 and 51 of the report and Mr. Jenkin is not disposed to implement either: he rejects paragraph 51 and in effect defers action on paragraph 35.

*WJ*

Content that Mr Jenkin should go ahead on the basis he proposes?

27 February 1981



218  
census office

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

27 February 1981

Mike Pattison Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

Dear Mike,

1981 CENSUS

... I attach a letter to the Home Secretary seeking approval to  
publish a White Paper on the Government's response to the  
Report of the British Computer Society on the security of  
... the White Paper (draft attached) on 19 March and launch the  
Census Field Operation the same day.

attached  
... to  
file jacket

The launch will entail a press conference to announce the timetable for the census and to present the census form and the two leaflets (attached). We will also take the opportunity to explain what the public have to do, and explain the help that is available to members of the public who need it (translations of the census questions and explanatory leaflets in nine languages; interpreters and language advice centres; help for the elderly, the handicapped and partially sighted).

The occasion would also be used to unveil the census advertising campaign. Journalists would be given copies of press advertisements and we hope that videos of television advertisements will be available for viewing.

In my Secretary of State's view neither the launch nor the White Paper require any form of Parliamentary Statement. You will recall that the Census Order was debated in the House last Session. May we have agreement to proceed as planned? The draft White Paper will be circulated to the Cabinet in the usual way.

I am copying this letter to David Heyhoe in the Paymaster General's Office and David Wright in Sir Robert Armstrong's Office.

Yours sincerely

D Brereton  
Private Secretary

enc.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1

24 February 1981

Dear Willie,

During the debate on the draft Order-in-Council for the 1981 Census of Population, I told the House that the British Computer Society (BCS) would be invited to report on the security arrangements for the 1981 Census. The Society carried out a similar review of the 1971 Census and their report was published with the Government's comments in a White Paper in 1973.

On this occasion the BCS has carried out its review before the Census is taken and has submitted the report to the Registrars General. The report states that the BCS considers the Census operation to be well protected and has recommended, inter alia, that publicity should be given to this fact in order to give the public the necessary degree of confidence.

I am proposing, with the agreement of the Secretary of State for Scotland, to arrange with the authorities of the House for the report to be published in a White Paper which would also contain HM Government's replies to the recommendations and an introductory statement by the Government. I am enclosing a copy of the draft introduction and replies, from which you will see what other recommendations the BCS has made.

The BCS has ranged beyond their terms of reference, which related solely to computer security, and have included recommendations to set up an independent body to monitor the Census Offices' compliance with their own security procedures and another independent body to investigate complaints by the public about the census. The draft reply postpones a decision on the first of these recommendations and rejects the second outright following arguments set out by the Government of the day when the identical proposal was put forward after the last census. I take the view that it is quite improper, as well as potentially embarrassing to our Departments, for the BCS to have exceeded their terms of reference in this way and we will consider whether in the light of this we are willing to invite them again to undertake such an exercise.

Perhaps you would let me know if you wish to comment on the enclosed draft, a copy of which is already in the hands of your officials. I fear there is some urgency on this as it would be far better to publish the White Paper on 19 March when I plan to launch the main census campaign with a press conference rather than later, not least because the less welcome aspects of the report are less likely to attract attention in the media if it is associated with

E. R.

the general launch. HMSO suggested that they would need clearance by this Friday, 27 February, to make this deadline. I am sure we can manage with less time than that but it would be very helpful if you could reply in the next few days.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland. My office are consulting No 10 and the Paymaster General's Office on the timing of publication.

*You are*

*Ratna*

PART I    Government Statement

Shortly before census day 1971, the British Computer Society (BCS) was invited to review the security arrangements of the census. At the same time the Royal Statistical Society was invited to make an independent study. The reports of the two Societies were published in July 1973 in the White Paper Security of the Census of Population, Command 5365, which also contained the Government's reply.

In its report (para 2.3.6 of the White Paper), the BCS recommended that there should be independent monitoring of the census operation at census processing centres and the Society offered to assist in such a task at future censuses. Following from this, the Secretary of State for Social Services announced that the British Computer Society would again be invited to report on the security arrangements being made for the 1981 census (debate on the Census Order, 29 April 1980, Hansard column 1331). The terms of reference agreed by the Secretary of State for Social Services and the Secretary of State for Scotland were:

"To consider the confidentiality arrangements made by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, and the General Register Office for Scotland for the 1981 Census, so far as they relate to computing, taking account of the sensitivity of information held, the risks of a breach of security and the costs of precautionary measures; and to make recommendations."

The Government are very grateful to the BCS for carrying out the study and for doing so quickly to enable its Report to be published well before census day.

The Government welcome the Society's conclusions on security and the protection of confidentiality. Paragraph 8 of the Society's report is as follows:

8. . The Society is pleased to report that the procedures for the conversion, processing and storage of Census information, and the procedures for making output available to users have been planned with care, and that particular emphasis has been placed on designing the system to make breaches of confidentiality extremely unlikely. Similarly, the standards of physical security at all the locations visited have been set at a high level. Most importantly, all OPCS and GRO(S) staff have shown an understanding of the problems and an attitude towards the issues of public confidence and data confidentiality which promises that a high standard of vigilance will be maintained for the actual operation of the 1981 Census.

Later, (paragraph 40), the Report recommends that publicity should be given to the fact that the census operation is well protected and the Government intend to do this.

The Society's Report is set out in Part II of this White Paper and the Government's comments on the 16 recommendations follow in Part III.

The Government are glad to have this opportunity to re-affirm their determination to protect the confidentiality of the information about individual persons and households collected in the census. The protection is given by law in the Census Act 1920 and in the Census Regulations made under the Act. Undertakings on confidentiality were given by the previous Administration in their White Paper 1981 Census of Population (Command 7146) and these were confirmed by the present Government in the debate on the Census Order. Paragraph 11 of Command 7146 reads:



4 "The following principles will govern the treatment of the information given in the returns:

(i) In most cases one form will cover all members of the household and it will be collected by the enumerator; but people will be able to give

the information they are required to give about themselves without revealing it (if they do not wish to do so) to anyone else in their household or establishment or to their local enumerator.

(ii) All members of the census organisation will be given strict instructions about confidentiality, and will be liable to prosecution for any breaches of the rules.

(iii) The physical security of census documents containing personal information held in the Census Offices will be maintained.

(iv) The computer system handling census data will have safeguards that prevent unauthorised access to the information held; names and addresses will not be entered into the computer.

(v) Information from the census will be used solely for statistical purposes. As in the past, the Census Offices will not pass information about identified persons or households to other government departments or to anyone else outside the census organisation; moreover, in releasing statistics from the census steps will be taken to protect the identity of individuals.

(vi) The returns themselves and the information they contain will not be made available to the public until 100 years have elapsed, when the confidentiality of the information is held to have expired."

The Report of the British Computer Society which follows, has examined a number of these matters and has made valuable recommendations for reinforcing confidentiality and security.

PART III

REPLIES TO THE INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BCS

Para 35

An independent body should be commissioned to monitor the continued compliance with security procedures by means of periodic unscheduled checks during the months preceding the April 1981 Census and, thereafter, on a regular but unscheduled basis.

This recommendation is being discussed with the government's security advisers.

Para 39

Consideration should be given to the possibility of strengthening the existing legislation concerning the publication of information about named individuals inferred from Census tabulations.

There is no evidence that the publication of information about named individuals inferred from census tabulations has ever occurred; or that it will, or could, occur on a scale and in a way that would call for legislative action to curb it. However, the Government will keep this recommendation under review.

Para 40

In order to give the public the necessary degree of confidence, publicity should be given to the fact that the operation is well protected.

In the period up to census day, the Government will draw attention through the various publicity channels to the British Computer Society's findings that the census operation is well protected.

Para 42

The hand baggage of everyone leaving the premises where Census data is being processed should be subjected to occasional and random searches.

The Registrars General take note of this recommendation, and are consulting local staff representatives.

Para 43

The feasibility of automatic screening for media such as tape and micro-fiche at all exits from Census premises be considered with a view to triggering an alarm system by means of an identifier.

The Registrars General accept this recommendation. The Census Offices are examining possible systems and their costs.

Para 44

The post code and the grid square reference (if used) held on machine-readable media should be further coded in such a way as to prevent their being identified if printed out in unauthorised circumstances.

The Registrars General believe that the risk of an unauthorised person obtaining a tape record and deciphering its content is so

small that they would not be justified in incurring the further expenditure and delay that would result from further encoding.

Para 48

From time to time, OPCS and GRO(S) should encourage further research into the statistical aspects of confidentiality; for example, an examination of whether it would be possible, by reference to actual requested tabulations, to infer information about identifiable individuals from some combination of tables.

The Registrars General accept the spirit of this recommendation. They have a continuing commitment to draw a careful balance between the objective of extracting as much statistical information from the census data as possible and the need to protect the confidentiality of the information about individuals. The statistical aspects of confidentiality have been, and will remain, an important area of study for statisticians in the Census Offices, and they will keep in touch with developments in the subject that occur outside.

Para 49

When tabulations are provided in the form of magnetic tapes, they should be accompanied by printed evidence of what is being released, such as a summary of the data for the purpose of identification.

Arrangements are already being made to implement this recommendation.

Para 50

Guidelines for providing tabulations should be published so that the public is aware of the conditions under which Census statistics can be obtained.

The Registrars General accept this recommendation in principle. Through the issue of OPCS Census Monitors and in other ways, the Census Offices will publicise the arrangements under which tables that are not published in the Census Reports may be requested and obtained. Paragraph 45 of the BCS Report outlines the steps that are taken in releasing the Small Area Statistics to ensure the confidentiality of individual information, and gives a reference to the Census Monitor in which the scheme is set out in detail. The Census Offices will consider whether it is practicable to set out guidelines that apply over a wide range of census output.

Para 51

An independent body should be invited by OPCS and GRO(S) to investigate any complaints made by a member of the public or a group concerning the conduct of the Census operation or the improper use of Census information and to report on them.

This is the same as recommendation VIIIb made by the Royal Statistical Society in the study published in 1973 in the White Paper Security of the Census of Population Command 5365. In their reply (also in Command 5365), the Government of the day deferred their conclusion on this recommendation pending decisions

on a general scheme for protecting data about individuals held on computers. The Government did however set out a number of points which would be relevant to a decision:

4.24 Certain features of the present position, however, are important and should be recorded. Under the Census Act 1920, the Registrars General for England and Wales and for Scotland carry out their census functions under the direction of the Secretaries of State for Social Services and for Scotland respectively. The two Secretaries of State therefore already exercise the functions specified for the proposed review body; and they deal with complaints either by correspondence with MPs acting on constituents' behalf, or by Parliamentary Questions or occasionally in Parliamentary debate. In addition, where an individual or organisation feels that something has not been dealt with satisfactorily by the Census Office acting for the Minister, it may be referred through the MP concerned to the Parliamentary Commissioner (the Ombudsman).

The considerations set out then apply equally today. There have been hardly any complaints in the past on the matters referred to in the recommendation. The Government are satisfied that the terms of the Census Act and the Regulations made under it provide an adequate statutory basis for ensuring the proper conduct of the census operation and the confidentiality of the information given. They are also satisfied that there are adequate means for considering complaints from the public about the census.

Para 52

The British Computer Society should be given an opportunity to re-assess the position if there are any significant changes to the planned operating procedures.

The Registrars General accept this recommendation, though they do not foresee any significant changes to the planned operating procedures.

Para 53

The controls and safeguards planned for the Census operation should be subjected to intensified and unscheduled checks by OPCS and GRO(S) staff in order to test their continuing effectiveness.

The Registrars General accept this recommendation.

Para 54

The census forms should be distributed during the editing and data processing operations in such a way as to minimise the possibility that a person working on the forms could inspect those from the district in which he/she lives.

The Registrar General for Scotland accepts this recommendation and has given instructions for appropriate procedures to be followed in the allocation of work to edit clerks and data preparation operators. In England and Wales, the arrangements already conform to the recommendation.

Para 56

Consideration should be given to the provision of raw, but unidentified, data in machine-readable form, drawn from the Census records on a sample basis.

The provision of individual data for a sample of persons in an anonymised and machine-readable form - often referred to as 'public use tapes' - is a well-established means of disseminating statistical information from the censuses in the United States and Canada. The release of public use tapes there enables users to prepare their own statistical analyses of census data without putting additional demands on the census authorities' computing facilities. To preserve anonymity the material made available to users omits names and addresses; and other items of information are coded into a small number of categories (for example, the geographical areas identified in the US tapes always contain at least 250 thousand people).

The possibility of releasing public use tapes in Britain has been discussed throughout the 1970s - see for example, the Report of the Committee on Data Protection Cmnd 7341 (the Lindop Report), para 26.08. Such a tape would have to conform to three criteria. First, the items of data to be recorded on the tape would have to be chosen and coded so as to protect confidentiality. Second, the uses of the tape would have to be sufficient to justify its costs. Third, statutory authority for the release of the tape would be required. A good many of the demands for census statistics (for example, for local areas) could not be satisfied



by public use tapes because the first criterion could not be met. Moreover new legislation might be needed because there is doubt whether the Census Act, 1920 provides statutory authority.

The Registrars General invite the British Computer Society or any other interested body or person to make proposals on the form of a public use tape that would serve a wide range of users whilst effectively protecting confidentiality.

Para 57

Machinery should be established within OPCS and GRO(S) to draw up and publish a code of practice to define the principles which should apply to the provision of raw and unidentified data in machine-readable form, of ad hoc tabulations and of the use of Census data to provide sampling frames for other surveys.

This recommendation is in three parts. The first, concerning the provision of raw and unidentified data in machine-readable form, has been discussed in the response to the BCS recommendation in para 56. The second, concerning the provision of ad hoc tabulations, has been discussed in response to the BCS recommendation in para 50.

N. The third part of the recommendation refers to the use of census data to provide sampling frames for other surveys. The White Paper 1981 Census of Population Command 7146 sets out the arrangements for carrying out surveys linked to the census. The relevant paragraphs read:

31 There will be some voluntary sample surveys linked to the census to check the accuracy of the census information. There will be two kinds:

- (i) Checks on the quality of the information given in the census. Small samples of households in different parts of the country will be interviewed by trained interviewers to see how well they understood and answered the questions and whether their answers were accurate for their particular circumstances.
- (ii) Checks on the completeness of coverage. The records of a sample of enumerators will be independently verified to assess the extent of any under-enumeration due to omission of buildings or parts of buildings or of whole households within buildings. Small samples of households will be visited to check that all persons present on census night were recorded on their census forms.

32 In addition, the census may be used as a source from which to select the sample for some other kinds of surveys—for example, surveys containing questions to be asked of people in particular occupations or with particular qualifications. This avoids encumbering the census with these questions and others that are inappropriate in a compulsory census.

33 It is likely that a small number of census-linked surveys of this kind will be taken after the 1981 census but it is too early yet to specify the topics that will be covered. Response to any such survey will be voluntary, and the surveys will be handled by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and by the General Register Office (Scotland). Information provided will be treated in the same strict confidence as information given on the main census forms.

34 Parliament will be informed about the subject matter of any census-linked survey which it is decided to conduct.

The essential points are that the surveys linked to the census are voluntary and that they are carried out entirely by staff of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and the General Register Office (Scotland). No identified information either from the census or from the follow-up survey is revealed outside these two Offices. The only census linked surveys which are at present planned are the quality and coverage checks and, in Scotland, a check on dwellings which were vacant or the occupier was absent at the time of the census, and a follow-up on persons with teaching qualifications but not employed as teachers.

Para 58

The possibility of storing the Census forms in an alternative form or format should be kept under review.

Such a review has taken place and will be repeated from time to time in the light of technological advance.



Home Affairs  
MIA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1

10 June 1980

Dear Michael,

ST JOHN'S HOUSE BOOTLE

Thank you for your letter of 30 May. I am very glad to hear that the contract to prepare St John's House, Bootle for occupation by OPCS for the initial processing of census forms has now been let and that you expect the building to be ready on time. This is most important, for the whole census timetable depends on it.

You also draw attention to the occupancy of St John's House by the Home Office and the Inland Revenue in addition to OPCS. The Registrar General had earlier raised the danger that there might be misleading propaganda by the anti-census lobby on the grounds you describe. His concern therefore has been with the problem of the security of the Census Offices. His staff have been in close contact with the CSD Security Adviser who has given valuable advice in this matter not only in regard to safety precautions against external threat but in the case of Bootle to demonstrate that the staff in the Home Office and Inland Revenue parts of the building will not have access to the OPCS part.

OPCS are also in touch with the British Computer Society about the integrity and security of the census computing arrangements, but this is only a small part of the census operation at Bootle.

I am satisfied that we are taking all possible steps to allay public anxiety should this sort of attack emerge. I am grateful for all you have done so far and your offer of further help should this prove necessary. I will certainly call for this if it appears essential.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, to Willie Whitelaw and Geoffrey Howe.

Your ever  
Pahul

Home Affairs

PRIME MINISTER

A warning note on the Census.

The initial processing will be undertaken in premises at Bootle. Both the Home Office and the Inland Revenue occupy parts of the same building. This will offer some scope for accusations that the "confidentiality" (not your word) of the Census reports will be compromised by allowing access precisely to those Departments of Government who could cause most concern in this respect - the immigration service and the Inland Revenue.

This is all entirely coincidental and you will see from the note that the Computer Society are to be asked to make an independent assessment of the safeguards introduced for the Census. But there will still be some unfavourable comment.

MP

Handwritten signature

3 June 1980



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

30 MAY 1980

*Dear Secretary of State*

We have now let a contract to prepare St John's House, Bootle for occupation by OPCS for the initial processing of census forms. I expect the work to start early next month and, assuming no untoward problems, to be completed in time for OPCS to meet the timetable set for processing census material.

We should however perhaps remind ourselves at this stage of the fact that the other occupants of this building will be the Home Office and Inland Revenue. You will remember Paul Channon's answer about further dispersal last December.

This could become the subject of unfavourable comment by those who, for whatever reason, want to call in question the confidentiality of the census. As census date approaches, natural anxieties about confidentiality, particularly of computerised material, are bound to emerge again, given the compulsory nature of the census. It might be suggested that public anxiety is not allayed when the census material is seen to be being processed in the same building that houses Tax Inspectors and a computer for the Home Office (the department with responsibility for the police, criminal records and immigration).

There is of course nothing in these anxieties - and indeed the risks are not noticeably greater than they would be if the departments were at different ends of the country, such is computer technology. Moreover, we have done all that OPCS have asked and, to ensure assurances can properly be given we are taking, and will continue to take, full cognizance of the advice of the CSD Security Advisor. You will too I believe be asking the Computer Society for an independent assessment of the safeguards we have introduced. I am sure that together we shall be able to give assurances that will satisfy serious commentators and those who are willing to listen. It is, in any event, too late to seek

another building and I would not favour keeping the rest of the building empty by deferring the implementation of our decision on dispersal.

I hope you too are satisfied that we have taken and are taking every reasonable precaution; please let me know if you think we can do more.

In view of their interest I am copying this to the Prime Minister, to Willie Whitelaw and Geoffrey Howe.

*Yours sincerely*

*Paul Buxton*

*(Private Secretary)*

MICHAEL HESELTINE  
(agreed by the Secretary  
of State and signed in  
his absence)



10 DOWNING STREET

*H. K. B.*  
*Home Affairs*

*From the Private Secretary*

28 April 1980

We spoke about your Secretary of State's exchange of correspondence with the Minister of Transport last week over the census question on car and van availability.

In the light of the representations recorded in Mr. Jenkin's letter of 24 April, the Prime Minister is content that the Government should table an amendment re-introducing the question.

I am sending copies of this letter to Genie Flanagan (Department of Transport), John Chilcot (Home Office) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

**M. A. PATTISON**

D. Brereton, Esq.,  
Department of Health and Social Security.

*2.*



PRIME MINISTER

Census

The census questions were reduced after your intervention. One of those eliminated was about the number of cars and vans available in a household (attached). <sup>-A</sup>

Mr. Fowler was persuaded to agree to this. But it has been seriously challenged in the House of Lords' debate. The local authorities are arguing strongly that this is important planning information, which they will have to collect by more expensive and less efficient means if it is excluded from the census.

In the light of this, Mr. Jenkin and Mr. Fowler are agreed that the Government ought to table an amendment in the Lords on Monday reintroducing the question. (Mr. Jenkin's letter<sup>B</sup> to Mr. Fowler is beneath the question.) + Mr Fowler's reply, C.

*Yes - returning*  
*no* Are you willing to accept the re-introduction of this question?

25 April 1980

*MAD*

## H5 Cars and vans

### H5 Cars and vans

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate the number of cars and vans normally available for use by you or members of your household (other than visitors)

- 0  None  
1  One  
2  Two  
3  Three  
or more

Include any car or van provided by employers if normally available for use by you or members of your household but exclude vans used solely for the carriage of goods.

Information from the 1971 Census about growth in car availability throughout the country has been used extensively in the planning of trunk roads by the Department of Transport.

Data from the 1981 Census will be used to check current predictions of car availability, to develop forecasting methodology and as the basis of new forecasts. The information has also been used by local authorities in determining car parking provision, both residential and non-residential, for transportation studies, and for policies on rural areas eg support of rural bus services.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for Social Services  
Department of Health and  
Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON  
SE1 6BY

25 April 1980

*Dear Secretary of State*

Thank you for your letter of 24 April about the question on car and van availability which we decided to drop from the 1981 Census.

As you of course know the Prime Minister was anxious that we should aim to reduce the cost of the Census and the burden of form-filling it involves. In considering the "transport" questions, I decided that the one on car and van availability was not essential for my Department's purposes and could therefore be dropped.

Personally I think the objection to this course has been overstated. Nevertheless we could be open to question if it will cost local authorities more than the £50,000 we are saving to collect comparable information themselves. I am therefore content that this question should be reinstated, subject to the views of colleagues on H Committee who approved the present Census Order.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister,  
the Home Secretary, members of H Committee and Sir Robert  
Armstrong.

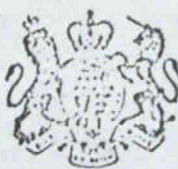
Yours sincerely

Genie Flanagan

pp

NORMAN FOWLER

(approved by the Minister  
and signed in his absence)



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP  
Minister of Transport  
Department of Transport  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON SW1

24 April 1980

Dear Norman,

CENSUS OF POPULATION: QUESTION ON CARS AND VANS

As you know, there have already been several Parliamentary questions about the omission from the Census of the question on cars and vans. You replied on 16 April to a question from Gary Waller, saying that similar and adequate information is obtainable from other, voluntary surveys carried out on behalf of the Government.

I have now received a number of letters from other Members, mostly enclosing submissions from local authorities. These make the point that the prime users of the question on cars and vans are local authorities and that, for their purposes, the other sources of information are not adequate. Tom Bradley, Chairman of the Commons' Select Committee on Transport, is among those who have written to me. I enclose a copy of his letter and of letters from Tyne and Wear County Council and from Merseyside County Council which are typical of many. Other local authorities have written direct to me and some to OPCS, including the Association of County Councils.

This was followed up in the House of Lords last night when the Census Order was debated; the point was raised on both sides of the House. Speakers said that if the question is not in the Census, then local authorities will have to carry out surveys of their own. It is argued that the combined cost of these surveys will certainly exceed the £50,000 saving in the Census. The Government spokesman, Lord Cullen, was also asked whether local authorities had been consulted before the decision was made to delete the question, and whether the Census Order can be amended when it comes before the House of Commons to reinstate the question. In replying to the debate, he said that he would put these points to me.

It is clear that we shall be pressed hard on this point when the Census Order is debated in the House of Commons. Whilst you have made it clear that the question is not essential for your Department I am bound to be reminded that the Census is also conducted for the benefit of local authorities; indeed its unique feature is that it provides statistics for local areas. At present I am not clear how to counter the argument, if it is true, that if the question is omitted, the local authorities will have to spend more than the £50,000 which we shall save.

In the light of all this, I am beginning to wonder whether there is a case for reinstating the question after all. If we do not, I shall certainly need your help in replying to Tom Bradley's letter and in preparing my speech for the debate.

The Census Order is expected to be debated in the Commons next Tuesday, 29 April, so time is very short. Would it help to have a word over the telephone to discuss how to proceed? Meantime, I am copying this letter and the enclosures for information to the Home Secretary, the members of the H Committee and to the Prime Minister.

Your ever  
Pat

ENCS

TYNE AND WEAR  
COUNTY COUNCIL

J J Gardner, LLB  
Chief Executive

Sandyford House  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1ED

Tel Newcastle (0632) 816144  
Telex 537564

My Ref JJG/AR/HMC

Your Ref

Date 3rd April 1980

This matter is being dealt with by

Ext

Dear *Text,*

REVISIONS TO 1981 CENSUS

This Authority has recently received from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys a publication 'OPCS Monitor' ref. CEN30/1 issued on the 20th March 1980 which describes 'Plans for the 1981 Census'. The County Council are alarmed to see that section 10 'Revision of Topics to be Covered by the 1981 Census' point vi, states that the question relating to the numbers of cars and vans available to the household has been excluded. A member of OPCS Census Information Section has told us that exclusions were made by the Government on the grounds of economy and that this particular exclusion was agreed because it was understood by OPCS that the Department of Transport would be carrying out an equivalent survey; however, they now know this not to be so. OPCS have further stated that as the Draft Census Order has already been placed before both Houses of Parliament, they (OPCS) are no longer in a position to do anything whatsoever.

The OPCS Monitor also indicates in section 7 that several topics are subject to affirmation by both Houses of Parliament.

The exclusion of the car availability question from the 1981 Census is, in the opinion of this Authority, a serious error of judgement for the following reasons:-

1. The Census is the Only source which can provide 100% data on car availability at small area level. It is also the only information strongly related to income which the Census can collect and as such is particularly valuable to this area and region.
2. This Authority (and many others) in carrying out the functions of a highway, planning and public transport authority uses transportation models and carries out studies which use car availability data as a fundamental part of the information base. Data from the 1971 Census has been widely used and many studies anticipated the use of data from the 1976 Census which were cancelled. The value of the Census data stems largely from its quality and coverage, which cannot be satisfactorily replaced by using sample surveys and also the opportunity it gives to follow past trends and develop estimates for the future.

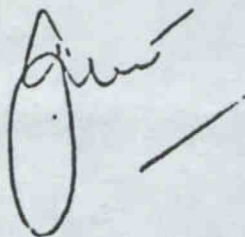
Cont'd ....

3. The above mentioned OPCS Monitor itself states in section 8, f that the question on mode journey to work would be used 'in planning roads and transport services, in Structure Plans and in planning homes and jobs'. It is the County Council's view that the question on car availability is intimately related to the mode of transport used and is therefore, no less important in planning these things. Its exclusion must conflict with this aim and in the long term reduce the effectiveness of transport planning.
4. In many areas (including Tyne and Wear County), there is a commitment to provide public transport where it is most needed and indeed an obligation to make its provision effective. Exclusion from the Census of the car availability question will preclude the identification of areas which most need public transport and where it will be most effective.
5. The exclusion of the question is surely a false economy as there is no doubt that most highway and public transport authorities will spend substantial sums of money in obtaining the information for their own areas. Despite this, it will be impossible to collect data of the same high quality as would be provided by the Census, and authorities would have to rely on sample surveys.

I understand that the Draft Census Order must be debated within forty days of the 20th March 1980 which makes this a matter of some urgency. Informal contact has shown that many other authorities in the country are gravely concerned at this omission and, like the County Council are writing to their local Members of Parliament to express their concern. Could you please, as Members of Parliament for a constituency within Tyne and Wear County, utilise whatever means you consider appropriate to ensure that the question on car availability is restored to the 1981 Census, and that those topics subject to affirmation are so affirmed.

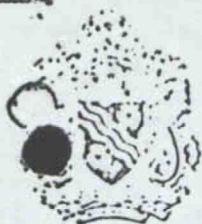
Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



W.E. Garrett, Esq. M.P.,  
WallSEND Constituency,  
House of Commons,  
Westminster,  
London. S.W.1.





# Merseyside County Council

Office of the Chief Executive

R F O'Brien MA IPFA  
Chief Executive

Eric Samuel Heffer Esq., M.P.,  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

PO Box 95  
Metropolitan House  
Old Hall Street  
Liverpool  
L69 3EL

Telephone 051-227 5234

Extn.

Your ref.

Our ref.

Date 9th April, 1980.

Dear Mr. Heffer,

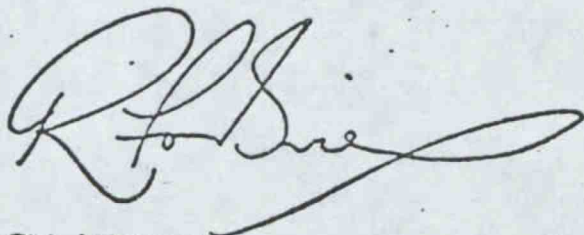
You will be aware that the Government is seeking Parliamentary approval for a Census of Population to be taken in 1981 and published on 20th March 1980, a draft Order in Council containing a list of particulars to be stated on the census forms. The list is a revision of the list published in July 1978 in Section II of the White Paper on the 1981 Census of Population (Cmd 7146). The Government have decided not to include in the Census a number of topics, including a question concerning the number of cars and vans available for the use of the household, having reasoned that the value of the statistics is insufficient to justify its inclusion.

This decision is very alarming for local government. The information collected, formed an essential base for our statutory duties as highway and transport authorities to provide technical advice on transportation matters and to implement proposals to solve a wide range of local problems. It is also necessary so that predictions of future traffic levels can be based on an analysis of up-to-date information concerning the present car ownership of the local population. The National Census is the only source of comprehensive data regarding the number of cars available to individual households and, as such, is used extensively for assessing local parking needs, identifying areas where bus services should be given special consideration because of low car ownership, providing a basis for predicting future car ownership and road traffic levels and as indicators of levels of social deprivation.

This essential information is available from no other source. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre in Swansea is only helpful for national statistics on car ownership. It cannot help in identifying areas of low car ownership and its data, in any case, has major drawbacks as firms cars (well over half of new cars are registered with firms) are located at the firms head office, not the residence of the individual who uses it. The Centre does not contain information on unlicensed vehicles either. Local home interview surveys can help collect this information but due to their expense must relate to a small sample and therefore do not provide the coverage necessary.

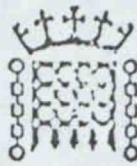
It is certain therefore that there is sufficient value in the statistics provided in the past from this question to justify its inclusion in the 1981 Census. Indeed, I would go as far as saying that it is essential to the proper fulfillment of our responsibilities. I should be pleased if you would bear these points in mind in considering the draft Order and press for a reinstatement of this topic in the list of items to be included on the census forms.

Yours sincerely,



Chief Executive.

From: Tom Bradley, MP



MRS DARLING  
OPCS

RECEIVED  
OFFICE OF THE  
10 APR 1980  
PARLIAMINARY  
SECRETARY

COMMITTEE OFFICE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA  
01-219 6102 (Direct Line)  
01-219 3000 (Switchboard)

4th April 1980

THE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Dear Patrick,

1981 Census

The attention of the Transport Committee has recently been drawn to the contents of the Census Order 1980, which you laid in the House on 20th March. We understand that it is proposed in the 1981 Census to omit the question on the number of cars and vans available for household use on the grounds, according to the OPCS Monitor (CEN 80/1) that 'the value of the statistics is insufficient to justify inclusion'.

We have received representations from members of the academic community which suggest that this decision should be reviewed, and we would be grateful for a fuller explanation of the reasons for the omission of the question concerned.

Car ownership and availability are obviously important factors influencing demand for travel and transport services, and as such their reliable prediction is an important ingredient in many transport planning decisions and much research into transport questions. Although DVLC at Swansea can provide reliable figures on current car ownership levels, it has been suggested to us that the Census provides the only opportunity for obtaining a complete record of both demographic and car ownership data and for rating and comparing the two. An alternative would be to use the National Travel Survey Data, although its small sample size makes it much less reliable, or to mount special surveys to collect information on local car ownership patterns. If local authorities were to be forced to resort to the use of special surveys it would appear that any saving in the cost of the Census might be offset by additional costs later.

I would be most grateful if you could let us have a more detailed explanation of the reasons for this decision at an early date after Easter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Minister of Transport.

Yours sincerely,

Chairman

Rt. hon. Patrick Jenkin, MP,  
Secretary of State for Social Services,  
Alexander Fleming House,  
London SE1



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
 Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY  
 Telephone 01-407 5522  
 From the Secretary of State for Social Services

✓MS

2

PRIME MINISTER

To note that the

19 March 1980 Census Order is

to be announced tomorrow  
 afternoon. I doubt  
 that it will come up  
 at Questions, but it  
 might.

MS

John Chilcot Esq  
 Private Secretary  
 Home Office  
 50 Queen Anne's Gate  
 LONDON  
 SW1H 9AT

*Dear John*

*[Handwritten mark]*

CENSUS 1981

The Census Order will be laid tomorrow and announced by a Written Answer in the House of Commons. The Secretary of State will hold a Press Conference at 2.30 tomorrow; I understand that a Mr Lewis will attend from the Home Office. I enclose copies of our Press Statement and the Secretary of State's opening statement.

Copies of this letter and enclosures go to Mike Pattison (Number 10), John Stevens (Office of the Duchy of Lancaster) Murdo McLean (Chief Whip's Office) and Richard Prescott (Paymaster General's Office).

Yours sincerely

*[Handwritten signature]*

D Brereton  
 Private Secretary

ENC.

PRESS NOTICE

1981 CENSUS - THE SIMPLEST FOR FIFTY YEARS

Mr Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Social Services, today laid a Draft Order in Parliament to enable a national census to take place on 5 April 1981. Answering a Parliamentary Question from Mr \_\_\_\_\_, Mr Jenkin said:

"The draft order in Council is published and laid before the House today.

The Government has looked very carefully at the plans for 1981 and has decided that some of the questions proposed can be dropped. The 1981 Census will be the shortest, simplest Census for fifty years.

The results of the Census will be produced more quickly than before, and I hope that preliminary figures will be available a few weeks after Census Day. Detailed figures for individual districts should be available early in 1982; national tables will appear from about mid 1982. All the main results should be available by mid 1984.

The Registrar General for England and Wales is publishing today two OPCS Monitors (CEN 80/1 and CEN 80/2) providing additional information about the plans for the 1981 Census and the tests of an ethnic question. I am arranging for copies of both documents to be placed in the Library."

OPENING STATEMENT FOR PRESS CONFERENCE - 1981 CENSUS

I am, today, laying before Parliament the draft Census Order for the 1981 Census. If approved by both Houses of Parliament, it will authorise the holding of the Census on 5 April 1981.

Before I answer questions I would like to make a few general points.

Why do we need a Census at all? This is the first question most people ask. The answer is that only a complete Census can provide basic information about where people live, where we need new schools, new hospitals, new roads. It will show where more services are needed for the elderly such as sheltered housing. It will give information about jobs which can be used in medical research to find ways of identifying and removing health hazards. The Census also helps Ministers to decide on how to distribute Government grants to local authorities.

Only a full Census can provide the information needed by Government, local authorities, health authorities and many other organisations to plan their spending of literally billions of pounds of public money. The gas and electricity industries, the post office, and other public services base their plans for the future on the Census information. Industry and commerce too find it very helpful to have the Census information to plan their operations; indeed they are prepared to pay for extra information.

If we did not have a regular Census every 10 years (and apart from the last war, a Census has been held every 10 years since 1801) a great many important decisions affecting the lives of all our people and involving the spending of billions of pounds would be taken without the benefit of the most up to date and accurate information about how many of us there are, where we live, how we earn our living, how many children we have, how many of us are elderly, how many are living alone, how many of our houses lack essential amenities, and so on.

Sample surveys can give us a rough idea. But, <sup>only</sup> the Census can provide accurate information - not just for the whole Nation, but for each small district and neighbourhood.

The next question people ask, is why do we have to answer so many questions? Are they not an invasion of privacy? My answer is that the 1981 Census will be the shortest, simplest Census for 50 years. A number of the questions which have been asked in the last three Censuses have been dropped, either because they were not essential, or because they were an unreasonable invasion of privacy and were considered offensive.

Next, they ask, what about the cost? Is it worth it? For Great Britain, the cost spread over the next few years will amount to £45 million. This works out at 83 pence per head. If you assume a Census every 10 years, that is just about 8 pence per head per annum. For this, we will get the information on which we can base spending of well over £15 billion on such things as rate support grants to local authorities, and allocations to health authorities. At 8 pence per head per annum, it is quite good value for money.

There are three particular matters to which I would like to draw your attention.

The first concerns the ethnic question. The last Government proposed that the Census should contain questions on race, or ethnic origin. Before reaching a final decision they said that it would be necessary to take account of whether the public found such questions acceptable, and whether tests established that the results would be reliable. These tests, the best known of which was the Census test at Haringey, tried out a number of different forms of questions. In addition, there have been widespread consultations with a large number of bodies, representing ethnic minorities, and with official bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality.

The main results of the Haringey Census test last year, and an earlier test in 1978 are described in an OPCS monitor "Tests of an Ethnic Question" which is published today.

It was clear from the consultations and the Haringey test that the direct ethnic question was not viable. The reliability of the results fell far below the standard which is acceptable in a census. Moreover, the test showed that there was a real risk that the inclusion of an ethnic question could jeopardise the Census as a whole.

Accordingly, the 1981 Census will contain no questions on ethnic origin, or on parents' countries of birth, or on nationality, or on the year of entry to the UK. But in line with all previous Censuses, the question on a person's own country of birth remains.

Of course, the Government wants proper information about the ethnic minorities, but the surveys and consultations show that this is not the right way to get it. There are other methods that can be used, through sample surveys and so on, which will provide the authorities with a good deal of the information they need to plan services for the ethnic minorities.

The other point I would like to stress is the importance the Government attaches to the privacy and confidentiality.

The only purpose of the Census is to produce statistics. Although people will have to put their names and addresses on the Census form, these details are not put into the computer. Census Offices are forbidden to pass information about individuals or households to anyone outside the Census organisation, and none of the statistics that are published, identify any individual. There are severe penalties for Census Officials who break these rules about confidentiality. The Government attaches the highest importance to seeing that the rules are strictly obeyed by everyone concerned. The Census forms themselves, once the statistical information has been extracted, will be kept under strict lock and key for 100 years before being made available to the public in accordance with past practice. Only officials of the Census Office will have access to them, and as I have said they are not allowed to disclose information about individuals to anyone else.

Finally, the Government is well aware that many people resent having to fill in the forms. This time, we have tried to make the Census form just as simple and as short as we can, avoiding those questions which either in the past or as a result of the test censuses, have been the ones which have given rise to the most resentment. The Census is necessary and I very much hope that the efforts we have made to keep it simple and to ensure confidentiality will make the operation worthwhile.





4. A/H

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY**  
 Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY  
 Telephone 01-407 5522  
*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon Norman St John-Stevas MP  
 Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
 Privy Council Office  
 70 Whitehall  
 LONDON SW1

6 March 1980

*Dear Norman,*

1981 CENSUS: PARLIAMENTARY TIMETABLE

Further to my letter of 14 February we now propose to lay the Order on 19 March.

On the assumption that the Easter Recess will be from 4 to 13 April inclusive and that no time will be lost for the May Day Adjournment, we calculate that the 40 days which the Draft Order must lay before Parliament will be completed on 7 May. The Privy Council meeting, we understand could be held during the middle to late May.

Since the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments may not be able to complete their consideration of the draft Order in one sitting, we suggest that time should be set aside for a debate in both Houses the week commencing 22 or 29 April.

The 1971 Census Order was debated on the Floor of the House starting at 9pm but in 1975, the Order for the Mid Term Census was not debated until 11pm. Since it was suggested during that debate that the contents of the 1971 census and the arrangements for it had not been adequately explained to Parliament and had not been adequately debated (Vol.889 c 408), a debate after 10 o'clock may not be acceptable and time will need to be found for a debate in "prime time".

I would be grateful if it could be confirmed that time will be found for the necessary debate during the 40 day laying period so that the Order can be ready for the Privy Council meeting in May.

I am copying this letter to colleagues on Legislation Committee, the Prime Minister's Office the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours  
 Pat*



MS  
1 N/S to see  
2 na

MAR 21/2.

with compliments

Private Secretary to  
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER  
68 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS  
Telephone 01-233-7113



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

cc: M N Sanders, No 10

Home Affairs

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AT

20 February 1980

See Act

1981 CENSUS: PARLIAMENTARY TIMETABLE

We spoke about the letter your Secretary of State wrote to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 14 February, and we agreed that it had now been clearly established that the Order has to be laid in draft for forty days and that the effect of this was that it would have to be laid before 13 March if it were to be available for consideration at the Privy Council meeting on 21 April. You suggested, however, that DHSS might decide to aim for the meeting after 21 April - which the Privy Council Office tell me could be held during middle to late May.

In these circumstances your Minister may like to write to the Chancellor of the Duchy again when firm views about the publication of the Order have been reached. Purely from the point of view of the business managers, there would be less difficulty in fitting in a debate in April than in the very congested period immediately before Easter. In saying this I am assuming, though this will need confirmation, that a time will have to be found for a debate in "prime time" and that a debate after 10 o'clock would not be acceptable.

One way of taking the necessary decisions would be for any further letter from your Secretary of State to be circulated for consideration by Legislation Committee. In the meantime I am copying this letter only to Murdo MacLean and Charles Cumming-Bruce in the Whips' offices, and to David Wright in the Cabinet Office.

J W STEVENS  
Private Secretary

Don Brereton Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Secretary of State for Social Services  
Department of Health and Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant & Castle



✓ MAP  
Home Affairs

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY  
Telephone 01-407 5522  
From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon Norman St John-Stevan MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
Privy Council Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1

14 February 1980

*Dear Norman,*

1981 CENSUS: PARLIAMENTARY TIMETABLE

When we discussed the 1981 Census at H last week colleagues expressed concern about the timing of any announcement particularly in relation to the forthcoming by-election. The original timetable proposed was that the Order should be laid on 21 February and that we held a press conference that day. The key point in the timetable were set out in Annex A to my paper to H Committee; I attach a copy for ease of reference.

If we cannot lay the Order before 13 March it could not be considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments before 25 March. Providing the Joint Committee cleared it that day there would be time to debate the Order before Easter if time could be set aside for this in both Houses. Unless this timetable could be met the Order would not be considered by the Privy Council at its meeting on 21 April and it would then not be possible to keep to the timetable. In that event we would either risk a delay in the date of the Census - which as the Annex explains ties in with RSG calculations and the EEC directive - or have to authorise extra expenditure on the printing in order to make up for lost time. We do not know what this would add to the cost but it might require a Supplementary Estimate.

I would be grateful for advice on whether it is at all realistic to plan on the assumption that if the Order is laid on 13/14 March there is a fighting chance that the Order would be cleared by the Joint Committee on 25 March and debated by both Houses before Easter.

I am copying this letter to colleagues on H Committee, the Prime Minister's Office and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever  
Patel*

ENC

Timetable

A necessary step in the implementation of the proposals is the laying of an Order in Council under the Census Act 1920. Schedules 2 and 3 of the draft Order were circulated previously annexed to H(79)77). The timetable is constrained by the proposed date of the census, 5 April 1981. This date fits the EEC directive and is conveniently between public holidays; a later date would endanger the census results being ready by May 1982 for the Rate Support Grant calculations. The HMSO will take about nine months to print the census forms, which means that there must be certainty about their contents by July 1980. The contents will not be absolutely settled until both the Order and the Regulations have been laid, each requiring to be before Parliament for 40 days. To meet this timetable the draft Order needs to complete its passage through Parliament in time for the Order in Council to be made at the Privy Council meeting to be held on 21 April 1980. This means, in effect, that the qualifying period must expire before the Easter Recess. In turn, this means that the draft Order must be laid by mid-February 1980. We would ask the Chief Whip to find Parliamentary time for a debate during the period the Order is laid.

CONFIDENTIAL



file vrb  
Home Affairs

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 February 1980

1981 Census

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Home Secretary's full report of H Committee's discussion about the Census on 4 February.

She has noted the presentational issues which were raised. She was also pleased to see that the Committee agreed further to limit the number of questions which will be included in the Census.

She has also noted that a majority of members of the Committee wish to maintain the arrangement under which the Census forms are retained for 100 years, and are then placed in the Public Record Office. Now that the Committee has had a properly prepared discussion of this issue, the Prime Minister accepts that her own view on this matter does not command the support of the majority of her colleagues. She is therefore content that Mr. Jenkin should proceed on the basis favoured by a majority of the Committee, but she has asked me to make it clear that, for her own part she will point out that the information on the Census form is not confidential in that sense in which she understands the word.

I am sending copies of this letter to Don Brereton (DHSS) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

MAP

J.A. Chilcot, Esq.,  
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Here is a full report from the Home Secretary about H Committee discussion of the Census.

The Committee agreed to delete further questions. A majority favoured sticking to the practice of releasing census forms to the Public Record Office after 100 years. (I understand that only the Home Secretary and Mr Fairbairn favoured your approach, and that the rest of the Committee were strongly in support of the status quo). You will also see that the Committee were seized of the political problems which will inevitably surround the announcement of the forthcoming census.

In view of the strong majority in H for continuing the past arrangements about preservation of the census forms, are you prepared to let Mr Jenkin proceed on this basis? Or do you want to raise the issue in Cabinet?

*Yes - but will [unclear]*

6 February 1980

*Point out that the information on the form is not confidential.*

CONFIDENTIAL



PRIME MINISTER

1981 CENSUS

Home and Social Affairs Committee considered yesterday afternoon the arrangements for the 1981 Census and the related question of the preservation or destruction of the individual census returns.

The Committee had already decided not to include questions on ethnic origin, parents' countries of birth, nationality and year of entry to the United Kingdom. We have decided now to drop a further three questions: Question H5 on the availability of cars and vans, Question 5 on date of marriage, and Question 11 on school qualifications. Question 17 on hours of work is to be simplified to distinguish only between full-time and part-time, and will be combined with another question.

The Committee accepted the need for the 16 questions which constitute the core of the census. In addition we agreed to the inclusion of 4 other questions which Departmental Ministers pressed strongly for. These will provide information about qualified manpower, a person's industry, place of work in relation to home, and method of travel to work. It is needed by Departments, Universities, local authorities, industry and transport undertakings to help with forward planning of all sorts.

The Committee agreed that people should no longer be able to return the census form by post. This should improve the reliability of the Census and secure a public expenditure saving of £ $\frac{3}{4}$  million. People will retain the right to ask for an envelope in which to seal the census form so that it is not seen by the enumerator who calls.

The Secretary of State for Social Services has agreed to consider further the charges which are made for the use of census data so that a greater proportion of the cost of the census can be recovered from users outside central Government.

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The Committee went on to consider whether the returns from the 1981 Census should not be destroyed. They noted the strong interest of the medical profession in census material for epidemiological research. The nineteenth century census forms which are now available to the public are consulted more frequently than any other records in the Public Record Office as a source of historical and genealogical information. Destruction would cause a fuss among the historians' lobby. Members of the Committee appreciated that there was public concern about the confidentiality of the census, in part reflecting a fear that their replies might be used for other purposes, for example by the police or the Inland Revenue. There was, however, no reason to suppose that any such breach of confidence would occur. In so far as people were concerned about the disclosure of embarrassing personal information to their descendants, some members felt that the dropping of the ethnic question should help here, and the withdrawal of the date of marriage question would preclude the use of the census forms to see whether one's forbears were illegitimate. The majority of the Committee considered that we should stick to past practice of preserving census forms for 100 years and then transferring them to the Public Record Office for public inspection. I agreed to report the discussion to you so that you could consider the matter further.

I should record that during our discussions of these census matters, there was a considerable feeling of political unease, especially about the imminent timing of an announcement. The Committee appreciated that we are bound to have a census next year. One has been held every ten years since 1801, except during the Second World War; and we are also bound to have a census in the Spring of next year under the terms of the E.E.C. Directive on Population Censuses. The timetable for the census means that the necessary Draft Order in Council must be laid later this month, and there will need to be debates in both Houses before Easter. The Secretary of State for Social Services will be holding a Press

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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conference at the time of the announcement and is meanwhile giving careful thought to the presentation of the Government's decisions, with a view to minimising political controversy.

I am sending copies of this minute to the members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*hohw*

*6*

February 1980

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Home Affairs <sup>2</sup>

PRIME MINISTER

Here is the paper for H about what happens to census returns after the information has been processed for basic census purposes. Although the paper concludes that the status quo should be maintained, its argument seems to me to make your case better than anything so far said.

I have ensured that the Home Secretary will report the views of the Committee to you before a decision is made firm. Your own views are strongly quoted in paragraph 1 and it will be interesting to see how the Committee reacts to a paper recommending a different conclusion!

mm

MP

31 January 1980

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Jenkin is now putting a fresh paper to H Committee about the 1981 Census, following your agreement to his revised proposals about the questions.

Paragraph 9 (page 4) of his paper refers to your position on long-term publication of the Census forms. Mr. Jenkin will be circulating a separate paper for a later H meeting, after discussion with the Lord Chancellor who has responsibility for public records. I will ensure that you see that paper before it is discussed.

Annex A (flagged) of this paper sets out the timetable. The first step in Parliamentary terms will be the laying of the draft Order by mid-February 1980. Mr. Jenkin proposes to ask the Chief Whip to find time for a debate thereafter.

28 January 1980

FILE RESTRICTED



Home Affairs

Blind cc: Martin Vile

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 January 1980

Dear Don,

The Prime Minister has considered your Secretary of State's minute of 15 January, about the Census of Population. She is grateful for the thorough consideration which he has undertaken of the basis for questions which have been proposed for inclusion.

The Prime Minister is now content that Mr Jenkin should put proposals to colleagues on the basis outlined in his minute. She has, however, asked me to emphasise her strong personal view that future publication of Census forms is unacceptable. She considers that the possibility of publication, even 100 years hence, is in fact a breach of the principle of confidentiality. She hopes that colleagues will share her view on this point, and she would certainly wish to have an opportunity to consider the matter further if colleagues dissent.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office).

Yours ever

Mike Pattison

Don Brereton Esq  
Department of Health & Social Security

RESTRICTED

RH



NBPM H. Afs.  
MAD

PRIME MINISTER

CENSUS OF POPULATION

Patrick Jenkin copied to me his minute and enclosure to you of 15 January about the census.

As he says, revised proposals will need to be discussed by our colleagues, and if you agree I, too, should be content for this to be done on the lines proposed in the minute.

A copy of this minute goes to Patrick Jenkin.

hskw.

17 January 1980

7.

PRIME MINISTER

Since your talk with Mr. Jenkin about the Census, he has undertaken some much more thorough work on the justification for the Census in its current form.

In his minute below, he sets out the questions in the precise form in which they would appear. He further explains the basis for including them.

You have already accepted that a basic population count is necessary. Five questions are related to this. A further six are directly relevant to decisions about the allocation of public funds. Two are needed for information on national and international population movement.

You queried the questions which might appear to be duplicated by regular Government returns, e.g., on employment. Mr. Jenkin has concluded that these questions do need to be included in the Census, to provide ten-year benchmarks against which the validity of the regular returns can be checked.

Mr. Jenkin has also satisfied himself that two further questions are justified in terms of manpower planning, both within Government and outside - e.g., in the universities and industry. A further three questions, relating to travel to work and use of transport, are also of considerable help in Government planning.

As a result, Mr. Jenkin has concluded that 16 questions are essential, constituting the core of the Census, and that the five questions on manpower and transport are almost certainly required although they will be reviewed with the users. This apart, he is proposing to drop the question on date of marriage, and the question on school qualifications, which do not seem essential, and to simplify the question on hours of work.

/ He has also

He has also reviewed matters of confidentiality. He has concluded that the present arrangements for signature and handling of the Census forms are the best that can be made given the current need for economy, and he also hopes that

*No* you can be persuaded to drop the idea that the Census forms should be destroyed. When they are released in the distant future they will constitute, in his view, an important part of our social history. *I disagree with this somewhat auto-tech view.*

Mr. Jenkin seeks your approval to propose that the Census should go ahead on this basis. Are you content that he should put these proposals to his colleagues on H Committee?

*MAD*

*I am absolutely against keeping the census forms for publication.*

*MIT.*

16 January 1980



PRIME MINISTER

Census of Population

When we met on 11 December I undertook to examine urgently the necessity for questions proposed in the 1981 census and the arrangements for safeguarding the confidentiality of information in census returns.

Most of the 24 questions in the census return are not entirely, or even primarily, for use by my own Department, and I shall need to put a revised set of proposals to colleagues. Meantime, I have looked myself at the detailed arguments put forward for their inclusion by both OPCS officials and the Departments concerned.

I enclose a bundle in which each page sets out the question as it is currently proposed to include it in the census form, together with a brief note on the reasons why the question is asked. (When you read the earlier papers, you worked, I believe, on the draft Order in Council, where the wording, and some of the numbering was different. The comments reported in Mike Pattison's letter of 3 December are cross-referenced as follows:

Paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13 of the Census Order correspond with the same numbers on the questions in the annex.

Paragraph 14 of the Census order covers questions 14-19 in the annex.


Paragraphs 16, 18, 19 of the Census Order refer to Questions H2, H3 and H4 in the annex.

Paragraph 17 in the Census Order about the structure of the dwelling is answered by the official collecting the census form.)

The main points can be summarised as follows:

- (1) Five questions are basic to the population count. (Q1, 2, 3, 7 and 8).
- (2) Six questions are directly used for resource allocation eg RSG, allocations to health authorities, etc., (Q H1 - H4, 4 and 6).
- (3) Two questions provide basic information on immigration and internal migration (Q9 and 10).
- (4) Three questions provide the sole source of what might be described as "benchmarks". You asked why, eg, normal employment and unemployment returns do not provide the information needed by Government. These returns are not by their very nature fully comprehensive or accurate; the census returns are the only really accurate figures. They are thus essential to 'validate' the regular figures in that they provide a "benchmark" every 10 years against which the regular returns can be measured and interpreted. Without such "benchmarks" the validity of the regular returns becomes increasingly doubtful.

The questions in this category cover the working population, occupations, social classes, and occupational mortality (Q.13, 15 and 16).

- 
- (5) Two questions provide information about the availability of qualified manpower and their deployment. The pressures for this information are as much from outside Government as within, for example, from the Universities (in planning their courses and intakes) and from industry (as shown in the Finniston Report). (Q.12 and 14)
  - (6) Three questions relate to travel to work and transport use and are used by Government for determining boundaries of travel to work areas and assisted areas, planning of employment services, roads and transport services. (QH5, 18 and 19).

I have been convinced by the arguments for including the sixteen questions in (1) - (4) above which constitute the core of the census. On the five questions in (5) and (6) above I will be pressing colleagues to review their need for this information, although I imagine that they will be very reluctant to drop them in the light of the uses set out in the enclosures to this minute.


This leaves three questions - on date of marriage (Q5), on school level qualifications (Q11) and on hours of work (Q17).

These cannot be claimed to be 'essential', and I shall accordingly propose:-

- (1) to drop the question on date of marriage. Its main use is in monitoring population trends as recommended in the Population Panel Report (Cmnd 5258);
- (2) to drop question 11 on school qualifications. This was requested by the Ministry of Defence and Manpower Services Commission;
- (3) to simplify question 17 on hours of work to distinguish only between "full-time" and "part-time" and combine it with question 16.

You asked me to look at two points on confidentiality. The first concerns the requirement for the form to be signed and how it is returned to the Registrar General. The reasons for requiring names are given in the note on question 1. Names are not included in the computer records and no information on named and identified individuals leave the census offices. Under present proposals an individual who does not want his form to be seen by the official who collects it, can ask for an envelope which is returned sealed to OPCS. The previous Government had proposed to offer the further facility, introduced in 1971, whereby respondents might, in exceptional circumstances, ask for a franked envelope to return their census forms by post to temporary regional offices so that such forms would not be seen by any local official. We are proposing that this facility should be withdrawn. It would be costly - some £700,000 assuming a moderate degree of use; and it would affect the accuracy of the census counts since it would not be possible to visit all the households that had failed to answer all the questions or had not sent in the form at all. If excessive use were made of the facility, eg as a result of a public campaign by a pressure group, then the census offices could be in serious trouble. I must discuss this with colleagues but I am inclined to propose that we should not offer the postal facility.

*The local census offices.*



Second, there is the question of destroying the census forms. I would like to persuade you that this would, on balance be a mistake. To destroy the forms would be to lose part of our social history. The position was last reviewed in 1965 when the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on Public Records recommended strongly that census returns should be preserved and this view was accepted. At present the prescribed period before the returns are open to the public is 100 years. I will however raise the whole question with colleagues to see if these arguments are still felt to be sound.

Are you content for me to put revised proposals to colleagues on these lines?

I am copying this minute and enclosure to the Home Secretary.

15 January 1980

P J

CONQUEROR

## PROPOSED QUESTIONS IN 1981 CENSUS OF POPULATION

	Marginal cost (England and Wales)	Whether asked in:	
	<u>£ million</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>
H1 : Rooms	0.10	Yes	Yes
H2 : Sharing	0.15	No	Yes
H3 : Tenure	0.15	Yes	Yes
H4 : Amenities	0.10	Yes	Yes
H5 : Cars and vans	0.05	No	Yes
1 : Names	0.00	Yes	Yes
2 : Sex	0.08	Yes	Yes
3 : Date of birth	0.40	Yes	Yes
4 : Marital Status	0.08	Yes	Yes
5 : Year and month of a woman's marriage	0.03	Yes	Yes
6 : Relationship in the household	0.05	Yes	Yes
7 : Whereabouts on census night	0.08	Yes	Yes
8 : Usual address	0.33	Yes	Yes
9 : Usual address 1 year ago	1.30	Yes	Yes
10 : Country of birth	0.43	Yes	Yes
11 : School-level qualifications	0.04	No	Yes
12 : Higher qualifications	0.19	Yes	Yes
13 : Whether working, retired etc	0.15	Yes	Yes
14 : Name and business of employer	0.30	Yes	Yes
15 : Occupation	0.44	Yes	Yes
16 : Employment status	0.05	Yes	Yes
17 : Hours worked per week	0.08	Yes	Yes
18 : Address of workplace	0.54	Yes	Yes
19 : Means of travel to work	0.02	No	Yes

The first column shows the marginal cost of each question, which is taken for this purpose as the identifiable amount of money which would be saved if that particular question were to be omitted, other things remaining unchanged.

NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

H1 Rooms

**H1 Rooms**

Please count the rooms in your household's accommodation.

● Do not count:

small kitchens, that is those under 2 metres (6ft 6ins) wide,

bathrooms,

WCs.

Number of rooms.....

**Note**

Rooms divided by curtains or portable screens count as one; those divided by a fixed or sliding partition count as two.

Rooms used solely for business, professional or trade purposes should be excluded

In conjunction with the number of persons, this measures and identifies areas of overcrowding and under-occupancy.

It is used both in Rate Support Grant and in Housing Investment Programmes. It has also been used in defining inner city areas.

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H2 Sharing

- Part 16 of Census Order

**H2 Sharing**  
Do you share the building with any other household?  
See note 1 on back page

YES    1     NO

↓  
If 'YES'

Are your rooms (not counting a bathroom or WC) enclosed behind your own front door inside the building?

1     YES    2     NO

Sharing of accommodation by two households or more is a measure of overcrowding and of potential housing demand. It is used for Housing Investment Programmes and to determine needs for Rate Support Grant purposes. The enumerator notes whether access to accommodation is shared to enable the number of dwellings to be estimated.

**H3 Tenure**  
How do you and your household occupy your accommodation?  
Please tick the appropriate box - see note 2 on back page

**As an owner occupier (including purchase by mortgage):**

1  of freehold property  
2  of leasehold property

**By renting, rent free or by lease:**

3  from a local authority (council or New Town)  
4  with a job, shop, farm or other business  
5  from a housing association or charitable trust  
6  furnished from a private landlord, company or other organisation  
7  unfurnished from a private landlord, company or other organisation

**In some other way:**

Please give details  
.....

Comparison of figures of tenure from the 1971 and 1981 Censuses will show national and local trends in owner-occupation and in the amount of furnished and unfurnished accommodation rented from private landlords: this last will throw light on the effects of legislative changes.

Information on the numbers occupying council houses, their family structure and socio-economic characteristics help in developing housing policies at local level.

Reliable information on these topics cannot be obtained from sample surveys..

H4 Amenities

- Para 19 of Census Order

**H4 Amenities**

Has your household the use of the following amenities on these premises?

Please tick the appropriate boxes.

- A fixed bath or shower permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe
  - 1  Yes - for use only by this household
  - 2  Yes - for use also by another household
  - 3  No fixed bath or shower
  
- A flush toilet (WC) with entrance inside the building
  - 1  Yes - for use only by this household
  - 2  Yes - for use also by another household
  - 3  No inside flush toilet (WC)
  
- A flush toilet (WC) with entrance outside the building
  - 1  Yes - for use only by this household
  - 2  Yes - for use also by another household
  - 3  No outside flush toilet (WC)

Used to identify areas for improvement under Housing Action Area and General Improvement Area powers. Also used in both Rate Support Grant and Housing Investment Programmes, and in defining inner city areas.



1 NAME

Surname
Forename(s)

It is essential for names to be shown on the census return for the following reasons :-

- i) to distinguish the persons entered on the form, so helping the householder to complete it accurately;
- ii) to enable census staff to apply to the right person when information on the census form is missing;
- iii) to establish whether householders and others have discharged their legal obligation to provide all the information asked for on the census form;
- iv) to enable prosecutions to be undertaken in cases of refusal.

No country conducts a census without names. A test in Australia of forms without names was a failure.

Names and addresses are not entered in the computer records. They remain on the original returns, which are kept under strict security until passed to the Public Record Office after 100 years.

The names are used in certain medical research applications. For example, the census can provide a sample of individuals in a particular occupation, and subsequently the death registrations show how many of them have died of particular causes. But this work is done entirely within OPCS. No information about identified individuals leaves OPCS at any stage.

2 Sex

3 Date of birth

<b>Sex</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	
<b>Date of birth</b>		
Day	Month	Year

A basic part of the population count. Provides an essential benchmark for central and local administration.

Essential for resource allocation schemes such as the Rate Support Grant and the corresponding scheme for the health services (RAWP).

Needed for making national and local population projections, on which plans for many of the social services are based.

Needed by the Government Actuary for estimating the future income and expenditure of the social security system.

Required for the construction of the National Life Tables which are also used by insurance companies.

The census question asks for date of birth rather than age because experience has shown that the former gives better answers. The information collected at birth registrations is not an alternative - it does not show how many people of each age are living in particular areas now.

4 Marital status

Para 4. of Census <sup>Act</sup> 1961

<p><b>4. Marital status</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box.</p> <p>If separated but not divorced please tick 'Married' (1st marriage) or 'Re-married' as appropriate.</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Single</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Married (1st marriage)</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Re-married</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced</p> <p>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed</p>
---	---

Basic knowledge about the structure of households and families, nationally and locally.

Used in resource allocation in the health service (RAWP); in measuring economic activity rates for women;

in the assessment of alternative tax and social security systems; and in the assessment of housing demand. Yields benchmark statistics on the various categories of lone-parent families; and on rates of marriage, divorce, re-marriage and fertility.

Needed by the Government Actuary for estimating the future income and expenditure of the social security system.

The three non-married categories (single, widowed, divorced) are needed because experience has shown that people want to identify themselves with their own particular category.

The category "re-married" is needed to measure a growing and important social phenomenon and its implications on fertility. The category is distinguished only in England and Wales because Scotland has fuller information from records of marriage registration.

5 Year and Month of a Woman's Marriage

Para. 5 of Census  
Order

5 Date of Marriage (married women only)

For a married woman please write the month and year in which she was married (her current marriage if married more than once).

Date of current  
marriage

Month ..... Year .....

In conjunction with data on family composition (question 6), provides benchmark information about marriage patterns, the speed of family building and social class differentials in these. This information, supplemented by the more limited data from birth registrations, helps in understanding the reasons for past changes in the birth rate and so helps in making projections of the future population.

This question is not proposed for Scotland since fuller registration particulars make it unnecessary there.

See also paragraph 13 of covering paper.

6 Relationship in the Household

*Pana Gaf Census Order*

6 Relationship in the Household

Please tick the box which indicates the relationship of each person to the person entered in the first column

Please specify for relationships other than those listed against boxes 01 and 02 eg father, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, niece, uncle, cousin, grandchild.

For unrelated persons please tick "Unrelated" and write in the persons position in the household eg boarder, friend, flat-mate, foster child etc  
Step children and adopted children may be treated as natural children

00  Head or one of the joint heads of the household

Relationship to first person

01  Husband or wife  
02  Son or daughter  
 Other relative, please specify

.....  
 Unrelated, please specify  
.....

The family remains the basic social unit. This question is needed so that families can be counted. It provides an essential benchmark, particularly for local social services.

Information about the types of family in an area, eg lone parent families, is used in the Rate Support Grant and has been used in designating inner urban areas.

By using the answers to this question it will be possible to avoid asking women the direct questions on fertility which, in 1971, led to many objections.

In conjunction with information on country of birth (question 10), answers to this question will provide statistics on the population of New Commonwealth and Pakistani ethnic origin. Also used by the Home Office for developing policies on immigration.

7 Whereabouts on Census Night

- Part 7 of Census Order

8 Usual address

<p><b>7 Whereabouts on night of 5-6 April, 1981</b> Please tick the appropriate box to indicate where the person was on the night of 5-6 April 1981</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> At this address, out on night work or travelling to this address</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Elsewhere in England, Wales or Scotland</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Outside Great Britain</p>										
<p><b>8 Usual address</b> If the person usually lives here please tick 'This address'. If not, tick 'Elsewhere' and write the person's usual address in the space provided. If the household head lives away from home during the week tick 'This address' Students and children away from home during term time should regard their home address as their usual address. Boarders should be consulted on what they consider to be their usual address.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> This address <input type="checkbox"/> Elsewhere - write the person's usual address and postcode <i>Block capitals please</i></p> <p>Address .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Postcode <table border="1" data-bbox="1255 929 1506 976"><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table></p>										

Required for the basic count of population in each area, viz. to deal with the problem that many people will be away from home on census night - on business, on holiday or at school or university. The census form asks for a return of persons present at the address on census night and persons usually living there but absent on census night.

The basic population counts used for Rate Support Grant and resource allocation in the health service (RAWP) are the numbers usually resident in an area. These are obtained by counting everyone giving a usual address in that particular area in answer to question 8, irrespective of where they happen to have been enumerated - that is, they must have ticked box 1 of question 7 and stated the particular place, say Birmingham, in answer to question 8.

Some of the other figures used in Rate Support Grant (eg on lone parent families, pensioners living alone and persons per room)

9 Usual Address one Year ago

Para 9 of Census Order

9 Usual address one year ago

If the person's usual address one year ago, on 5 April 1980, was the same as that given in answer to Question 8 please tick 'Same'. If not, please tick 'Different' and write the usual address in the space provided.

If everyone on the form has moved from the same address, please write the address in full for the first person and indicate with an arrow that this applies to the other people on the form.

For a child born since 5th April 1980 write 'UNDER ONE'

- Same as Question 8
  - Different - write the person's address and postcode on 5 April 1980
- Block capitals please*

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Provides basic information on internal migration.

This question is the only way of obtaining information on the numbers and characteristics of people who move into and out of an area.

of population

Used in the preparation of the annual estimates for Rate Support Grant and similar resource allocation formulae (eg RAWP for the health service), and of population projections for local areas.

In an increasingly mobile society, local authorities regard information on the numbers and characteristics of migrants as an essential tool for their policies on housing, employment, the elderly and the overseas-born. The figures may give advance warning of movements that will eventually affect the whole character of an area.

Previous address must be asked for in order to count the number of people (wherever they may be living at census date) who have left, say, Birmingham. Many local authorities pressed hard for a second question on migration, asking additionally for each person's address five years ago, as in the 1971 Census, but this was rejected.

7 Whereabouts on Census Night (continued)

8 Usual address (continued)

can only be obtained by taking everyone returned as "usually resident at this address" (box 1 of question 8) irrespective of their answer to question 7.

Both questions are asked in order to provide the most accurate counts.



10 Country of Birth

10 Country of birth

If the person was born in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or the Irish Republic, please tick the appropriate box.

If the person was born in any other country please tick box 6 'Elsewhere' and write, in the space provided, the name of the country in which the birthplace is situated. Give the name by which the country is known today.

- |   |                          |  |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | England  |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wales  |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scotland   |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Northern Ireland   |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Irish Republic   |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elsewhere<br>Please write the present<br>name of the country |
- .....

Provides essential statistics on the numbers and characteristics of immigrants in each area.

Data from the 1981 Census on persons born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NCWP) will provide the starting point for the best estimates we shall be able to make of the numbers of persons of NCWP ethnic origin in Britain as a whole and in local areas. (For this, country of birth will be used in conjunction with the answers to question 6 on relationships in order that UK-born children living in the parental home can be grouped with their parents). Data on country of birth will also provide a base for the design of any voluntary surveys, in selected areas, of the ethnic minorities which may be required to fill the gap left by the omission from the census of a direct ethnic question.

The question on country of birth, in conjunction with questions 8, 9 and 6 on usual residence, usual residence one year previously and household composition, will provide statistics about recent immigrants to Britain and their household structures and about movement into and out of areas of immigrant concentration. Such information will be used by the Home Office in considering the operation of immigration control and possible changes to the rules, of the recent changes for husbands and fiancés.

10 Country of birth (continued)

The statistics from the answers to this question are also needed for policies on race relations and inner city areas.

11 School level qualifications

- Part II of Census Order

11 Qualifications

Please tick the appropriate boxes if the person has obtained one or more of the following qualifications. If none of the qualifications listed below has been obtained please tick the fifth box.

Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Grades 2-5

GCE 'O' level, CSE (Grade 1), School Certificate, Matriculation, (Scottish equivalents: SCE 'O' grade, SLC Lower)

GCE 'A' level, Higher School Certificate (HSC), (Scottish equivalents: SCE Higher, SLC Higher, Certificate of 6th Year Studies)

Ordinary National Certificate (UNC), Ordinary National Diploma (OND)

01  CSE (Grades 2-5)

02  'O' level etc

04  'A' level etc

08  UNC, OND

None of these

Statistics of school-level qualifications have been used by the Ministry of Defence to assess the extent to which their recruiting is tapping the potential supply of school-leavers with various levels of qualification. The Manpower Services Commission has also asked for the information.

The question helps the mechanics of census-taking by providing an opportunity for those who have school-level qualifications to state them separately from any higher qualifications, so cutting down the work of editing the question on higher qualifications. The question is also a safety-valve for a group of people who might feel rejected by society if they could not enter some qualification.

12 Higher qualifications

Para 12 of Census Order

<p><b>12 Other qualifications</b></p> <p>If the person has obtained other qualifications after age 18, such as Degree; Diplomas, HNC, HND, Nursing qualifications, teaching qualifications, Graduate or corporate membership of professional institutions; Other professional, educational or vocational qualifications</p> <p>Please write for each qualification, in the order in which they were obtained:</p> <p>the title,</p> <p>the major subject or subjects,</p> <p>the year obtained and</p> <p>the awarding institution.</p> <p>Enter all qualifications even if they are not relevant to the person's present job or if the person is not working</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Subject</p> <p>Year</p> <p>Institution</p>
<p>If more than three, please enter in a spare column and link with an arrow</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Subject</p> <p>Year</p> <p>Institution</p>
	<p>Title</p> <p>Subject</p> <p>Year</p> <p>Institution</p>

This question, in conjunction with questions 14 and 15, obtains the stock of qualified people and shows the industries and occupations where they are employed. The census is the only source for this.

This question in the 1961 and 1966 censuses was the starting point for the forecast, made in 1972, that by 1981 the number of graduates seeking work would far exceed any likely demand in the occupations which have been traditional for graduates. This information was published in a leaflet sent to schools, colleges and careers advisers to help intending students to make better-informed decisions about the future of their lives. It also played its part as background when decisions were made about the future scale of higher education.

12 Higher qualifications (continued)

(At the time when the forecast was first published, outside pressures were still calling for a further expansion.)

The 1971 Census results were used to keep these assessments up to date, and showed that the prospects had become even worse. The 1981 Census questions are needed so that the Government will have up-to-date information in the 1980s.

Used as a background to decisions about the balance of places in the universities.

The Finniston Report recommends that the census should be used to obtain information about the stock and deployment of engineers etc. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer has called in strategy proposals (E(79)84) for more information on qualified manpower.

Because of the tremendous range and diversity of qualifications beyond school level, experience has shown that to obtain usable information it is necessary to ask for the qualifications to be shown individually.

13 Whether working, retired etc

Para 13 of Census Order

13 Whether working, retired, housewife etc last week

Please tick all the boxes appropriate to the person's activity last week.

Tick box 1 if the person did any work for pay or profit last week including:

- full-time work
- part-time work, even if only for a few hours
- casual or temporary work
- work on a person's own account
- work in a family business

Tick box 1 if the person was not at work last week because he or she was:

- on holiday
- temporarily laid off
- on strike

Unpaid work does not count as a job.

For a full-time student tick box 9 as well as any other appropriate boxes.

Do not count as full-time students persons in a paid occupation where training is also given, such as a student or pupil nurse, an engineering apprentice or a management trainee.

- 1  In a job at any time last week
- 2  In a job but off work for all or part of the week due to sickness or injury
- 3  Waiting to take up a job already accepted
- 4  Seeking work
- 5  Prevented by temporary sickness from seeking work
- 6  Permanently sick or disabled
- 7  Housewife
- 8  Wholly retired from employment
- 9  At school or a full-time student at an educational establishment not provided by an employer
- Other, please specify

The purpose of this question is to find out how many people of each age are in the working population, how many are potentially available for work and how many are not available because they are sick, retired, etc. It shows how the proportion of people who are working or seeking work, in each age group in each area, compares with the national average; with implications for the potential "reserve of labour" in the area. The results, often described as "activity rates", are the subject of many Parliamentary Questions.

This information is not available completely from any other source. It is not available from regular employment and unemployment statistics because they do not cover the self-employed or people who are seeking work but do not register as unemployed. Nor is it available from household surveys for they do not cover persons in institutions. The census figure is comprehensive and so can be used as a benchmark to set

13 Whether working, retired, etc (continued)

against less complete but more frequently available statistics. Government, local authorities and the private sector (including market research firms) all use the census figures in this way.

Particular applications have included:-

Use by the Government to assess the financial effects of possible changes in the retirement age and national insurance rules.

Use by DHSS to analyse the unemployment benefit "payroll".

Use by local authorities for many applications.

Use by major firms, eg choosing factory sites in areas where the census shows that there is a reserve of labour.

Use in market research as a benchmark for sample surveys.

Without the question, the UK would be the only major country which did not include the working population in its census results.

14 Name and business of employer

- Para 14 of Census Order

14 Name and nature of business of employer (or a self-employed person's business.)

- a Please give the name of the person's employer. Give the trading name if one is used and avoid using abbreviations or initials.
- b Please describe clearly what the employer (or the person if self-employed) makes or does.

For members of the Armed Forces, civil servants and local government officers see notes 3, 4 and 5 on back page before answering questions 14-17.

For a person employed solely in private domestic service write 'Domestic Service'.

a Name of Employer.

b Nature of business

This question is used to determine the industry in which a person is employed as distinct from his occupation.

In conjunction with question 15 on occupation, it is used:

- (i) to answer such questions as "how many engineers are employed in manufacturing, and how many in the public sector?"
- (ii) to estimate the future demand for skilled and shortage occupations;
- (iii) by the Manpower Services Commission to plan training.
- (iv) in medical research to study mortality rates in certain industries (eg fertilisers).

Although the regular employment statistics give figures of the total number of employees in each industry, they do not obtain any information about occupations. It is the combination of questions 14 and 15 in the census which is important.



15 Occupation

- Para 14 of Census Order

15 Occupation

a Please give full and precise details of the person's occupation  
If a person's job is known in the trade or industry by a special name use that name.

Precise terms should be used, for example, 'radio-mechanic', 'chartered electrical engineer', 'jig and tool fitter', 'tool room foreman' rather than general terms such as 'mechanic', 'engineer', 'fitter', 'foreman'.

b Please describe the actual work done.

a Occupation

b Description of work

The census provides the essential benchmark for all studies of occupations; and hence also for the estimates of social classes which are used most extensively (eg for market research and other social surveys). The question is essential for studies of occupational mortality.

In conjunction with question 14 on industry, it shows the deployment of skilled and shortage groups and of qualified manpower, and is used for estimating future labour demand.

In conjunction with question 12 on higher qualifications it is used for studies of the future demand for graduates.

It is used by insurance companies and others concerned with occupational pension schemes, by local authorities in the preparation of their structure plans, and for defining inner city areas.

There is no other adequate source. Sample surveys are too small for these applications.

16 Employment Status

- Para 14 of Census Order

16 Employment status

Please tick the appropriate box.

Box 3 should be ticked for a person having management or supervisory responsibility for other employees. Persons employed as quality control inspectors and concerned only with the technical quality of an item should tick box 2.

- 1  Apprentice or articled trainee
- 2  Employee not supervising other employees
- 3  Employee supervising other employees
- 4  Self-employed, not employing others
- 5  Self-employed, employing others

This census question is the only source for figures of the total number of self-employed persons, and so provides a benchmark for the total working population. The Department of Employment's statistics do not cover the self-employed, and the Inland Revenue statistics cover only those who are liable to tax.

The Department of Employment need periodic census information about the self-employed for the analysis of changes in the labour force; this, in turn, helps in understanding changes in the level of unemployment.

The answers to the question provide one of the benchmarks used for social surveys and market research; and are also used in medical research, because of the strong connection between employment status and mortality.

Only the census provides a complete count of apprentices, needed by the Manpower Services Commission for planning future training.

17 Hours worked per Week

- Para 14 of Census Order

For persons in a job last week - give details of main employment.

17 Hours worked per week

Leaving out overtime and meal-breaks state the number of hours per week which the person usually works in his or her main job.

..... hours per week  
usually worked in main job

Used to distinguish between full-time and part-time employment and to show the hours worked by part-time workers. It has been requested by the TUC in connection with the Employment Protection Act and by the EEC.

The answers to the question have been used in studies of the availability for employment of married women with young children; in decisions about the provision of nursery care; and in estimates of the likely growth in part-time employment.

See also paragraph 12 of the covering paper.

18 Address of place of work

- Para 14 of Census Order

**18 Address of place of work**

Please give the full address of the person's place of work:

For a person not working regularly at one place or who travels during work:

If reporting daily to a depot or other fixed address, give that address.

If employed on a site for a long period give the address of the site.

If not reporting daily to a fixed address tick box 1.

For a person working mainly at home tick box 2.

Full address and postcode of workplace

*Block capitals please*

Address .....

including Postcode 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1  No fixed place

2  Mainly at home

Used in conjunction with usual address (question 8) to determine 'travel-to-work areas'. These are the smallest areas for which unemployment rates are calculated. In turn, travel-to-work areas are used by the Department of Industry for designating assisted areas. For such uses the census information is objective and authoritative, and avoids accusations of prejudice that might arise if travel-to-work areas were determined subjectively.

The Manpower Services Commission uses travel-to-work areas both in organising its services and in giving advice on labour availability to prospective employers.

Travel to work statistics are used extensively by local authorities and local transport authorities, especially when cross-analysed with question 19 on method of travel to work.

The answers to the question also help in coding the industry of the employer's business accurately (question 14).

19 Method of Travel to Work

- Page 14 of Census Order

19 Journey to work

Please tick the appropriate box to show how the longest part, by distance, of the person's daily journey to work is normally made.

For a person using different means of transport on different days give the means most often used.

Car or van includes three wheeled cars and motor caravans.

- 1  British Rail train
- 2  Underground, tube, metro, etc
- 3  Bus, minibus or coach (public or private)
- 4  Motor cycle, moped, scooter,
- 5  Car or van - pool, sharing driving
- 6  Car or van - driver
- 7  Car or van - passenger
- 8  Pedal cycle
- 9  On foot
- 10  Other (please specify)
- .....
- 11  Works mainly at home

Information from the 1971 Census has been used extensively by the Department of Transport in planning trunk road schemes, particularly those serving urban centres. Local transport operators have also used census statistics in planning their services, eg BR and local authorities providing metro services.

Both the Department of the Environment and local authorities have used information on journey-to-work - both routes and method of travel - in planning the provision of new jobs and homes, eg in inner cities, and the related transport services. This information has also been an important input to Structure Plans.

To the Prime Minister

PRIME MINISTER A<sup>1</sup>.

Agree to see Mr Jenkin  
tomorrow at 17.30, to  
discuss the Census?

Home Affairs

CENSUS OF POPULATION

Your Private Secretary, Mike Pattison, wrote to mine on 3 December recording your main comments on the proposals for the census of population in H(79)77. — A. I comment briefly below on the specific questions you have queried but would welcome a short meeting with you on the more general worries you have expressed about the census. I understand that this may be possible at 1730 tomorrow, 11 December. I suggest that I bring the Registrar General, Mr Thatcher with me and Sir George Young who takes a special interest in matters involving OPCS.

I think it is possible that the legal formulation in Schedule 2 to the draft Census Order, which you were using, makes some of the questions sound much more complicated than they actually look on the form which goes to the public. In the cases where you have queried the complexity, the attached notes reproduce the questions asked in the recent census test at Haringey. The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys have made several tests with samples of the public to find the method of presentation which gets the best response and with the least effort on both sides. They assure me that these particular questions were answered in the Haringey census test without any undue difficulty. This, at least, is reassuring. The complaints at Haringey about intrusion were almost entirely concentrated on the ethnic, nationality and year of entry questions which the 'H' Committee has already decided to remove.

The attached notes also explain the main reasons for the other questions which you have queried. For some of these, OPCS is of course acting as an agent and it would really be for the Ministers of the Departments which require the information, rather than for me, to comment on their necessity. I should make the point however that there have been very extensive discussions between departments and the 1981 census form is now significantly shorter than the 1971 form - and indeed a great deal shorter than the census forms used in the USA and Canada.

I am copying this minute and the enclosed notes to the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Scotland, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Sir Robert Armstrong and the Registrar General.

P.J.

10-12-79

B

QUESTION 4

Marital status	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Single
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Married (1st marriage)
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Re-married
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Separated but not divorced
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed

The category 'divorced' has been included in every census since 1931. Quite apart from the increasing numbers in this category (and the social implications of this), a separate tick-box is needed to resolve the doubts of divorced people as to how they should complete the form (see inset panel).

The category 're-married' has not previously appeared in the precise form shown in the panel. But in all post-war censuses (except the mid-decade census in 1966) the fact of re-marriage has been elicited from the answers to questions on date(s) of marriage.

A main purpose of distinguishing re-married people from those in their first marriage is to help in measuring the quite different family structures - in some of which children of a previous marriage are included.

Question 5: year and month of a woman's marriage

Paragraph 6 of paper H(79)77 summarises the case for a question to married women on year and month of marriage.

The census is the main or only source on a number of aspects of recent changes in family and household patterns. Analyses of census data by marriage cohort, ie grouping together couples according to the period in which they married, are used, for example, in measuring family size attained by a given duration of marriage.

Questions addressed to women on date(s) of marriage have been asked in all post-war decennial censuses (and indeed a question on length of present marriage was asked in 1911). A question on numbers of children born to women in marriage was also asked in those censuses, but this has been dropped for 1981.

It is recognised that in some circumstances the question on year and month of marriage may be regarded as intrusive, but, on balance, the Registrar General recommends its inclusion.



QUESTION 6

**5 Position in household**

Please tick the box which indicates the relationship of each person to the head or a joint head of household entered in the first column.

Please specify for relationships other than those listed, eg daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, niece, uncle, cousin.

Step-children and adopted children may be treated as natural children.

Foster-children should be ticked in the 'Other related' or 'Unrelated' category as appropriate.

Couples living as husband or wife may be so described.

1  Head or a joint head of household

**Relationship to 1st person**

- 2  Husband or wife
  - 3  Son or daughter
  - 4  Father or mother
  - 5  Grandchild
  - 6  Brother or sister
  - 7  Other related (please specify)
- .....

**Unrelated**

8  (Please specify)

.....

The family is a basic social unit.

Social service departments, both central and local, need to know about the numbers of families and their make-up. The question in the inset panel meets this need. A question on these lines has been asked in every census since 1851.

It is also intended to measure fertility from the answers to the question in the inset panel, instead of asking married women a direct question about the children born to them; (such a direct question was asked in four earlier censuses but has been dropped from the proposals for 1981 on grounds of economy and privacy).

QUESTION 7

**6 Whereabouts on night of 1-2 April 1979**

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate where the person was on the night of 1-2 April 1979.

- 1  At this address, out on night work or travelling to this address
- 2  Elsewhere in England, Wales or Scotland
- 3  Outside Great Britain

housing and  
Departments and others concerned with social policy need to have figures about the normal make-up of households as distinct from the make-up on census night. For example a mother and child present on census night, with the father absent on business, would appear as a one-parent family unless it were possible to recognise the father's place in the family. The only way to do this economically and quickly is to include him on the census form and then mark him as 'absent'. This is done by a tick-box question as in inset panel.

This method has been followed since 1961.

QUESTION 9: usual address one year ago

The purpose of this question is to measure the migration from one area to another and to find out about the types of people who move. It is the only way of obtaining this information, which is regarded as vital by the Department of the Environment and local authorities. Many local authorities pressed hard for a second such question asking additionally for the address five years ago, as in the 1971 Census, but in view of the cuts exercise this was rejected.

QUESTIONS 11,12

The Census is the only means of measuring the stock of the nation's qualified manpower and its deployment. It also helps to study the demand for graduates etc in particular sectors of the economy. This information is of particular value to the Department of Employment and to bodies concerned with higher and further education.

The question on school-level qualifications (see inset panel) has tick-boxes which are straightforward. However because of the tremendous range and diversity of qualifications beyond school-level, details of these are asked for individually.

Questions on higher education qualifications have been asked since 1961. A question on school-level qualifications was introduced in 1971.

**The remaining questions do not apply to persons under 16 years of age**

**12 Qualifications**

a Please tick the appropriate boxes if the person has obtained one or more of the following qualifications. If **none** of the qualifications listed below has been obtained please tick the fifth box:

Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Grades 2-5.

GCE 'O' level, CSE (Grade 1), School Certificate, Matriculation, (Scottish equivalents: SCE 'O' grade, SLC Lower).

GCE 'A' level, Higher School Certificate (HSC), (Scottish equivalents: SCE Higher, SLC Higher, Certificate of 6th Year Studies).

Ordinary National Certificate (UNC), Ordinary National Diploma (OND).

b If the person has obtained other qualifications after age 16, please tick the 'other qualifications' box and enter details on the back of the form.

- CSE (Grades 2-5)
- 'O' level etc
- 'A' level etc
- UNC, OND
- None of these

Other qualifications (please enter details **on back page**)  
below

**Other qualifications**

If the person has obtained other qualifications after age 16, such as:

Degrees; Diplomas; HNC; HND; Nursing qualifications; teaching qualifications; Graduate or corporate membership of professional institutions; Other professional, educational or vocational qualifications

please write in the person's name and for each qualification, in the order in which they were obtained, the title, the major subject or subjects, the year obtained and the awarding institution.

Enter all qualifications even if they are not relevant to the person's present job or if the person is not working.

If more than three, please enter in a spare column and link with an arrow.

*Title*

*Subject*

*Year*

*Institution*

*Title*

*Subject*

*Year*

*Institution*

Question 13: whether working, retired, housewife etc last week

This is one of the most vital questions in the Census. Its purpose is to find out how many people of each age are in the working population, how many are potentially available for work and how many are not available because they are sick, retired, etc. This kind of information has been obtained at every census since 1841 and the census is the only source which covers everyone.

The question for the 1981 Census only requires people to put ticks in the relevant box or boxes. There are 10 boxes because people find it easier this way. If the categories are grouped together to reduce the number of boxes, some people are uncertain what they are meant to do.

The question appears on the form as follows:-

<p><b>13 Whether working, retired, housewife etc last week</b></p> <p>Please tick all the boxes appropriate to the person's activity last week.</p> <p>Tick box 1 if the person did any work for pay or profit last week including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● full-time work</li><li>● part-time work, even if only for a few hours</li><li>● casual or temporary work</li><li>● work on a person's own account</li><li>● work in a family business</li></ul> <p>Tick box 1 if the person was not at work last week because he or she was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● on holiday</li><li>● temporarily laid off</li><li>● on strike</li></ul> <p>For a full-time student tick box 9 as well as any other appropriate boxes. Do not count as a student a person in a paid occupation where training is also given such as a student or pupil nurse, an engineering apprentice or a management trainee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 <input type="checkbox"/> In a job at any time last week</li><li>2 <input type="checkbox"/> In a job but off for all or part of the week due to sickness or injury</li><li>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting to take up a job already accepted</li><li>4 <input type="checkbox"/> Seeking work</li><li>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Prevented by temporary sickness from seeking work</li><li>6 <input type="checkbox"/> Permanently sick or disabled</li><li>7 <input type="checkbox"/> Housewife</li><li>8 <input type="checkbox"/> Wholly retired</li><li>9 <input type="checkbox"/> At school or full-time student at an educational establishment not provided by an employer</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)</li></ul>
--	--

QUESTION 14: employment status, occupation, industry and journey to work

The main purpose of this block of questions is to find out how many of the working population are engaged in each occupation and industry. This basic information has been obtained at every census since 1841 and the census is the only source which covers everyone.

The question about the business of the employer is needed in order to identify the industry accurately. The question about hours has been requested by EEC. The questions about place of work and means of transport to work are needed by the Ministry of Transport, the Department of Employment, British Rail and local transport authorities.

## QUESTIONS 16, 17, 18, 19

This block of questions measures the stock of housing and its characteristics, both nationally and locally, and changes since the last census. It is required by the Department of the Environment and particularly by local authorities. Paragraph 20 of Cmnd 7146 gives some details of the needs served by the questions.

The questionnaire (on the lines of the inset panel) is straightforward and, with enumerators' help to the householder if needed, gives rise to few difficulties in the field.

Questions on housing go back to the very first census in 1801; the details on sharing, tenure and amenities were introduced in 1951 and 1961.

There is no census question to distinguish permanent houses, non-permanent houses, caravans etc. (paragraph 17 of the draft Census Order). This information is filled in by the enumerator on the basis of his own observation.

### H2 Sharing

Do you share the building with any other household?

YES  NO

If 'YES'

Are your rooms (not counting a bathroom or WC) enclosed behind your own front door inside the building?

YES  NO

### H3 Tenure

How do you and your household occupy your accommodation? Please tick the appropriate box.

**As an owner occupier (including purchase by mortgage):**

of freehold property ..... 1

of leasehold property ..... 2

**By renting, rent free or by lease**

from a local authority (council or New Town) ..... 3

with a job, shop or other business ..... 4

from a housing association or charitable trust ..... 5

furnished from a private landlord, company or other organisation ..... 6

unfurnished from a private landlord, company or other organisation ..... 7

**In some other way** .....

Please specify .....

### H4 Amenities

Has your household the use of the following amenities on these premises?

● A fixed bath or shower permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe

1  YES - for use only by this household

2  YES - for use also by another household

3  NO

● A flush toilet (WC) with entrance inside the building

1  YES - for use only by this household

2  YES - for use also by another household

3  NO

● A flush toilet (WC) with entrance outside the building

1  YES - for use only by this household

2  YES - for use also by another household

3  NO

Copied to :  
Master Set

✓  
MAP  
Home Affairs

RECORD OF A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PROPOSED 1981 CENSUS, HELD IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT 1605 HOURS ON TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER, 1979

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Present:

- The Prime Minister
- The Secretary of State for Social Services
- Mr. R. Thatcher (Registrar General)
- Mr. D. Brereton
- Mr. M. Pattison

\*\*\*\*\*

The Prime Minister said that she had opposed the proposal for a mid-term census in 1976, and her views had not changed. It seemed to her that the range of information sought in a census was more to satisfy doctoral students than to provide material for effective Government decision making. Preliminary information took 18 months to become available, whilst detailed information arrived 4 or 5 years after the event. She had further doubts about the intrusion in personal affairs through the census process. Her personal view was that the individual returns should be destroyed, not retained for eventual release even after 100 years; that the role of the enumerators threatened the confidentiality; and that there was no good reason why the forms could not be completed anonymously.

The Secretary of State for Social Services pointed out to the Prime Minister that she had been working on the schedule prepared to enable Parliament to approve the request for information. The census would be carried out through a form, with the questions largely asked through the box selection. Tests had shown the response to be satisfactory, and the questions to be generally understood. The 1981 proposals differed little from the 1971 census, although the Government had made some reductions in the coverage, and expected to save 16 per cent of the costs forecast by the previous Government. The information sought through the census was needed for a large variety of purposes throughout Whitehall and local authorities. He could not himself offer the justification for the

/needs of all



needs of all these various users. The census was the only form of enumeration which gave detailed information for quite small areas. The Prime Minister pointed out that only the 1971 census had been on a similar scale. Mr. Thatcher said that the 1951 and 1961 censuses had been similar.

The Prime Minister doubted that local authorities actually used the census information as a basis for decisions. Much of the statistical material was collected year by year, whilst local authorities most often worked from eg, their own housing waiting lists and other similar compilations. She recognised that some information was essential, for example to settle the distribution of the Rate Support Grant or the new Unitary Grant, to decide on school provision, and on old people's homes, and perhaps for demographic trends although birth and death records should provide this. Mr. Thatcher recalled the demands for information which had followed the establishment of the population panel. The Prime Minister commented that this demonstrated that the census was essentially a playground for Ph.D's. Mr. Thatcher said that many other sources of information were inadequate. The Electoral Register, for example, was often erroneous. The census represented the simplest way of getting the information required by many branches of government. Many other countries were asking essentially the same questions.

In further discussion, the Prime Minister emphasised the lack of any firm evidence that previous census information had been the basis of decision making. This must be proved to justify going ahead with the present exercise. Mr. Jenkin said that it would be possible to halt the process now and plan something more limited. But this decision could only be taken after a substantive exercise of checking with users the effect of dropping questions related to their needs for information. To take as an example the question about the job status of respondents, this had been asked regularly since 1841. He could not simply strike out a question providing information which had been used for the past 130 years. The Prime Minister reiterated that she took a different view. She saw such questions as an unwarranted intrusion in personal affairs unless they could be justified afresh.

/Mr. Jenkin said

Mr. Jenkin said that the Government could reconsider the question of posting census returns as an alternative to having them collected by an enumerator. There would be considerable costs. He would arrange to assemble, with his colleagues, further information on the precise reasons for the inclusion of certain questions, and on decisions taken in the past on the basis of census information. He would submit further to the Prime Minister as a result of his enquiries.

The meeting concluded at 1645.

MAP

12 December 1979

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed to see Mr. Jenkin to discuss the census. He is bringing the Registrar General (Mr. Thatcher) and Sir George Young. I attach:

- (a) Mr. Jenkin's minute on the general issues;
- (b) a sample of the questions used in the Haringay census test;
- (c) the H paper on which you originally commented.

11 December 1979



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

You need to dispose of  
these census questions  
as soon as possible.

The suggested 17.30  
slot may now be  
overtaken by Ivan:

I shall try to fit this  
in at the first  
opportunity, if you  
agree

MAF  
10/  
XII

ms  
mb



censor file  
na  
MAD  
Home Affairs

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Wilke

I have been through  
this document. word by word  
and spelled. Just before  
Mr S. A. says it - make  
certain each & every person has  
it. read and understood  
possibly approve. They can't  
to approve which is  
not observed in many  
of the minutes.

*Replied by phone  
NFA at present*

MR PATTISON (No. 10)

*MAP 6/81*

## 1981 CENSUS

Martin Vile has shown me a copy of your letter of 3 December to Don Brereton at DHSS, and I was very interested to see the comments the Prime Minister has made on the proposals in H(79)77.

One basic question which needs determining is to settle which census data do form a really essential part of this periodical stock-taking of our national human resources. Some information is needed in addition to a straightforward count in order to get an accurate national picture of the basic characteristics of our population and to make projections of the future. This includes the questions on sex, age, and family structure; and also on how many employed and self-employed people there are - especially the latter, for which there are no accurate alternative data sources; also on what sorts of people are without jobs (whether registered as unemployed or not). Many of these data are needed not just in their own right, but also for cross analyses and to provide controls for grossing-up the sample surveys on which we depend between censuses.

At least equally important, however, is the information which the census provides at a detailed local level - for local government and health authorities and for industry. I was therefore a little bothered that you had not copied your letter to Mr Heseltine's private office, as I think that the needs of local authorities (particularly for data on housing conditions and migration) may need special consideration in any political consultations. Mr Carlisle's office and Mr Prior's too might also feel that they would want to respond to the Prime Minister's comments on the questions on educational qualifications in which both DES and DE have an interest.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Peter Urwin*

PP A J BOREHAM

5 December 1979

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Free

Home Affairs H2  
cc: S.O.  
H.O.  
C.O.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 December 1979

B/F 12-12-79

I spoke to Rupert Woollcombe-Adams this morning about the proposals for the 1981 Census contained in H(79)77.

The Prime Minister is extremely concerned at the range of information demanded by the Census. As at present envisaged, she sees this as an expensive as well as intrusive exercise which could cause political problems.

I will not record all the comments which the Prime Minister has made on the July 1978 White Paper at Annex A to the H paper. But it may be helpful if I record the main queries she has made on Schedule 2 at Annex B.

Question 4: The Prime Minister queries the need for information on divorce status, and whether a marriage is first or subsequent;

Questions 5: The Prime Minister queries the need for  
6: this information;

Question 7: The Prime Minister is unconvinced by the arguments for asking this question;

Question 9: The Prime Minister sees no need for anything more than the information required under Question 8;

Question 11: The Prime Minister finds this unnecessarily complicated;

Question 12: Again, this seems too complicated. The Prime Minister suggests that it could be confined to a science and arts choice.

Question 13: The Prime Minister questions the need for this information;

Question 14: Is this information not already available from Unemployment figures?

Questions 16, 17, 18, 19: The Prime Minister finds all these unnecessarily complicated.

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/ Perhaps

DSG

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- 2 -

Perhaps you could let me know whether your Secretary of State proposes to make further written comments on the Census proposals to the Prime Minister, or whether he would prefer to have a meeting with her first.

I am sending copies of this letter to Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office), John Chilcot (Home Office) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

M. A. PATTISON

Don Brereton, Esq.,  
Department of Health and Social Security.

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M's comment on H(79)77  
29.11.79

I have been through this census form. It is ridiculously complicated and in view of the other statistics we collect monthly, asks far too much. We could cut a lot of expenditure and needless nosy-ness by asking less.

The proposed form will, rightly, give us a lot of political trouble. I suggest Angus Maude goes through it with the Ministers concerned.

Reference para. 5 Please note these forms are published when their confidentiality expires. They should be destroyed. See 11(vi) of the form.

Census form

Reference para. 3 : No - some of the information is provided in other statistics.

Reference para. 4 : The author protests too much.

Reference para. 5 (First sentence) : Nevertheless it is collected in a form which makes it useable against them. When taken with 11(vi), everything about ancestors will be publicly revealed.

Reference para. 6 (Second sentence) : Hardly borne out by the present form.

Reference para. 9 - harmonisation - : That really will cause trouble.

Paragraph 11 - reference (ii) & (iii) : Scope for doubt given the number of current leaks.

Paragraph 11 - reference (vi) : They should never be available, indeed they should be destroyed.

Paragraph 14 - reference Advisory Committees : These Committees often do not represent the views of individuals but those interested in a kind of collective state.

Paragraph 17 - reference '... the answers on other topics' : But are much too complex.

Paragraph 19 - reference 'the number of people who live in Britain' : That is its main purpose and the only justification.

Paragraph 19 - reference Q1 : Names and addresses will be revealed later.

Paragraph 19 - reference Q6 : This isn't necessary.

Paragraph 19 - reference Q7 : Not justified.

Paragraph 20 - reference Q8 : The questions are too complicated.

Paragraph 20 - reference Q10 : Then ask the question in a simple way.

Paragraph 22 - reference Q12 : Is this really necessary. Interesting yes - necessary no.

Paragraph 23 - reference EEC requirement : We ought to get that from the work permit.

Reference para. 24 : I think you are asking too much and it will be resented. You need numbers and size of family.

Reference para. 26 : These statistics are just for academic use, and will not affect decisions.

Reference para. 26 (Second sentence) : They will have to be long before this information can be known. By that time it will, or may, have changed.

Reference para. 28 : Why? Retraining should depend on known shortages. These are obtained in other ways.

Paragraph 28 - reference Q21 : Much too complex.

Paragraph 28 - reference Q22 : Much too complex. Questions which are too complex will result in false information.

Paragraph 29 - reference '... areas of work of the workers resident in each area' : We must already know this from other sources.

Paragraph 29 - reference Q25 : Surely this is best and most easily obtained by a traffic census.

Paragraph 30 - reference Q26, '...a guide to policies on Welsh language development' : How? If few, are you going to use the figures to teach more? Or to say there is no demand and therefore no supply is needed?

Paragraph 35 - reference 100,000 staff : Why? We register electors without all this.

Reference para. 39 : This is appalling. The more complex the form, the more the assistance required.

Reference para. 45 : This gives rise to endless offences and there are some questions which just should never give rise to criminal liability.

Reference para. 50 : It is the questions that matter - not their general character.

## SCHEDULE 2

Reference Q4 : Queries on reference to divorced and to first and subsequent marriage.

Reference Q5 : Why?

Reference Q6 : Why?

Reference Q7 : Don't accept reason given for asking this.

Reference Q9 : Only need Question 8.

Reference Q11 : Ridiculously complicated.

Reference Q12 : Too complex. Confine to science or arts.

Reference Q13 : Surely we can cut this out.

Reference Q14 : We have these in unemployment figures.

Reference Q16 : Much too complicated.

Reference Q17 : Too complicated.

Reference Q18 : Too complicated.

Reference Q19 : Too complex.

**ACTION**

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PRIME MINISTER

C 2.

Have noted my views to the site of each

For discussion in H on Monday. You might glance at proposals in para 13, and discussion of privacy issue in para 5

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

H(79)77  
29 November 1979

Question Please reconsider

Copy No 2

CABINET

HOME AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ORDER IN COUNCIL FOR THE 1981 CENSUS

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Social Services and the Secretary of State for Scotland

I have been through this census form. It is ridiculously complicated and in view of the other statistics we collect monthly for too much. We could cut

1. Our predecessors announced their plans for the 1981 Census in July 1978 (Cmnd 7146, here at Annex A), and we have agreed in correspondence that it should proceed subject to a 16 per cent cut in costs. At our meeting of 6 November we agreed that questions on ethnic origin, parents' countries of birth, nationality and year of entry should not be included; we now need to decide on the remainder.

2. The proposed date is 5 April 1981; it is within the range of dates specified in the EEC Directive, is within British Summer Time, yet avoids holidays and local elections. To meet this date officials must have statutory authority by the middle of next year; this date is governed mainly by the time required to print the 28 million forms. The Parliamentary process begins with the laying of the Census Order and we hope this may be done before the Christmas recess.

3. There has been wide consultation with users of the census. Departments are agreed on the census contents. Paragraphs 4 to 7 set out the points on which our proposals differ from those previously announced on Cmnd 7146.

4. Our predecessors had announced that the Census would count the number of separate dwellings in England and Wales. This would have entailed considerable cost. The DHSS and DOE have agreed on the much cheaper alternative of asking households whether they share accommodation and about means of access to it. Such statistics are adequate for examining housing needs.

5. We would not quarrel with the emphasis given by our predecessors to census privacy and confidentiality. However, the practices then proposed have been examined for cost-effectiveness. A person who does not wish other members of his household or the enumerator to see his census form can hand it to the enumerator in a sealed envelope, which is to be passed unopened to the local Census Officer. As an additional safeguard, the White Paper has also provided (para 44) that, as in 1971, householders might in exceptional circumstances, return their census forms by post to temporary regional offices so that they would not be seen by any local official. In 1971 many problems arose, because people said that they had returned

Please note - when forms are published should be distributed. See 11 (v)

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their forms by post when in fact they had not. Field staff then had to visit the addresses again. It was more difficult to ensure a full return from everybody and the accuracy of the census suffered. If there were to be a campaign (for example, by those concerned with confidentiality) to persuade large numbers of people to use the facility, then resources of the Census Offices could easily be swamped and the census operation could be severely damaged. Withdrawal of this postal return facility (but still keeping the right to hand the return to the enumerator in a sealed envelope) would save £0.6 million. However, it would run the risk that there may be another outcry about confidentiality. Thus the choice is finely balanced, but we are swayed by the saving in costs. Moreover, although we have trimmed the proposed publicity costs of the census, they still allow for a campaign intended to create confidence in the public that their privacy will be respected and that the census organisation may be trusted, and reminding them of the penalties for those who infringe census confidentiality.

6. Since the publication of Cmnd 7146, the Registrar General has proposed that in addition, a question to married women only should be put in England and Wales on month and year of marriage; the cost will be less than £30,000. This information, when analysed in conjunction with family compositions, would provide a fuller understanding of changes in family patterns and family building, and would help in making projections of future population. It would also restore the balance in this respect with Scotland, where fuller information is available from registration records. Answers could however disclose sensitive information, eg that a child had been born or conceived before marriage.

7. The cost of the census proposed for Great Britain in Cmnd 7146 was £45 million at November 1976 prices, spread over eight years (see Annex A, para 7). At November 1978 prices, this had become £53.4 million. We have pruned this figure by £8.2 million. These cuts have been accepted by the Ministers concerned in the recent review of public expenditure; for the five year period of the 1979 PES, they amount to 16 per cent. The proposals in this paper would cost £38.2 million in England and Wales and £7.0 million in Scotland at November 1978 prices.

8. A necessary step in the implementation of our proposals is the laying of an Order in Council under the Census Act 1920. The Act specifically authorises the collection of particulars about certain matters (subject to a negative resolution of either House), but authorises others only if they are sanctioned by affirmative resolutions of both Houses. The particulars are listed in the draft Order at Schedules 2 and 3 (attached at Annex B), and those subject to affirmative resolution are underlined.

9. The draft Order lays on specified persons a legal obligation to make returns in respect of themselves or of the members of their households. Refusal to make

H(79)77 29/11/79

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returns or making false returns is an offence under Section 8(1) of the Census Act, punishable on summary conviction by a fine not exceeding £50.

10. We consider that Parliament should have an opportunity, perhaps in February, to debate all aspects of the census, not merely those that are subject to affirmative resolution.

11. Following approval of the Order by Parliament, Regulations covering the detailed conduct of the census, including the actual questionnaires, will need to be laid. The Regulations are subject to negative resolution. It is essential that these steps should be completed before the Summer Recess so that the census forms may be printed in time and other preparations made.

12. We propose that there should be a Ministerial press conference in London to coincide with the laying of the Census Order. In view of the public interest in our decision on the ethnic question, we propose that a written answer to a PQ, to be agreed with the Home Office, should be tabled at the same time as the Census Order is laid; it would set out the main considerations which led to the Government's decisions to omit the ethnic question.

Conclusion

13. At our meeting on 6 November 1979 we agreed that the 1981 Census should not include questions on ethnic origin, parents' countries of birth, nationality and year of entry to the UK. We now invite our colleagues to agree that:

- (a) the 1981 Census of Population should in other respects be as described in Cmnd 7146 (see Annex A), but subject to the modifications referred to above, namely:
  - (i) omission of the count of numbers of separate dwellings in England and Wales (para 4);
  - (ii) omission of the facility for householders to return their forms by post (para 5);
  - (iii) addition of a question to married women only in England and Wales on year and month of marriage (para 6);
  - (iv) reduction in census costs (para 7).
- (b) the Census Order should be laid before the Christmas Recess.
- (c) the Chief Whip be invited to arrange Parliamentary time for debating the Census Order.
- (d) public announcement of our decisions should be by a Ministerial press conference and an inspired PQ (para 12).

PJ  
GY

29 November 1979

Department of Health and Social Security  
London SE1

**CONFIDENTIAL**

ANNEX A



**1981**  
**CENSUS OF POPULATION**

*Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State  
for Social Services and the Secretary of State for Scotland  
by Command of Her Majesty  
July 1978*

LONDON  
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
40p net

Cmnd. 7146

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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# 1981 CENSUS OF POPULATION

## I

### INTRODUCTION

1 The Government have decided that, subject to Parliamentary approval, a Census of Population should be taken in 1981. The proposed date is 5 April 1981. This will be the latest in the traditional series of censuses every tenth year which, with the exception of the war year 1941, have been taken since 1801. This White Paper sets out the Government's proposals for the census in Great Britain (separate arrangements are being made for the census in Northern Ireland).

2 Every large organisation needs to take stock from time to time. A complex, modern society like Britain is no exception, and the census of population is the principal way of taking stock of our main asset: the people of the country. The census counts the people, shows how the population has changed in the previous ten years, and helps in predicting future changes. But it is much more than a simple head count. It shows how many households and families there are and what kinds and standards of housing they live in; how many people there are in work and how many are available for work; what occupational skills and what educational and professional qualifications exist among the people and what use is being made of them; where people work in relation to where they live and how they travel to and from work.

3 A comprehensive knowledge of these facts is necessary if our society is to operate humanely and efficiently. The census also measures the needs of the community, whether, for example, for better housing in particular areas or for better conditions for minority groups such as one-parent families or immigrant communities. To meet such needs effectively we must be able not only to measure them over the whole nation but also to know just where they are most acute.

4 Only the census can provide information on a uniform basis both about the country as a whole and about individual areas in relation to one another. Its results are just as important to local authorities as they are to the Government. The census provides firm foundations of fact for many of their decisions on policies and planning; it helps central and local government to distribute resources where they are most needed; and it supplies the factual setting in which Government, local and health authorities, industry and business, trade unions, charities and many others must work. Ultimately it measures the framework of society and the changes that are taking place in it.

5 Even though the census collects a wide range of information about individual people, it is not concerned with people as individuals and the information will not be used in relation to them as individuals. The census is taken solely to compile statistics about groups and categories, including particular geographical areas, and not to reveal, still less to make any practical or administrative use of, information about any individual person or family or household. This cannot be stressed too much. No one need have any fear that the information he provides about himself or his household will be used administratively in dealings with him as an individual. The census is a statistical operation which converts information into statistical form to be used for statistical purposes only.

No. - some  
of the info collected  
is provided in  
other tables.

The census  
provides too  
much.

Needs to know it  
in collection -  
form which  
mechanical, made  
up of  
them.

→ Brit-  
will - see  
11 (vi). & they don't  
about answer  
will be publicly  
needed.

6 The Government's proposals for the 1981 census are founded on certain broad principles. First, the census should be confined to obtaining information for which there is a real need and which will be put to good use. Second, the census should be acceptable to the public by respecting their privacy and limiting its demands. Third, the census should safeguard the confidentiality of the information the public provide. And fourth, the census should meet the essential needs of census-users as rapidly and flexibly as cost will allow.

7 The cost of the census in Great Britain is estimated at £45 million at November 1976 prices and there is provision for most of this in *The Government's Expenditure Plans 1978-79 to 1981-82* (Cmnd 7049). (The balance will fall in later years.)

8 This White Paper is being published now, nearly three years before census day, because the Government believe that there should be time for public discussion and because it is important that firm instructions should be given early to the census planners. The census is a major operation touching every person in the country. To plan it properly takes a long time, especially if delays like those experienced in the processing of the output from the 1971 census are to be avoided; the Government are determined they should be.

9 Britain will not be alone in taking a census at the beginning of the decade. The United Nations has recommended its members to take one then, and most will do so. The nine states of the EEC have agreed to take censuses between 1 March and 31 May 1981\*; where it is reasonable to do so, census questions in the different countries are being harmonised. The United Kingdom has played a full part in the deliberations on these matters both in the United Nations and in the EEC.

CONFIDENTIALITY

10 The census collects information about each person in the country. This is justified because the statistics which are produced from the information are necessary for the efficient conduct of the nation's affairs; but in providing this information the public have a right to expect that their confidences will be respected. The confidentiality of census information is enshrined in the Census Act 1920, which provides legal penalties for unlawful disclosure of the information. In the past, assurances have been given to the public that all the information given will be treated in strict confidence by the Census Offices; similar assurances will be given about the 1981 census. No case is known of information given on the census form being used to the detriment of the individual concerned. There is a long established tradition of maintaining census confidentiality which the Government intend to uphold.

11 The following principles will govern the treatment of the information given in the returns:

- (i) In most cases one form will cover all members of the household and it will be collected by the enumerator; but people will be able to give

\*Council Directive of 22 November 1973 on the synchronisation of general population censuses (73/403/EEC).

Handily become out by the present form.

That really will cause trouble!

Yes - clear -

the information they are required to give about themselves without revealing it (if they do not wish to do so) to anyone else in their household or establishment or to their local enumerator.

- (ii) All members of the census organisation will be given strict instructions about confidentiality, and will be liable to prosecution for any breaches of the rules.
- (iii) The physical security of census documents containing personal information held in the Census Offices will be maintained.
- (iv) The computer system handling census data will have safeguards that prevent unauthorised access to the information held; names and addresses will not be entered into the computer.
- (v) Information from the census will be used solely for statistical purposes. As in the past, the Census Offices will not pass information about identified persons or households to other government departments or to anyone else outside the census organisation; moreover, in releasing statistics from the census steps will be taken to protect the identity of individuals.
- (vi) The returns themselves and the information they contain will not be made available to the public until 100 years have elapsed, when the confidentiality of the information is held to have expired.

With the no. of letters we have read?

They should never be available in the (city) should be destroyed

Should never be needed but should be destroyed out

12 There are only two circumstances in which the Government consider that information from a census return may be made available during the 100 year period. Any inadequately completed census form may have to be produced as evidence in court in connection with a prosecution under the Census Act 1920. In certain circumstances, a limited amount of information, never less than 50 years old, may be released to the person himself (or, if he has died, to his immediate relatives and descendants)—for example to help establish entitlement to a pension or an inheritance.

13 The principles outlined in paragraph 11 take account of the Government's conclusions on the independent reports that were made after the 1971 census by the British Computer Society (BCS) and by the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). These conclusions were set out together with both the Societies' reports in the White Paper *Security of the Census of Population* (Cmnd 5365). In that White Paper, the Government reserved a decision on the BCS's recommendation that there should be independent monitoring of the operations at census processing centres from an early stage of the planning and design of the census. They also reserved their position of the RSS's recommendation that there should be a standing review body to handle any complaints about the conduct of the census. Before taking any decisions, the Government believe that they should await the report of the Data Protection Committee, set up in 1976 following the White Paper *Computers and Privacy* (Cmnd 6353). The Committee was established to advise the Government on the machinery needed to protect personal information held in computers.

CONSULTATION

14 The Census Offices have consulted widely before making their recommendations for the 1981 census. The Departments of State were asked how the

There committees  
often do not  
represent the views  
of within checks - but  
these interests - and in  
- kind of collection  
- take!

census could best help the services for which they are responsible. The needs of local authorities and those outside government for information from the census were sought through Advisory Committees set up by the Registrars General. To enable representatives of groups, such as the aged or the ethnic minorities, to give their views on information needed from the census as well as the way it was to be conducted, it was announced that submissions on census matters would be welcomed from any source with or without invitation. Consultations on the statistical output from the census are continuing.

II

TOPICS COVERED BY THE CENSUS

15 The decennial census has traditionally covered all the people rather than a sample of them, and this pattern is proposed for 1981. Our society is centred mainly on the family and household, and the household will usually be the unit for which a census form is completed; slightly different arrangements will be made for persons living in hotels, public and private institutions and other communal establishments, and for anyone who would prefer to complete an individual census form. As well as including those present, the return for an address will also include those normally resident there who happen to be away on census night. This makes it possible to produce statistics about people usually living in an area as well as statistics about the people actually there on census night. Not all census information will be obtained by questioning the public; some, such as the type of accommodation, will be noted by enumerators.

16 The topics in the census have been chosen from those most needed for decision-making by central and local government, by industry and by others concerned with economic and social policies. Account has been taken of the use of census statistics for the advancement of knowledge in the social and economic sciences. Full weight has been given to the extent to which questions could be regarded as intrusive or embarrassing by those asked them. Each question has been the subject of thorough research to ensure that it can be asked in a way that will obtain as reliable answers as possible. The cost of processing the answers to questions has been considered in relation to the usefulness of the statistics that could be derived from them; questions that would be disproportionately expensive to process have been avoided.

17 Many of the topics included in the census are inter-dependent since the information about one can throw light on others. The processing of the information on the census forms therefore involves complex and detailed cross-analysis of data. For example, the information about sex and date of birth provides a picture of the population structure; but the answers on other topics, such as school or higher qualifications, occupation, usual address one year earlier, are also analysed by sex and age to provide a fuller picture. Information on weekly hours usually worked is used to distinguish full-time from part-time occupations. Information on housing accommodation and amenities is cross-analysed against the information about size and composition of the families living in the accommodation.

18 To keep the census form as short as possible, certain subjects which were asked about in the 1971 census will be omitted in 1981. These include:

Address five years earlier;

Don't see much  
to compare

!!!

- occupation one year earlier;
- month and year of birth of each child born alive in marriage (for married, widowed or divorced women under 60);
- month and year of first marriage and, where first marriage has ended, the month and year that it ended (for married, widowed or divorced women under 60);
- parents' countries of birth;
- certain household amenities, ie cooker, kitchen sink and hot water supply.

Population information

19 The most important task of the census is to give an accurate figure of the number of people who live in Britain; it is a stock-taking of all the persons in the country at one point in time. This information analysed by age, sex and marital status provides the essential bench-mark for allocating large sums of money (some £13 billion in 1976/77) by way of Rate Support Grants to local authorities to aid their housing, education and welfare programmes, and of grants to health authorities. Census figures of population are also used as a base for estimating the future population. The population information required in the census is:

Q1 Name

Names and addresses are not entered into the computer but they are needed on the form. They signify that the respondent has fulfilled his duty under the law to complete the form; they enable the Census Offices to check the receipt of those forms that have by-passed the field staff; they enable commonsense checks to be made at the Census Offices and the right person to be approached when it is necessary to call back to ensure that the information on the form is sound.

Q2 Usual address

Q3 Whereabouts on census night

The answers to these questions are used in three ways. First, a count of all those who are 'present at this address' on census night gives the enumerated population. Second, persons with a usual address different from the place of enumeration can be counted in the areas where they usually live to give the usually resident population. Third, respondents are asked to include all members of their household irrespective of their whereabouts on census night, to permit the usual composition of households to be analysed.

Q4 Sex

Q5 Date of birth

Q6 Marital status

The answers to these questions are most often used in conjunction with other census information; for example, to estimate the numbers and ages of married women who are working and the types of jobs they hold. The answers used by themselves are needed to estimate the characteristics of the populations of local authority areas and to determine the potential demand for the services which local authorities provide; for example, welfare facilities for the young and old.

*This not necessary*

*That is the main purpose & the only introduction*

*But they will be revealed later.*

*They will usually reply from home*

Q7 Position in household

*Not included !!*

Organisations that provide social services need to know how many families there are, what their composition is and what changes are taking place over time. So households are analysed by their family composition and this is shown on the census form by entering the relationships of the household members to the person who is returned as 'head of the household'. Information about married couples and their children, derived from the answers to this question, helps to establish the patterns of family building.

*- why? - for whom?*

**Housing**

20 The census collects information on the stock of housing and some of its characteristics. The national and local area figures, when compared with those of the previous census, help measure the effects that housing policies have had in providing new housing and in renovating accommodation; they also help to shape new policies. Because the census measures the standards of all housing, the figures enable the problems of particular areas to be seen in the context of housing elsewhere in the country and in similar types of area.

*The function are too complicated*

Q8 Tenure of household accommodation

Changes in tenure between censuses measure the effect of building policies, the growth of owner-occupation, the provision of local authority housing, and the supply of furnished and unfurnished accommodation for private letting.

Q9 Rooms in accommodation

The number of rooms, taken with the number of people in a household, is used to measure housing standards, in particular the degree of over-crowding.

Q10 Sharing

*Then ask the household is a separate unit*

This question asks whether space for moving between the rooms in the household's accommodation is shared with any other household. It is used to count separate dwellings and other self-contained household accommodation.

Q11 Amenities

Information will be obtained on the availability of a bath or shower and of an inside or outside WC. The answers to the question will distinguish amenities which are exclusive to the household from those which are shared with other households. Lack of these amenities or sharing of them usually indicates sub-standard housing.

21 It is proposed to count separate dwellings in England and Wales. This information helps to identify areas of housing need and is useful in planning housing investment. Dwellings will not be counted in Scotland where there are alternative sources of information.

**Address one year ago**

22 So many people change their address during a year that the number and characteristics of the population of small areas often change considerably. The

census will provide statistics about the number and characteristics of people who at the time of the census are living in a different area from the one in which they lived one year previously. The information is needed for regional and local planning, particularly when estimating changes in local populations between censuses and when making population projections.

Q12 Usual address one year ago This shows where those changing their address came from, and so provides details of the numbers who have moved between different areas.

*(1) this really necessary -  
interview for -  
necessary no.*

**Country of birth, nationality and ethnic group**

23 The answers to the questions on country of birth and nationality will be used to estimate the numbers of persons of foreign nationality who live and work in Britain; this information will be required by EEC to measure the movement of persons who are nationals of member countries. The year of entry will provide information on migration patterns.

*We ought to see that the work is recorded.*

Q13 Country of birth; and for those born outside the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic, whether naturalised or registered as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies; and for those not registered or naturalised, the name of the country that issued the passport on which the person entered the United Kingdom.

Q14 The year of entry to the United Kingdom, for those born outside it.

24 In addition, there is a need for authoritative and reliable information about the main ethnic minorities. In order to help in carrying out their responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, and in developing effective social policies, the Government and local authorities need to know how the family structure, housing, education, employment and unemployment of the ethnic minorities compare with the conditions in the population as a whole. Any study of community relations must start from a knowledge of the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the ethnic minorities and, in particular, from knowledge of changes in their geographical distribution. The census, which is comprehensive and confidential, would provide much of this basic information.

*I think you are asking too much info. will be recorded. You need no's + s/n's (family).*

25 In the 1971 Census of Population, a question was asked about the countries in which persons and their parents were born. The Registrars General are considering the reliability and acceptability of possible forms of a direct question on ethnic origin of the kind already asked in many other countries, such as the Caribbean countries of the Commonwealth, Canada and the USA. The Government believe that a question on race or ethnic origin should be asked in England and Wales; in Scotland it would have less application. Before making a final decision on the question to be asked, and whether it would also be asked in Scotland, the Government would wish to take account of the findings of the Registrars General and of public opinion.

Q15 Race or ethnic origin The form of question will be decided after further consideration.

Employment

26 The census is the most comprehensive source of information about socio-economic characteristics of the population. It provides information about the ages, occupations and qualifications of workers in the different industries, and about other groups over school-leaving age (for example students, housewives, and the retired). It also provides information about groups not included in routine employment statistics, such as the self-employed, or in routine unemployment statistics, such as those (including many married women) who are seeking work but are not registered as unemployed. The statistics are used to measure rates of economic activity in different sections of the community and the numbers of people not economically active; and they help in calculating for each industry and occupation the rates of incidence of specific industrial diseases and injuries. Statistics for local areas contribute to regional and local policies—for example, in ascertaining the need for new jobs in a particular place and the need for training facilities to enable people to move to new jobs, and in identifying areas of economic deprivation calling for special assistance.

!!  
This is just for academic use, and is not going to affect decisions. They will have to be made long before this information can be known. By that time it will have changed.

27 Questions 17-19 refer to the person's main employment in the week before the census or, for persons not in a job, to the most recent full-time job.

- Q16 Activity last week: Everyone aged 16 or over is asked whether, in the previous week, he or she was in a paid job, seeking work, a student, a housewife, retired, or prevented from working because of sickness or disability.
- Q17 Name and business of employer: This is asked in order to identify the industry in which the person works. Solely as an aid to accuracy, the name of the firm or organisation is asked for as well as its type of business. The workplace address (question 23) is also used to identify the industry if the firm has different businesses at different addresses.
- Q18 Occupation: Persons are asked to name their occupation and to describe the work they do.
- Q19 Employment status: This distinguishes employers, other self-employed, apprentices, and other employees.
- Q20 Weekly hours usually worked: This question is used to distinguish full-time from part-time workers and gives information on the structure of the labour force; it is also useful for studies of special groups such as mothers with young children.

See comments beside questions

Educational and professional qualifications

28 The answers to these questions are used, with answers to other questions, to give statistics about the qualified people engaged in different industries and occupations, and to measure changes in the proportion of qualified people in them. They are also used for planning education and re-training, and for policies on industrial recruitment and re-deployment. They show the reserves of qualified manpower among, for example, housewives and the unemployed.

- Q21 School etc qualifications: This question is about qualifications normally obtained at school, for example CSE, GCE 'O' and 'A' levels and their equivalents in Scotland; and ONC and OND.

Why?  
Re training should depend on how shortages. There are changes in other ways.

Amuldas  
Complex.



Q22 Higher qualifications

This question asks about degrees, HNC, HND, membership of professional institutions, nursing and teaching qualifications and other higher qualifications. The title, major subject (or subjects), awarding institution and year obtained are sought in order to classify the qualifications returned according to their level and subject.

*Check 605  
Q22 has 605  
605 complete  
results will  
John information*

**Workplace and transport**

29 The activity question (Q16) together with usual address (Q2) provides information about the number of workers resident in each area. This may be very different from the number of people working in each area which is given by the answers to the question about address of place of work (Q23). The census therefore shows the areas of work of the workers resident in each area and the areas of residence of the people who work in each area. This helps in identifying employment areas for planning purposes. The census measures the numbers travelling to work, the origins and destinations of their journeys and the main means of transport used. It also asks for the number of cars and vans available for use by the members of each household. The information is used to assess the demand for public transport and road space and helps in making transport policy.

*We must already know this from other sources.*

Q23 Address of place of work

The address of place of work shows the destination of the journey to work; the usual address (Q2) will normally be the origin of the journey.

Q24 Main means of transport used on journey to work

This asks for the means of transport normally used for the longest part, by distance, of the journey.

Q25 Number of cars and vans

The answers to this question indicate the areas where people are most dependent on public transport, and the areas where private transport makes the most demand on road space.

*Smelly this is best owned cars  
owned by a Welsh census.*

**Welsh and Gaelic languages**

30 The census will ask questions on language in Wales and in Scotland.

Q26 Does the person speak Welsh and, if so, does he or she speak English, read Welsh, write Welsh

The answers to these questions, which are asked in Wales of everyone aged 3 years or over, will be used to measure the change in use of the language and as a guide to policies on its development.

*- 1971 - if there are  
willing to use the  
to work more?*

Q27 Can the person speak Gaelic and can he or she read Gaelic, write Gaelic

These questions, asked in Scotland of everyone aged 3 years or over, will provide information broadly comparable to that obtained in 1971 about speaking ability and literacy in the language.

*Or to say  
there is no  
demand - i.e. no  
supply is needed?*

III

SURVEYS LINKED TO THE CENSUS

31 There will be some voluntary sample surveys linked to the census to check the accuracy of the census information. There will be two kinds:

!!

- (i) Checks on the quality of the information given in the census. Small samples of households in different parts of the country will be interviewed by trained interviewers to see how well they understood and answered the questions and whether their answers were accurate for their particular circumstances.
- (ii) Checks on the completeness of coverage. The records of a sample of enumerators will be independently verified to assess the extent of any under-enumeration due to omission of buildings or parts of buildings or of whole households within buildings. Small samples of households will be visited to check that all persons present on census night were recorded on their census forms.

32 In addition, the census may be used as a source from which to select the sample for some other kinds of surveys—for example, surveys containing questions to be asked of people in particular occupations or with particular qualifications. This avoids encumbering the census with these questions and others that are inappropriate in a compulsory census.

33 It is likely that a small number of census-linked surveys of this kind will be taken after the 1981 census but it is too early yet to specify the topics that will be covered. Response to any such survey will be voluntary, and the surveys will be handled by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and by the General Register Office (Scotland). Information provided will be treated in the same strict confidence as information given on the main census forms.

34 Parliament will be informed about the subject matter of any census-linked survey which it is decided to conduct.

IV

THE CONDUCT OF THE CENSUS

Census staff

35 The delivery and collection of forms will be carried out by some 100,000 temporarily recruited enumerators in England and Wales and 15,000 in Scotland. In England and Wales senior temporary field officers will be recruited at three levels: 2,200 Census Officers, each responsible on average for 50 enumerators, themselves each responsible for enumerating 400-500 people; 6,800 Assistant Census Officers to help Census Officers in the day-to-day work; and 110 Census Supervisors each responsible for the recruitment, training and general oversight of some 20 Census Officers. In Scotland the structure is similar.

36 All temporarily recruited census staff will have to sign an undertaking that they will not, without lawful authority, divulge or make use of any information

Why? We require all this without

100,000

acquired in the course of their duties. They will be liable on conviction under the Census Act to imprisonment or a fine, or both, for any contravention. Staff employed in the Census Offices are bound by the provisions both of the Census Act and of the Official Secrets Acts. All staff will be warned against inadvertent disclosure.

37 Care will be taken to avoid, as far as practicable, placing an enumerator in an area where there are people he knows personally or through business contacts. But it is impossible to guarantee that an enumerator will never know, or be known to, a householder especially in sparsely populated areas. Where this does happen, enumerators will offer the householder an envelope in which the completed form may be sealed so that it will not be seen by the enumerator.

**Delivery and collection of census forms**

38 Census forms will be delivered and collected by enumerators except in special cases such as large establishments (hotels, hospitals, etc) where the Census Officer will make the arrangements with the proprietor or manager. Special arrangements will be made to enumerate the personnel of naval vessels and the crew and passengers of civilian ships.

39 The enumerator will check that each form is complete (unless it is returned in a sealed envelope) and will give any help required. Experience has shown that this is generally welcomed. A telephone enquiry service, free of charge, will be available for anyone who has difficulties in completing the form. Assistance will also be available for those with a limited knowledge of English.

**Collection of forms in confidence**

40 A person completing a census form may, if he wishes, return it without disclosing its contents to other members of a household or establishment, to the census enumerator, or to any local census officials.

41 An adult member of a household who does not wish other people in the household to see his census answers may ask for a separate form and an envelope in which to seal it. The householder will be required to enter on the main household form only the name and position in the household of anyone making a separate return and to indicate whether that person was present at the address on census night.

42 In hotels, hospitals, prisons, schools and similar establishments, a separate form will generally be issued to each person. A supply of envelopes will be given to the manager or other person responsible for the enumeration of the establishment so that anyone who wishes may make a return without disclosing it to the manager. This will apply equally to the staff of the establishment and other persons present.

43 A householder who does not want the completed form to be seen by the enumerator can ask for an envelope in which the form can be sealed. The envelope will be passed unopened to the local Census Officer who, with the

*Why?*

*This is spelling.*

*The more complete the form - the more the assistance.*

Assistant Census Officers, will then be responsible for checking it and having any omissions made good. Enumerators will be instructed to offer envelopes wherever they know, or are known to, householders.

44 In exceptional circumstances, a householder may post the completed form to the appropriate census office, and thus avoid the census answers being seen by any local official. In England and Wales temporary regional offices will be established; posted forms will be sent to an office outside the area of enumeration.

45 In all cases the obligation to make a return will not be discharged until a fully completed form is received by the census organisation.

*This gives me  
to call off  
and then as soon  
as possible which  
it should be  
with the census  
with the census*

V

THE RESULTS OF THE CENSUS

46 The Government recognize that the longer it takes to publish the results of the census the less useful they are. Owing largely to delays in making decisions about the census and to the unprecedented volume of demand for output, it took longer than expected to complete the publication of the results from the 1971 census. The Government intend to publish the results of the 1981 census quicker, so far as resources permit. Procedures will be simplified or automated where practicable. Statistics for some topics which are expensive to process will be produced using only a sample of the answers where this will provide statistically satisfactory results.

47 In England and Wales some temporary clerical processing centres will be set up. In order that the staff of these centres should not have access to information about people they know personally, these centres will not process the census returns for the areas in which they are situated. Final computer processing will be done centrally. In Scotland the clerical processing will be done at a single centre and the computer processing will be shared between the Census Offices, conversion of the data to tape and production of special Scottish tabulations taking place in Edinburgh.

48 A preliminary report will be published as soon as possible after census day. Before the end of 1982 some tables should be available for all districts. The aim will be to make all the main results available by the summer of 1984. In order to achieve this timetable the processing system needs to be adequately tested before the census in a dress rehearsal in a number of areas in 1980. The Government are grateful to the members of the public who take part in these tests.

49 The output from the census will consist, as previously, of tables to be published in a set of reports laid before Parliament, an abbreviated set of statistics for smaller areas and special tabulations produced to meet the requirements of particular users and paid for by them. In addition, simple summaries and explanatory guides will be issued in order to make the results available to a wider public.

VI

THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

50 The Government will in due course prepare a draft Order in Council embodying the proposals outlined in section II of this White Paper, and will lay it before Parliament for approval in accordance with the Census Act 1920. The Schedule to the Act authorises the inclusion in the census of the following matters in respect of which particulars may be required:

1. Names, sex, age.
2. Occupation, profession, trade or employment.
3. Nationality, birthplace, race, language.
4. Place of abode and character of dwelling.
5. Condition as to marriage, relation to head of family, issue born in marriage.

*It is the  
colonial countries  
that matter -  
not their  
general character*

All other matters require affirmative resolution in Parliament. As well as the particulars to be stated in the returns, the Order will prescribe the date on which the census is to be taken, and the persons by whom and about whom the returns are to be made.

51 At a later stage the Secretary of State for Social Services and the Secretary of State for Scotland, who are the ministers responsible for the census, will make Census Regulations and lay them before Parliament; these regulations are subject to negative resolution. Each set of regulations will make provision for the conduct of the census and contain specimen census forms.

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## SCHEDULE 2

## PART I

Particulars to be stated in returns made in England and Wales

1. Full name.
2. Sex.
3. Date of birth.
4. Whether single, divorced <sup>why</sup> widowed or married and if married, whether first or subsequent subsisting marriage. <sup>why?</sup>
5. In respect of a married woman, the month and year in which the subsisting marriage was solemnized. <sup>why?</sup>
6. <sup>why</sup> Relationship to head of household or to the first named joint head of household or where there is no head or joint head of the household to the first person named on the form, or position in establishment.
7. Whether present in or absent from the dwelling or part of the dwelling occupied by the private household to which the return relates, and, if absent, whether working overnight or travelling overnight to that dwelling, whether elsewhere in Great Britain or whether outside Great Britain. <sup>Don't need reason for working over</sup>
8. Usual residence.
9. In respect of any person whose usual residence on 5 April 1980 was not the same as on census day, the usual residence on 5 April 1980. <sup>Only need question 8</sup>
10. Country of birth.
11. In respect of any person aged 16 years or over, which, if any, of the following qualifications he has obtained, namely a Certificate of Secondary Education at Grade 1, a Certificate of Secondary Education at Grades 2-5, a General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level, a General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level, a Higher School Certificate, a School Certificate, a Certificate of Matriculation, a Scottish Certificate of Education at the Higher Grade, a Scottish Certificate of Education at the Ordinary Grade, a Scottish Leaving Certificate at the Higher Grade, a Scottish Leaving Certificate at the Lower Grade, a Certificate of Sixth Year Studies, an Ordinary National Certificate, an Ordinary National Diploma. <sup>Ridiculously complicated.</sup>

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*Too unhelpful  
Sec. 9  
Miss.*

12. In respect of any person aged 18 years or over, the academic, professional or vocational qualifications obtained after attaining that age, and for each qualification the subject or group of subjects in which the qualification was obtained, the name of the institution which awarded the qualification and the year the award was made.

13. In respect of any person aged 16 years or over, whether that person was at any time during the week preceding census day -

*Surely we  
can understand  
out.*

- (a) in a job and if so whether off work for all or part of the week due to sickness or injury;
- (b) housewife;
- (c) waiting to take up a job already accepted;
- (d) seeking work;
- (e) prevented by temporary sickness from seeking work;
- (f) permanently sick or disabled;
- (g) wholly retired from employment;
- (h) at school or a full-time student at an educational establishment not provided by an employer;
- (i) engaged in any activity other than those mentioned above, the activity to be specified.

14. In respect of a person aged 16 years or over -

*And that  
we do have  
employment  
figures.*

- (a) if in employment at any time during the week preceding census day, for the main employment in that week -
  - (i) whether that employment was as an employee, and, if so, whether or not supervising other employees or whether engaged as an apprentice or articled trainee;
  - (ii) whether that employment was as a self-employed person, and, if so, whether or not employing others;
  - (iii) name and nature of business of employer or of the person if self-employed;



- (iv) occupation and kind of work done;
- (v) the number of hours normally worked by that person in that employment in one week excluding overtime and meal breaks;
- (vi) the address of the place of work;
- (vii) the main means of transport, if any, used for the daily journey to work;

(b) except a person mentioned at paragraph (b),(h) or (i) of item 13 above, if not in employment during the week preceding census day, particulars of the last full-time employment, if any, as specified in sub-paragraphs (i),(ii),(iii) and (iv) of paragraph (a) of this item.

15. Number of rooms occupied by the private household to which the return relates.

16. Whether the private household to which the return relates has exclusive use or shared use of the building occupied by that household, and where the building is shared by more than one household, whether the rooms occupied by that household, but excluding any toilet or bathroom of which that household has the use, are enclosed behind their own front door inside the building.

17. Whether the structure or other place occupied by the private household to which the return relates is permanent or non-permanent or whether it is a caravan, and, if it is a permanent structure, whether it is occupied by that household as a purpose-built flat or maisonette or if not, whether the entrance to it is shared by any other household.

18. Whether the living accommodation to which the return relates is owned or leased, otherwise than by virtue of a lease for a term of 21 years or less, by any person usually resident therein, or, if not, whether it is rented or leased or occupied rent free -

(a) from a local authority or New Town Development Corporation or the Commission for the New Towns;

(b) by virtue of the employment of a member of the household, or with a shop, farm or other business premises;

*Mark too complicated*

*Too complicated*

*Too complicated*

CONFIDENTIAL

- (c) from a housing association or charitable trust;
- (d) from any other person or body, and if so, whether furnished or unfurnished;

or otherwise occupied and if so, stating the conditions on which it is occupied.

19. Whether the private household to which the return relates has exclusive use or shared use of a fixed bath or shower which is permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe, and of a water closet with entrance inside the building, and of a water closet with entrance outside the building.
20. Number of cars and vans normally available for use by members of the private household to which the return relates.

PART II

Additional Particulars to be stated in returns made in Wales.

21. In respect of any person aged 3 years or over, whether speaking Welsh, and, if so, whether also -
- (a) speaking English;
  - (b) reading Welsh;
  - (c) writing Welsh.

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SCHEDULE 3

Particulars to be stated in returns made in Scotland

1. Full name.
2. Sex.
3. Date of birth.
4. Whether single, married, divorced or widowed.
5. Relationship to head of household or to the first named joint head of household or where there is no head or joint head of the household to the first person named on the form, or position in establishment.
6. Whether present in or absent from the dwelling or part of the dwelling occupied by the private household to which the return relates, and, if absent, whether working overnight or travelling overnight to that dwelling, whether elsewhere in Great Britain or whether outside Great Britain.
7. Usual residence.
8. In respect of any person whose usual residence on 5 April 1980 was not the same as on census day, the usual residence on 5 April 1980.
9. Country of birth.
10. In respect of any person aged 16 years or over, which, if any, of the following qualifications he has obtained, namely a Certificate of Secondary Education at Grade 1, a Certificate of Secondary Education at Grades 2-5, a General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level, a General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level, a Higher School Certificate, a School Certificate, a Certificate of Matriculation, a Scottish Certificate of Education at the Higher Grade, a Scottish Certificate of Education at the Ordinary Grade, a Scottish Leaving Certificate at the Higher Grade, a Scottish Leaving Certificate at the Lower Grade, a Certificate of Sixth Year Studies, an Ordinary National Certificate, an Ordinary National Diploma.

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11. In respect of any person aged 18 years or over, the academic, professional or vocational qualifications obtained after attaining that age, and for each qualification the subject or group of subjects in which the qualification was obtained, the name of the institution which awarded the qualification and the year the award was made.
12. In respect of any person aged 16 years or over, whether that person was at any time during the week preceding census day -
- (a) in a job and if so whether off work for all or part of the week due to sickness or injury;
  - (b) housewife;
  - (c) waiting to take<sup>up</sup> a job already accepted;
  - (d) seeking work;
  - (e) prevented by temporary sickness from seeking work;
  - (f) permanently sick or disabled;
  - (g) wholly retired from employment;
  - (h) at school or a full-time student at an educational establishment not provided by an employer;
  - (i) engaged in any activity other than those mentioned above, the activity to be specified.

13. In respect of a person aged 16 years or over -

- (a) if in employment at any time during the week preceding census day, for the main employment in that week -
  - (i) whether that employment was as an employee, and, if so, whether or not supervising other employees or whether engaged as an apprentice or articled trainee;

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- (ii) whether that employment was as a self-employed person, and, if so, whether or not employing others;
- (iii) name and nature of business of employer or of the person if self-employed;
- (iv) occupation and kind of work done;
- (v) the number of hours normally worked by that person in that employment in one week excluding overtime and meal breaks;
- (vi) the address of the place of work;
- (vii) the main means of transport, if any, used for the daily journey to work;

(b) except a person mentioned at paragraph (b), (h) or (i) of item 12 above, if not in employment during the week preceding census day, particulars of the last full-time employment, if any, as specified in sub-paragraphs (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) of paragraph (a) of this item.

- 14. In respect of any person aged 3 years or over, whether able to speak, read or write Scottish Gaelic.
- 15. Number of rooms occupied by the private household to which the return relates (separately distinguishing rooms used for cooking).
- 16. Whether the private household to which the return relates shares the use of any hall, passage, landing or staircase with any other private household.
- 17. Whether the living accommodation to which the return relates is owned by any person usually resident therein, and, if not, whether it is -
  - (a) occupied by virtue of the employment of a member of the household, or with a shop, farm or other business premises;
  - (b) rented from a local authority or New Town Development Corporation or the Scottish Special Housing Association;

- (c) rented from any other housing association, or a charitable trust;
- (d) rented from any other person or body, and, if so, whether rented furnished or unfurnished;
- (e) otherwise occupied and, if so, stating the conditions on which it is occupied.
18. Whether the private household to which the return relates has exclusive use or shared use of a fixed bath or shower which is permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe, and of a water closet with entrance inside the dwelling occupied by that household, and of a water closet with entrance outside that dwelling.
19. Whether the structure of other place occupied by the private household to which the return relates is -
- (a) a detached, semi-detached or terraced building occupied by a single household; or
- (b) a building consisting of
- (i) 2 storeys, or
- (ii) 3 or 4 storeys, or
- (iii) 5 or more storeys
- divided into flats or rooms, or consisting of a single flat with a shop, office or other business premises;
- (c) non-permanent, and if so whether it is a caravan.
20. In respect of any dwelling, or part of a dwelling, occupied by the private household to which the return relates -
- (a) the level at which the building is occupied, and, where the level of occupation is on the first floor or above, the level of entry to the household's accommodation;
- (b) whether the access to the dwelling or, as the case may be, the part of the dwelling, is by means of a lift, external stairs or outside steps, internal stairs or none of these.
21. Number of cars and vans normally available for use by members of the private household to which the return relates.

*Home Affairs*



Civil Service Department  
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 3000

Minister of State

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of Health & Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON SE1 6BY

4 October 1979

*Dear Patrick,*

*My/lu*

OPTIONS FOR CUTTING THE COST OF THE CENSUS OF POPULATION

Thank you for your letter of 27 September. In view of what you say, I accept that there is no need for a separate discussion on the 1981 Census in the context of the options exercise.

As you know, Christopher Soames is due to report back to Cabinet later this month with recommendations on the reductions which can be secured in Civil Service staff costs by 1982-83. I propose that the cuts of 16 per cent which you have offered in the costs of the Census in England and Wales, and of 17½ per cent offered by George Younger for Scotland, should be included in the report to Cabinet. Final decisions on the shape and cost of the Census can, as you say, be taken when the full Census proposals come up for collective discussion later in the year.

Copies of this letter go to the recipients of yours.

*✓*

PAUL CHANNON

*Pal*



*Home Affairs*

SCOTTISH OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

Paul Channon Esq MP  
Minister of State  
Civil Service Department  
Old Admiralty Building  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

*R*  
*u/w*

*3* October 1979

Patrick Jenkin wrote to you on 27 September about the proposals made for cutting the cost of the census.

As he indicated in his letter, there are compelling reasons for holding a census in 1981 and, having regard to the substantial reductions in the cost of the census which he and I propose to make, I hope you will be able to agree that there is no need for a separate discussion on cutting census costs.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

GEORGE YOUNGER





Home Affairs

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY  
Telephone 01-407 5522  
From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Paul Channon Esq MP  
Minister of State  
Civil Service Department  
Old Admiralty Building  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

MJM

R29/9

27 September 1979

Dear Paul,

OPTIONS FOR CUTTING THE COST OF THE CENSUS OF POPULATION

Thank you for your letter of 14 September about the Census of Population. Of course I fully understand your concern that the Census comes just at a time when we must do our utmost to reduce expenditure. However, the reasons for holding the Census are really very strong indeed, as you will see from the enclosed note. Also, on timetable we are already committed by an EEC directive to hold the Census in the spring of 1981.

None of our colleagues has questioned the need for the Census and you will have seen from George Younger's letter of 5 September and Michael Heseltine's of 19 September how keen they are to get the results. The Home Office, Department of Employment, the Department of Education and Science and my own DHSS are also major users, to say nothing of all the local authorities. I feel that the proposals which I circulated on 24 August for reducing the cost of the Census by 16 per cent are a good contribution to the cuts exercise and that this is as far as we can go.

If I may say so, the situation on the Census is hardly the same as on rating revaluation, where the Cabinet view was that to have proceeded would have made it appear that we were committed to the present rating system indefinitely. There is no such consideration in the case of the Census.

The full proposals for the Census will be coming up for collective discussion later this year, probably in November at the Home and Social Affairs Committee and then in the Legislation Committee before the Census Order is laid before Parliament. In view of this, and the other points above, I hope you will agree that there is no need for a separate discussion in the context of the cuts exercise.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to the other recipients of your letter.

Your ever  
Paul

THE 1981 CENSUS OF POPULATION

1 The Census of Population is the single most important statistical operation in Britain, as in almost every other country. Fundamentally it is still the only comprehensive stock-taking of the country's largest resource - manpower. It provides basic data which are the ultimate foundation for innumerable estimates on which policy decisions are based, not only in national and local government but also in industry and commerce. For example, it is used in the allocation of well over £15 billion by way of rate support grants to local authorities and grants to health authorities. It is also an important service to the general public.

2 Once one has set up the organisation which is needed to count the numbers of people it is a comparatively cheap matter to collect information about other topics at the same time. Indeed, the census provides the only occasion when it is possible to collect certain information at the local level. The reasons for each of the questions in the census, and the purposes for which they will be used, were set out in the White Paper on the 1981 Census (Cmd 7146).

3 A census has been taken in Britain every ten years from 1801 to date with the single exception of the war year 1941. A number of advanced countries now have a statutory requirement to take a census every 5 years (notably Canada, the USA and Australia).

4 The Council of Ministers of the EEC agreed in 1973 a Directive (73/403/EEC) which laid down that

"Member States shall conduct a general population census on a date between 1 March and 31 May 1981."

The Directive continues that the Commission, in collaboration with the competent authorities of the Member States, shall draw up a programme of the statistical tables to be prepared. The UK has been fully involved in this operation.

5 When the plans for a mid-decade census in Britain (to be taken in 1976) were axed by the previous administration as part of the expenditure cuts in the 1975 Budget, there was widespread protest from the local authorities, who needed the local area statistics uniquely provided by the census. Efforts to find a partial substitute for the cancelled census eventually led DoE to launch the National Dwelling and Housing Survey; this is a sample survey covering 1 million households. Moreover many local authorities conducted surveys at their own expense to make up, in part, for the loss of the 1976 Census.

6 Cancellation of the full decennial Census which is due in 1981 would be very strongly resisted by the users, and particularly by local authorities. It would break a long British tradition and would also be contrary to the EEC directive.



**with compliments**

**MINISTER OF STATE**

---

*010-  
re/s attal*

**CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT  
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ**

**Telephone 01-273 5563/4086**



Minister of State

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of Health and  
Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON SE1 6BY

Home Affairs  
Civil Service Department  
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 3000

P. 1919

14 September 1979

Dear Patrick,

#### OPTIONS FOR CUTTING THE COST OF THE CENSUS OF POPULATION

Thank you for copying to Christopher Soames your letter of 24 August to Michael Heseltine.

As you say, the question of Census costs has implications for the staff cuts exercise. Current provision for the Census in PES for the years 1979-80 - 1983-84 stands at £50.4m, a large proportion of which is for staffing and other administrative costs. Expenditure in both the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and in the General Register Office for Scotland will thus be rising sharply over the precise period in which the Government's objective is to achieve substantial reductions. Even if the costs of the Census were reduced by some 16%, as you propose, the PES provision for OPCS and GRO(S) in 1982-83 (our target year for the cuts exercise) would be substantially above 1979-80 levels.

I do of course appreciate that there are strong arguments for holding the Census in 1981, as the Director of the Central Statistical Office emphasised in his letter to you of 30 August. Nevertheless, given the size of the expenditure involved, and in the light of yesterday's discussion in Cabinet, would you agree it might be appropriate for colleagues generally to have the opportunity of considering the case for going ahead with the Census? As you know, this was the approach we adopted to the decision on rating revaluation, and it would enable the case for proceeding with the Census on the basis you propose, together with the cost implications, to be considered fully by our colleagues.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister (with copies of your own and John Boreham's letters), and to the other recipients of your letter.

Y/-  
Paul

PAUL CHANNON



*MJS*

LORD TREASURER'S OFFICE  
C  
30 AUG 1979  
FILING INSTRUCTIONS  
FILE No. ....

CABINET OFFICE  
Central Statistical Office

Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ Telephone 01-233 6117

From the Director: A. J. Boreham, c.B.

LORD TREASURER'S OFFICE
Mr Williams
PS - Min of State
<del>PS - Form Sec</del>
PS - Command Form Sec
LP (ET)
Mr Wilding
Mr Bingham
Mr Waller

*H/S* 31 AUG 1979 *EB*

30 August 1979

Our Ref G11/19

*Dear Secretary of State*

OPTIONS FOR CUTTING THE COST OF THE CENSUS OF POPULATION

I have seen a copy of your letter of 24 August to the Secretary of State for the Environment about possible ways of reducing the cost of the next Census of Population in 1981.

Cancellation of the census which was to have been held in 1976 has meant that we are still relying on 1971 figures as a basis for current demographic estimates. This makes monitoring of the Government's policies increasingly difficult and emphasises the need for a comprehensive census in 1981.

Nevertheless economies can be made which need not be damaging to the collection of essential information. I fully support the proposals for savings outlined by OPCS.

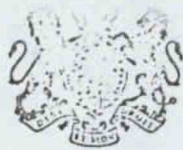
I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

*Yours sincerely*  
*John Boreham*

JOHN BOREHAM

Secretary of State for Social Services  
Department of Health and Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant & Castle  
SE1

LORD PRESIDENTS OFFICE  
C 19  
28 AUG 1979  
FILING INSTRUCTIONS  
FILE No.



*Mr Williams*  
*MS PS/Minister of State*  
*PS/2nd Permanent Sec.*  
*Mr Walding*  
*Mr Bamfield*  
*Mr Wollen*  
*LP(ET)*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine, MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1

*M/S 29 AUG 1979 E5*

24 August 1979

*Dear Michael,*

OPTIONS FOR CUTTING THE COST OF THE CENSUS OF POPULATION

As you will know, the next Census of Population is due to be held in April 1981. After seeing the case for holding it, I am satisfied that the Census should take place but we need to exercise all reasonable economies. I am enclosing a paper prepared by OPCS which sets out the options which have been identified for cutting the cost of the Census in England and Wales.

The proposed economies require the decisions which are summarised in paragraph 17 of the paper. These chiefly concern you, the Secretary of State for Scotland and myself. Before proceeding further, I should therefore be grateful if you would let me know whether you can agree to the proposals.

Although these economies will be a contribution to the cuts exercise, decisions on the points in the paper are also needed so that preparation of the Census Order to be laid before Parliament can start. I should be grateful, therefore, if you can let me have a fairly early reply.

I am writing similarly to the Secretary of State for Scotland, and I am copying this letter and enclosure for information to the Lord President (because of its implications for the cuts exercise), the Chief Secretary, the Secretary of State for Wales and to Sir John Hunt.

*Yours ever*  
*Ratne*

Encls:

## OPTIONS FOR CUTTING THE COST OF THE CENSUS OF POPULATION

Note by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

### The 1981 Census of Population

1 The plans for the 1981 Census of Population, drawn up by the previous administration after extensive consultations with local authorities and other users, were published in July 1978 as a White Paper (Cmnd 7146). The proposed topics, and the reasons for them, are set out on pages 4-9 of the White Paper. These topics are due to be laid before Parliament later this year as part of a draft Census Order and at that stage there would normally be a debate.

2 This paper sets out for examination the possible options which have been identified for cutting the cost of the Census in England and Wales. They are consistent with the options for Scotland which are being submitted concurrently to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

3 The provision for the 1981 Census in the 1979 Public Expenditure Survey at present stands at £42.7 million (at November 1978 prices), covering expenditure in England and Wales in the 5 financial years 1979/80 to 1983/84, inclusive. There is a corresponding provision of £7.7 million for expenditure in Scotland in the same period.

4 The whole census operation has been re-costed and examined for potential savings. In 1979/80 it is anticipated that £0.3 million can be saved on the current provision. The succeeding paragraphs describe the possible savings from 1980/81 onwards.

### Field and processing staff and accommodation

5 The original plan provided for processing work to be spread over six regional offices. In the interest of economy, it is now planned to concentrate this work into a single office at Bootle. This will save £0.7 million on staff costs and £0.4 million on accommodation costs. Furthermore, the tasks to be undertaken by the field staff are being reduced, so that they will be paid for fewer hours. This will save £1.0 million.

## Dwellings

6 The census identifies the numbers of individuals and households. In addition, in England and Wales but not in Scotland, the data are analysed to find the number of dwellings, a further concept which depends on whether households have separate access to their accommodation. If the analysis of dwellings could be dropped, this would not only save £0.7 million but would also simplify the computer programming and processing and so speed up the census results. OPCS strongly urges that serious consideration should be given to this option. (The numbers of households which (a) share and (b) do not share, which are important social indicators, would still be available.)

## Migration

7 The last census asked questions about a person's addresses one year and five years ago, in order to obtain information about internal migration over these periods. (The census is the only detailed source about internal migration.) The White Paper announced that to simplify the next census, the question on address five years ago would be dropped. Since then, however, there have been strong representations from local authorities and also from the Department of the Environment asking for the question to be restored. If processed on a 10% sample basis for districts only, this would cost £0.4 million.

8 However, in the present climate, Ministers may take the view that it would be difficult to justify this extra cost. It is also desirable to keep down the number of census questions in order to minimise the burden on the public. Accordingly, it is proposed that the question on address five years ago should not be included in the Census.

## Grid Squares

9 Provision was made for the 1971 Census to be presented by standard one-kilometre grid-squares. Areas constituted from grid-squares have the merit of being independent of changes in administrative areas, and it is likely that 1971 statistics will come into greater demand when comparable figures are available for 1981. Grid-square statistics are particularly amenable to computer manipulation and abandoning them would be a retreat in census technology. However, the estimated cost for this facility was £1.8 million. It



intended to revise the system but preserve its essential features for half the cost, so saving £0.9 million.

#### Travelling Expenses

10 Present plans provide for the field staff (enumerators) to be paid travelling expenses at rates of 11p to 14p per mile. It is now proposed that they should be paid expenses at the public transport rate of 6.6p per mile, except in exceptional cases, thus saving £1.0 million.

#### Postal Return Facility

11 A person who does not wish other members of his household (or the enumerator) to see his census form, can hand it to the enumerator in a sealed envelope. As an additional safeguard, the White Paper also provides (para 44) that householders may, in exceptional circumstances, return their census forms by post to temporary regional offices so that they will not be seen by any local official. Unfortunately this adds considerably to the cost and in 1971 caused many problems, because people said that they had returned their forms by post when in fact they had not. Field staff then had to visit the addresses again. Withdrawal of this postal return facility (but still keeping the right to hand the return to the enumerator in a sealed envelope) would save £0.6 million. However, it would run the risk that there may be another outcry about confidentiality.

12 It may be noted that there is also a risk in retaining the postal return facility. If there were to be a campaign (for example, by those concerned with confidentiality) to persuade large numbers of people to use the facility, then OPCS resources could easily be swamped and the census operation could be severely damaged. Thus the choice is finely balanced.

#### Publicity

13 The experience of 1971 has pointed to the need for considerably greater publicity in 1981, and provision had been made for a comprehensive programme costing £1.7 million. However, reduction by £0.9 million would still leave a considerably larger sum than in 1971 and should be enough, particularly if a decision is made not to ask questions on ethnic origin - see para 15 below.

## Reduction of Computer Output

14 A simple reduction in the number of pages of census tables produced by the computer by 25 per cent would save £0.4 million. This would be unlikely to have harmful consequences provided that there is careful recognition of priorities, and that Departments are willing to accept compromise tables that fit both their needs and the needs of others.

## Ethnic Origin

15 The White Paper gave the previous administration's reasons for wishing to include a question about ethnic or racial origin, but said that the Registrars General would consider the reliability and acceptability of possible forms of question before a final decision was made on the question to be asked. Alternative questions on ethnic origin and on parents' country of birth were tried out in the census test at Haringey in April 1979 and the Registrar General will be reporting shortly on the results of the test. If Ministers then decide that the question on ethnic origin should not be asked in the 1981 Census, then there would be some further net financial saving. However, this is not a decision to be made on grounds of cost and it will require separate discussion by Ministers when the Registrar General's report is available.

## Summary of savings

16 The potential savings discussed above are summarised overleaf.

Paragraph  
reference

Savings  
£ million

4	Reduction to be achieved in 1979/80	0.3
5	Reduction in staff at regional processing offices	0.7
5	Reduced cost of accommodation by using one processing office only	0.4
5	Reduction in tasks and working hours of field staff	1.0
6	Dwellings	0.7
9	Grid squares	0.9
10	Travelling expenses	1.0
11-12	Withdrawal of postal facility	0.6
13	Publicity	0.9
14	Computer output	0.4
	Total	<u>6.9</u>

The total of £6.9 million amounts to 16 per cent of the 1979 PES provision for the 1981 Census in England and Wales. This excludes any further net saving which may result if it is decided not to include an ethnic question in the census.

Decisions required

17 Ministers are invited

- (a) To decide whether the analysis of dwellings can be dropped.
- (b) To agree that a question on address 5 years ago should not be added to the Census.
- (c) To decide whether to withdraw the postal return facility.
- (d) To endorse all the other savings listed above.

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys  
13 August 1979



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