



ONS Census Transformation Programme

The 2021 Census

Assessment of initial user
requirements on content for
England and Wales

Ethnicity and National
Identity topic report

May 2016

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1. Introduction

In June 2015 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the public consultation document ‘[The 2021 Census initial view on content for England and Wales](#)’¹. This discussed the initial views of ONS regarding the potential inclusion of current (2011) and additional topics in the 2021 Census. The public consultation was open from 4 June 2015 to 27 August 2015 and aimed to promote discussion and encourage the development of strong cases for topics users wanted to be included in the 2021 Census. The focus was on information required from the 2021 Census, not the detailed questions that could be asked on the questionnaire.

ONS received 1,095 responses to the consultation; 279 of these were from organisations and 816 were from individuals. Of all consultation respondents, 460 answered at least one question, or discussed collection of data, on the ‘Ethnicity and national identity’ topic.

There are two sub-topics within the ‘Ethnicity and national identity’ topic:

- Ethnic group
- National identity

Based on the evidence given by users and topic experts, sub-topics were evaluated using the criteria detailed in the consultation document using a standardised method. The criteria are listed in table 1 below. The criteria largely reflect those used in the 2011 Census topic consultation and have undergone expert review within ONS and via the Census Advisory Groups for use in the 2021 Census topic consultation. More detail on the scoring methodology is available in section 2 of the document ‘[The 2021 Census - Assessment of initial user requirements on content for England & Wales: Response to consultation](#)’².

Table 1 Evaluation criteria

<p>1. User requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Small geographies or populations • Alternative sources • Multivariate analysis • Comparability beyond England and Wales • Continuity with previous censuses 	<p>2. Other consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data quality • Public acceptability • Respondent burden • Financial concerns • Questionnaire mode
	<p>3. Operational requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising coverage or population bases • Coding of derived variables and adjustment for non-response • Routing and validation

This report provides ONS’s updated view based on our evaluation of user responses against these evaluation criteria.

¹ https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/censustransformationprogramme/consultations/the2021censusinitialviewoncontentenglishfinal_tcm77-405920.pdf

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/censustransformationprogramme/consultations/2021censustopicconsultation/assessmentofinitialuserrequirementscontentforenglandandwalesresponsetoconsultation.pdf>

2. Background

Ethnic group has been collected in the census since 1991, and has become one of the most widely used variables. These data are used for resource allocation by central and local government, to inform policy development and to help organisations meet and monitor their statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which superseded the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The question has evolved to remain relevant to contemporary society, as shown in the question images below. For example, following consultation in 2005 on topics to be included in the 2011 Census, two additional tick boxes were added: 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Arab'. The 'Chinese' tick box was moved into the 'Asian' or 'Asian British' category and the term 'British' was expanded to include all the UK nations. These changes were implemented following substantial research including consultation with stakeholders, question testing and the carrying out of an equalities impact assessment. In all versions there have been options allowing respondents to write in their ethnic group.

Question testing prior to the 2011 Census also included a review of the public acceptability of the use of colour terminology; this found that there were opposing views within communities on the acceptability of using colour terminology. However, across all ethnic groups the majority of respondents felt comfortable with the use of the terms 'Black' and 'White' in England and Wales.

Whilst there is evidence that some individuals object to the use of colour terminology it is believed to be essential to capture information on visible minority populations. Testing prior to the 2011 Census showed that if the ethnic group question used purely geographic terms, (for example, if 'African' was used) then visible minorities such as 'Black African' would be conflated with non-visible minorities such as 'White African'. Removing colour terminology from the ethnic group question would therefore reduce the suitability of the data for users interested in, for example, monitoring discrimination against visible minorities.

The national identity question was developed by ONS for the 2011 Census questionnaire, to be asked before that on ethnic group. This was in order to increase the public acceptability of the ethnic group question by allowing respondents to express their affiliation with England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Britain irrespective of their ethnic group. In addition, it allowed respondents to identify themselves as, for example, English or Welsh. This was implemented in a census context for the first time in 2011 and the data collected were widely analysed both in conjunction with, and independently of, those for ethnic group.

National identity data also aimed to provide a better understanding of society. During consultation prior to the 2011 Census public and political concerns were expressed in Wales about the lack of a Welsh tick-box category in the ethnic group question to enable Welsh people to specify their national identity in the same way that people in Scotland could record themselves as Scottish. For example, the Welsh Assembly Government (2005) commented that 'people who view their ethnicity or national identity to be Welsh should be able to indicate that at least as easily as those who view themselves as British or any of the other national identities pertaining to Britain'. There have been similar requests from English and other sub-UK identities.

The UK signed the Council of Europe [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#)³ in 1995 and ratified it in 1998. The [Council of Europe state](#)⁴ that: "The Framework Convention sets out principles to be respected as well as goals to be achieved by the states,

in order to ensure the protection of national minorities. Parties to the Framework Convention undertake to promote full and effective equality of persons belonging to minorities in all areas of economic, social, political, public and cultural life together with conditions that will allow them to express, preserve and develop their culture, religion, language and traditions. They have to ensure their freedom of assembly, association, expression, thought, conscience, religion and their access to and use of media. The Convention also provides guidelines for their linguistic freedom and rights regarding education.”

When [reporting progress](#)⁵ against the Framework Convention in 2010 the United Kingdom government stated that the UK ratified the framework on the understanding that it would be applied with reference to “racial groups” within the meaning of the Race Relations Act 1976, now replaced by the Equality Act 2010, which is to say any groups defined by “colour, race, nationality or national or ethnic origins” providing that they are also in a minority in the UK.

In April 2014 the Framework Convention was amended to include Cornish as a National Minority group. When [announcing this change](#)⁶, the Government stated: “The decision to recognise the unique identity of the Cornish, now affords them the same status under the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as the UK’s other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish.” They go on to state: “The Government’s approach to the Framework Convention is to be modified to recognise the unique position of the Cornish as a Celtic people within England. It is without prejudice as to whether the Cornish meet the definition of “racial group” under the [Equality Act 2010](#)⁷, as only the courts can rule on that.”

The response options used in the 2011 Census, for both questions, reflect the national harmonised questions developed to ensure consistency between National Statistics outputs.

This led to ONS’s initial view on these sub-topics, as published in the consultation document ‘The 2021 Census: Initial view on content for England and Wales’ and reproduced in table 2 below.

Table 2 Initial view of ONS

Sub-topic detail	Initial view	Collected in 2011?
Ethnic group	Collect	Yes
National identity	Collect	Yes

³ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm>

⁴ <http://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/fcnm-factsheet>

⁵ http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_3rd_SR_UK_en.pdf

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cornish-granted-minority-status-within-the-uk>

⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Figure 1 Census questions on Ethnicity and National Identity

1991 Census:

11 Ethnic group
Please tick the appropriate box.

White <input type="checkbox"/> 0	White <input type="checkbox"/> 0
Black-Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Black-Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> 1
Black-African <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Black-African <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Black-Other <input type="checkbox"/> <i>please describe</i>	Black-Other <input type="checkbox"/> <i>please describe</i>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Indian <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Indian <input type="checkbox"/> 3
Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> 6	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> 6
Any other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/> <i>please describe</i>	Any other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/> <i>please describe</i>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

If the person is descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which the person considers he/she belongs, or tick the 'Any other ethnic group' box and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.

2001 Census:

8 What is your ethnic group?
Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

A White

British Irish

Any other White background, *please write in*

B Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, *please write in*

C Asian or Asian British

Indian Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background, *please write in*

D Black or Black British

Caribbean African

Any other Black background, *please write in*

E Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other, *please write in*

2011 Census:

15 How would you describe your national identity?
Tick all that apply

English

Welsh

Scottish

Northern Irish

British

Other, write in

16 What is your ethnic group?
Choose one section from A to E, then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background.

A White

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

B Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

C Asian/Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

D Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

E Other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group, write in

3. Summary of consultation responses

Table 3 presents the number of responses by type of respondent and organisational sector. The organisations that responded to this topic are listed by sector in Annex A.

Table 3 Ethnicity and national identity - number of responses by type of respondent

Type of respondent	Total responses	
	N	% total responses
Individual	301	62
Organisation (all sectors)	159	38
Sector		% organisation responses
- Government department/public body	14	9
- Local authority	82	52
- Health organisation	5	3
- Housing	1	1
- Academic / research	12	8
- Charity and voluntary	23	14
- Commercial	6	4
- Genealogist/family historian	1	1
- Other	15	9
Total responses	460	100

Note: Percentages might not add to 100% due to rounding.

Note: An organisation may have submitted more than one response.

The quotations below are used to illustrate how respondents use information about ethnicity and national identity. These provide additional context to the evaluation. Some data users referred to nationality rather than national identity in their responses.

Ethnic group:

Central government and local authorities demonstrated how they use the ethnic group data for planning services and making decisions about resource allocation, including in relation to equalities monitoring and developing approaches to community cohesion:

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames: *“The majority of our budget requires some consideration of its impact on minority groups. As an example we are beginning the process of Outcome Based Budgeting from 2016/17 as we analyse which non-essential services we can afford*

to maintain, Equality Impact Assessments will be done to measure the impact on minority groups if a service is to be removed, if we did not have information on ethnicity this would be virtually impossible and could result in negative (potentially discriminatory) outcomes.”

Blackpool Council: *“This allows us to understand how the changing age profile of our population breaks down in terms of ethnicity, enabling us to take a view on potential social cohesion issues emerging. This is particularly relevant in our most deprived areas as we try and move to upstream service delivery which encourages communities to collaborate and address their issues together based on their common assets.”*

Waltham Forest Council: *“For Waltham Forest it is important for us to make comparisons across the UK for resource allocation purposes - as our demographic profile is substantially different from the national picture; nearly half our residents are from ethnic minority backgrounds compared with as little as 10 per cent in other authorities, so there are specific impacts for our authority regarding fairer funding from Central Government where we are compared with other authorities.”*

In addition it was noted that changes to harmonised questions, such as ethnicity and national identity, can have an impact on other data collection exercises. Although not specifically referenced to any particular topic, the Department for Education noted:

“Across Government our systems often align with census definition. In considering the need for changes to Census questions, I would like to ask that ONS fully assess the costs and benefits across Government of changes to questions.”

These implications will be considered as part of our evaluation when developing questions.

National Identity:

There was limited discussion of national identity in isolation from data on ethnic group:

Welsh government: *“National identity is important to capture to gain an understanding of how much residents of Wales from different population groups feel that they belong to a UK or other national identity.”*

Presbyterian Church of Wales: *“Not collecting data on national identity would have a high impact as it would be much more difficult to measure how many people in a specific part of Wales considered themselves Welsh, and therefore would be likely to take an interest in our work and be open to working with us.”*

Additional response options:

Responses to the consultation also highlighted where respondents thought that additional response options within the ethnic group question would be of value. These included:

Manchester City Council: *“Including Kashmiri in the Census will allow us to benchmark our practice and the outcomes of Manchester’s Kashmiri population with the rest of the UK.”*

Sikh Federation UK and Sikh Network: *“If the Census 2021 ethnicity question does not include a Sikh tick box question, the impact from a service user perspective will continue to grow and result in Sikhs being invisible to those who develop policies and deliver public services. This will span across the inequalities observed by Sikhs in health, education, employment etc.”*

Cornwall Council: *“As a local authority the Council adheres to the 2010 Equality Act and specifically the Public Sector equality duty. Information is collected against the protected characteristics and Cornish identity which is now recognised through the National Minority Framework (since April 2014). Because this has happened since the 2011 Census, a Cornish tick box in the 2021 Census would recognise the right of people to self-define as Cornish ethnicity and build on other datasets such as increasing self-identification in school censuses (over 40% and building) and housing need surveys. This would assist the Council and other bodies in understanding the impact of policy and deprivation characteristics of the indigenous population and their cultural identity.”*

From across the consultation responses specific requests for additional options within the ethnicity question included; Anglo-Irish, Cornish, Cypriot, Eastern European, English, Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Jewish, Kashmiri, Latin American, Orthodox Jewish, Roma, Sikh, Somali, Turkish, Western European, White Cornish, White European and Yemeni. Some respondents also advocated allowing respondents to tick multiple categories and removal of the use of colour terminology.

Requests for additional options within the national identity question included further regional identity options, for example Cornish.

4. Evaluation

The following sections show the scores allocated to each sub-topic by individual criterion based on the evidence given by users. The criteria largely reflect those used in 2011, but have undergone expert review within ONS and via the Census Advisory Groups. The document '[The 2021 Census - Assessment of initial user requirements on content for England & Wales: Response to consultation](#)'⁸ gives details on the scoring methodology including:

- 'user requirements criteria', including a description of relative weights, are described in section 2.1 of the document. Note that, in the following tables, the overall score is weighted and is not the sum of the scores for individual criteria
- 'other considerations' are described in section 2.2 of the document. These will predominately be used in conjunction with the user requirement score to steer the development of the census questionnaire and the production of administrative data research outputs
- 'operational requirements' are described in section 2.3, of the document. ONS has operational uses for some of the data collected in the census, of which the most important is maximising coverage of the 2021 Census. Each sub-topic is categorised as being of maximum, moderate or minimum importance in relation to operational requirements.

4.1 User requirements - ethnic group

Table 4 User requirement score by criterion

Criterion	Score	Evidence
Weighted Overall Score	90.5	High user need
Purpose	9	<p>Data users, including central government and devolved administrations, told us that the information is used in relation to resource allocation and service planning.</p> <p>The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) said that:</p> <p><i>"Lack of comprehensive and sufficiently granular information on these sub- topics (Ethnicity, National Identity) would hinder the Government's and the Department's capacity to identify and address issues connected with the multi-cultural nature of British society in areas such as Housing, Local Government services, social integration, neighbourhood relations , local participation, women issues, equality, deprivation, etc."</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government commented that:</p> <p><i>"Developing Welsh Government policy interventions aimed at promoting equality and reducing the impact of discrimination such as the Tackling Hate Crimes Framework, as well as funding decisions in this area require information on the various protected characteristics including ethnicity."</i></p>

⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/censustransformationprogramme/consultations/2021censustopicconsultation/assessmentofinitialuserrequirementscontentforenglandandwalesresponsetoconsultation.pdf>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
		<p>They also stated:</p> <p><i>“The Welsh Government has statutory responsibilities under equality legislation and sets out its own Strategic Equality Plan. It is a requirement that all policy interventions have an equality impact assessment and data on ethnicity is needed for such assessments to be based on a good understanding of the picture across Wales.”</i></p> <p>The Equalities and Human Rights Commission also discussed use of the data for equalities monitoring linked to the Equality Act 2010, giving specific examples of work:</p> <p><i>“For example, these have been used in the Commission’s analysis of race disproportionately in stop and search by the police and in the calculation of rates from other administrative data.”</i></p> <p>Local authorities use the information in relation to funding decisions and planning particular projects. Several local authorities also commented on ethnicity data being used to gain suitable funding from central government through illustrating the particular needs within their communities.</p> <p>The London Borough of Hackney reported that:</p> <p><i>“Evidence on ethnicity and national identity is used to make decisions about resource allocation for services targeted or tailored to the needs of specific groups. This includes funding decisions in relation to grant funding of community organisations representing and reaching specific ethnic or national groups, eg. Chinese, Vietnamese, Turkish, African or other community groups.”</i></p> <p>Sheffield City Council stated that:</p> <p><i>“We use it for allocating resources, research purposes, informing service providers about our population, benchmarking our recruitment, amongst many other uses. In addition to this, information on ethnicity and nationality is a vital component in helping the council and public sector agencies to pay due regard to our Public Sector Equality duties helping to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing quality of opportunity and fostering good relations. We use the census to help understand the communities we service and inform the services we provide directly or commission and also to monitor how they are delivered.”</i></p> <p>It was notable that data users showed how information about ethnicity and national identity are being used in combination. Census data on ethnic group are also used by the ONS in the production of population projections, which are widely used for government planning.</p>
<p>Small geographies or populations</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Local authorities use the data at small area level to, for example, identify small population groups that may have specific needs and to inform work around particular programmes, such as improving the outcomes of a particular group.</p> <p>The London Borough of Hackney said that:</p> <p><i>“Reliable information is required on the size and needs of a specific community to inform these decisions. This data is also used to make decisions to proceed with, and to shape, specific pieces of work to</i></p>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
		<p><i>tackle disadvantage, for example a current piece of work to improve outcomes for Young Black Men. This affects both resources allocation and the way services are delivered.”</i></p> <p>Respondents reported that small area data on ethnic group is required down to output area for research and monitoring purposes.</p> <p>The Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) - Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) said that:</p> <p><i>“...the ‘neighbourhood segregation’ briefing used ethnic group data for output areas to assess changes in residential segregation; the analysis of ethnic inequalities in housing for districts showed where minorities are most disadvantaged.”</i></p> <p>Data below local authority level are also used to consider the impact of any changes to services on different groups.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council said that output area or super output area data are used to:</p> <p><i>“...investigate the impacts of changing service provision, since there is usually a decision to take about geographic changes in service location or coverage.”</i></p> <p>The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea said that:</p> <p><i>“Specific requirements for small area data often come from local businesses and charities that need to understand their local population better. The council also uses this data to gain an estimate of the resources required for an area and uses OA level data in most of its bespoke research. For example, a particular housing estate or a travellers site.</i></p> <p><i>Difficulty would arise if the Census no longer collected this data as the ease of access to high quality data and having it at small area level allows the council to quickly analyse and report on target areas. This includes work surrounding local issues, local resident meetings, planning, requests from councillors and local businesses/charities.”</i></p> <p>The need for data on this particular subgroup was also discussed in the Welsh Government response:</p> <p><i>“There is particular interest in the housing circumstances of Gypsy and Irish Travellers eg. caravans/mobile accommodation, or non-mobile housing and also in other circumstances of this ethnic group (education, health social disadvantage) in order to develop policies. There were also concerns about the population estimates of this group but a further breakdown of ethnicities may lead to a more representative figure.”</i></p>
Alternative sources	8	<p>The majority of responses referenced possible alternative data sources such as surveys, but it was often stated that these do not meet user needs and would require wide scale development. For example, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) stated that:</p> <p><i>“The Commission uses a wide range of survey sources of ethnicity information, depending on the particular analysis required. Most major surveys collect this information; examples include the Labour Force</i></p>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
		<p><i>Survey; Family Resources Survey; housing, crime and health surveys. The limitation arises where information is needed for a small ethnic group or for part of Great Britain. For example, analysis of measures by ethnic group for Wales often fail to meet adequate levels of robustness.</i></p> <p>Other issues raised by respondents included that the School Census, which collects ethnic group data, only covers the school age population. Some respondents suggested using GP registration information and other health records but concerns were raised over the quality of the data and the ability to gain access to it.</p>
Multivariate analysis	9	<p>Local authorities and government departments stated the need to use data on ethnic group with a range of other census topics including age, gender, health, religion and education. For example, the Equality and Human Rights Commission said:</p> <p><i>“The Commission’s main use of ethnicity data would be to compare ethnic groups on a range of measures, which cover topics such as housing, language, migration, education, health, carers and the labour market. This information may also be used in conjunction with country of birth to differentiate between first and later generation migrants and to compare their situations in relation to employment, qualifications etc.”</i></p> <p>The Department for Communities and Local Government stated:</p> <p><i>“comprehensive and disaggregated data on ethnicity/national identity are becoming increasingly important for our understanding of housing needs; community and inter-faith relations; and the dynamics that lead to ‘troubled families’.”</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government stated:</p> <p><i>“Examples of use of such data may be consideration of the needs for health or social services for those of particular ethnic groups. Information about household composition (e.g. one-person households), age, sex and disability are likely to be of interest in this context.”</i></p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council added:</p> <p><i>“We regularly use ethnicity information alongside other topics when planning services as by doing so we understand the differences between ethnic groups so are better able to plan services that meet their needs. So for example understanding the ethnic composition of our 0-4 year old population is important for commissioners of children centres...”</i></p> <p>The use of the data in fulfilling duties under the Equality Act demonstrates that multivariate analysis is being carried out regularly.</p> <p>The London Borough of Camden said that:</p> <p><i>“Uses include Equality monitoring, Equality Impact Assessments, profiling the communities in Camden, looking for links between ethnicity and inequality (health, economic activity, housing, educational attainment, industry and occupation and social grade).”</i></p>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
<p>Comparability beyond England and Wales</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Comparable data is important to public bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) who stated that:</p> <p><i>“The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s remit covers Great Britain, and as a minimum we require comparable data for England, Scotland and Wales. According to the analysis, we may also require data at a regional and/or local authority level.”</i></p> <p>Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) use national information in relation to duties under the Equality Act 2010:</p> <p><i>“We use the national totals for Ethnicity and National Identity to understand the impact of our policies on these groups, particularly in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty.”</i></p> <p>Respondents also told us about analysis designed to understand the impact of change over time, both on the make-up of the population and in understanding inequality in order to target areas for intervention. For example, the Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) - Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) is a programme with a UK wide interest. They commented that:</p> <p><i>“Our intention is to understand ethnic inequalities across the UK which is very difficult without comparable data. Many of our analyses have been conducted separately for England and Wales and Scotland.”</i></p>
<p>Continuity with previous censuses</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>The majority of data users have made comparisons between 2011 and previous census data, implying that continuity is important. Local authorities monitor change over time to support decisions regarding policy development and service delivery. For example, Waltham Forest Council stated that:</p> <p><i>“For many of the Census topics it is important for us to evaluate change over time, identify demographic patterns and project where those patterns may indicate growing levels of need and demand for Council services. Changes in the ethnic makeup of our borough, and the increased numbers of international migrants observed between 2001 and 2011 have helped us to develop strategies regarding Adult Social Care support, Schools and young people’s services, as well as developing initiatives around homelessness.”</i></p> <p>The Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) - Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) discussed change over time in relation to diversity monitoring, stating that:</p> <p><i>“We have analysed trends in segregation and ethnic inequalities. Overall this has shown increased ethnic mixing but widening social inequalities. These are important findings about social change in an increasingly diverse society.”</i></p>
<p>Weighted Overall Score</p>	<p>90.5</p>	<p>High user need</p>

4.2 Other considerations - ethnic group

Table 5 ONS assessment of impact by criterion

Criterion	Operational impact	Justification
Impact on data quality	Low	<p>There were few concerns associated with the quality of the information collected on this sub-topic. The response rate for this question was 97.0 per cent and the agreement rate between the 2011 Census and the 2011 Census Quality Survey (CQS) was 94.7 per cent.</p> <p>The CQS reported that as the ethnic group question is subjective, it was possible that respondents would change their answer depending on how they felt about their ethnicity at the time the question was asked; however this was only thought to affect a small proportion of respondents.</p>
Impact on public acceptability	Low	<p>Asking for information on this sub-topic was considered to be publically acceptable. This question was familiar to most respondents and, although the information on ethnic group is considered 'sensitive' under the Data Protection Act⁹, it is asked in many surveys and administrative registers.</p> <p>The 2007 consultation identified a desire for ethnic minority populations to express their affiliation with England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Britain, particularly among those who were born in the UK. In addition, those identifying with the 'White British' ethnic group expressed a strong wish to express a more detailed identity than just 'British'. Question testing prior to the 2011 Census reinforced this finding, showing that the public acceptability of this question is improved by including the national identity question prior to the ethnic group question.</p>
Impact on respondent burden	Medium	<p>This question is asked on many questionnaires so people are becoming more familiar with the options available. However the question did have a high number of response options for respondents to read and consider.</p> <p>Question testing prior to the 2011 Census found that while understanding the question and being able to provide an answer was relatively easy for most respondents, some found it difficult. These included people who were not born in the UK or for whom English was not their first language, those born in the UK who had a low level of education, and those who were not familiar with answering an ethnic group question.</p> <p>Additionally, the 2011 questionnaire testing found that a small proportion of people used more than one ethnic group to describe themselves. This finding is reflected in the disagreement between the CQS and the 2011 Census as the vast majority of differences occurred where the respondent gave different answers in the two settings. Differences were found across several of the categories, the biggest being between 'Asian' on the census and 'Mixed' on the CQS.</p>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act>

Criterion	Operational impact	Justification
Impact on financial concerns	Medium	There were moderate manual coding costs associated with the write-in text response option and in 2011 the imputation rate was 3.1 per cent.
Impact on questionnaire mode	Medium	<p>This sub-topic question was presented with the national identity question in order to increase the public acceptability of the ethnic group question. However, in the online version the two questions did not display in full on a single page so online respondents had to scroll to view all the ethnic group response options.</p> <p>The length of the question may present some challenges in an online design. In particular the ability to see all response options at once may affect how respondents answer as scrolling is not best practice for questionnaire design.</p>

4.3 Operational requirements - ethnic group

Maximum operational requirement

In previous censuses, information on ethnic group was used during the coverage adjustment process to ensure the accuracy of the final population estimates. These data will again be used in this way in 2021.

4.4 User requirements - national identity

Table 6 User requirement score by criterion

Criterion	Score	Evidence
Weighted Overall Score	65.5	Medium user need
Purpose	7	<p>Data on national identity are used to inform government policy. As noted previously, the Welsh government said that:</p> <p><i>“National identity is important to capture to gain an understanding of how much residents of Wales from different population groups feel ‘Welsh’ or that they belong to a British or other UK national identity, or alternatively another national identity. Again this could have an impact on decisions about community cohesion policies and resource allocations. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 requires public bodies to set well-being objectives to work toward the vision for Wales set out in seven well-being goals which includes a Wales of cohesive communities and a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh Language. Capturing data on what</i></p>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
		<p><i>the people of Wales consider to be their national identity alongside information on ethnicity and country of birth will help public bodies across Wales set those objectives.”</i></p> <p>While responses indicated that data on ethnicity are more commonly used than information on national identity, some local authorities showed how the data are used together. For example,</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council stated that:</p> <p><i>“National identity: Is a useful addition to information around ethnicity and helps us build a better picture of the communities that live within our area and their affiliations...”</i></p> <p>Similarly, Tower Hamlets Council told us that:</p> <p><i>“National identity provides complementary data, which allow wider consideration of the concept of cultural identity. These inform the Council’s work on cohesion.”</i></p>
<p>Small geographies or populations</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>Some respondents indicated a need for information on national identity down to low levels of geography, although this was not as well evidenced as ethnicity. For example, with reference to collecting data on national identity to aid objective setting following the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 coming into force, the Welsh Government stated:</p> <p><i>“Such data would be required at a small area level as public bodies will be required to produce needs assessments that look at smaller areas within local authorities.”</i></p> <p>The dual use of ethnicity and national identity data is demonstrated in a comment from Bournemouth Borough Council:</p> <p><i>“Children’s Centres require Ethnicity and National Identity at small geography level (LSOA) to assess the percentage of families from different cultures. This is key to service and resource allocation because strong differences in attitudes to a particular provision eg. MMR vaccination or take up of free Early Years education can be a result of cultural differences...”</i></p> <p>This dual use is also shown in a response from Oxfordshire County Council:</p> <p><i>“Data on ethnicity and national identity is typically used at Output Area or Super Output Area to investigate the impacts of changing service provision, since there is usually a decision to take about geographic changes in service location or coverage.”</i></p> <p>Oldham Council also noted that the national identity data gives information on small populations:</p> <p><i>“National identity tends to be more small population groups than ethnicity- it is useful in identifying such groups, and their scale across Oldham.”</i></p>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
Alternative sources	8	<p>The majority of data users reported that, while alternative sources exist, they do not meet their requirements. For example, the Presbyterian Church of Wales pointed out the drawbacks of a survey source:</p> <p><i>“I compare the Census with the British Social Attitudes Survey, which asks questions about national identity. This would be the next best alternative source of information. The problem is that it does not differentiate between ‘Welsh’, ‘English’ and ‘Scottish’. They have all been merged under ‘British’.”</i></p> <p>Alternative sources also do not provide the level of geographic detail required. Kent County Council said that:</p> <p><i>“...There is no alternative single source of national identity other than the census that is available across all levels of geography.”</i></p>
Multivariate analysis	5	<p>Some respondents, including local authorities, commented that they use data on national identity with other census topics, although this was reported far less than the cross-tabulation of ethnicity data.</p> <p>The London Borough of Bexley stated that:</p> <p><i>“We have produced ward profiles which detail the Ethnicity and National Identity of residents alongside other key characteristics.”</i></p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council stated that:</p> <p><i>“To compare the relationship between National Identity and Language on specific age and family groups.”</i></p> <p>The National Association of British Arabs said that:</p> <p><i>“We primarily need to access a combination of ethnicity and national identity questions. These are matched up primarily with geographical, health and education information for the purpose of policy development primarily but also for research purposes.”</i></p>
Comparability beyond England and Wales	4	<p>Respondents expressed the need for UK wide information on national identity. For example,</p> <p>Bewnans Kernow stated that:</p> <p><i>“...we need to make comparisons across the UK with regard to social inclusion, resource allocation and policy making for the Cornish in comparison to other minorities and the majority population. Throughout the UK, almost every town has Cornish residents (cf Census 2011) and it is extremely important to get a more accurate understanding on this so a coherent view of the Cornish population in the UK can be gained which can generate benefit and more effective provision to the overall Cornish population.”</i></p> <p>Some local authorities discussed comparing community data with the rest of the UK, although this tended to be when using ethnicity rather than national identity data.</p>

Criterion	Score	Evidence
Continuity with previous censuses	7	<p>Information on national identity was first collected in the 2011 Census hence comparisons with previous censuses are not yet possible. However, several respondents reported a need for comparable data in the future. For example, the Economic History Society said that:</p> <p><i>“Comparisons over time are central to economic and social history - re: Ethnicity and National Identity as for other topics - so comparability between censuses is very important to us. This particular type of census information has only been collected fairly recently, but looking to the future historical researchers will want as long a series of comparable data as possible.”</i></p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council also reported a desire to draw comparisons over time:</p> <p><i>“As this is a relatively new measure, it will be useful to see how this changes over time after the next census.”</i></p>
Weighted Overall Score	65.5	Medium user need

4.5 Other considerations - national identity

Table 7 ONS assessment of impact by criterion

Criterion	Operational impact	Justification
Impact on data quality	Low	The response rate for this question was 98.1 per cent. However the subjective nature of this question and the multi-tick response options can affect the accuracy of the information collected.
Impact on public acceptability	Low	This sub-topic was introduced for the first time in 2011. Asking for information on this sub-topic was considered to be publicly acceptable. Its placement prior to the ethnic group question increases the public acceptability of that question by allowing all usual residents to express their affiliation with England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Britain.
Impact on respondent burden	Low	Testing of this question prior to 2011 found no issues. This is a short question with no additional instructions required.

Criterion	Operational impact	Justification
Impact on financial concerns	Medium	The imputation rate in 2011 was just under 2.0%. However, there were moderate manual coding costs associated with the write-in text response option and the multi-tick response option required more complex processing than other variables.
Impact on questionnaire mode	Medium	This sub-topic question was presented with the ethnic group question. In the online version of the questionnaire the national identity question displayed in full on a single page as it is quite short and is the first of the two questions. However, the two questions together did not display in full on a single page on most electronic devices. Respondents had to scroll to view all of the ethnic group response options. Scrolling is not best practice for questionnaire design, being unable to see all response options for both questions at once may affect how respondents answer.

4.6 Operational requirements - national identity

Minimum operational requirement

There is minimal census operational requirement to collect data on this topic, its only operational use is in increasing the public acceptability of the question on ethnic group by allowing respondents to express their affiliation with England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Britain irrespective of their ethnic group.

5. Updated view

The following table gives the updated view of ONS at the sub-topic level and the justification for this.

Table 8 Updated view

Sub-topic detail	Initial view	Updated view	Justification
Ethnic group	Collect	Collect	<p>Information on ethnic group is used in a variety of ways by different data users. These include making resource allocation and service planning decisions and meeting obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The data is particularly important for local authorities when making decisions about resource allocation to support different groups within their communities and to promote social cohesion. Data to the lowest possible geographical level is therefore useful for local authorities to have a clear understanding of the make-up of the inhabitants of their area so that they can make informed decisions on providing particular services or initiatives. The data are also used to support fairer funding from central government based on the particular level of need within a local authority. There is therefore clear justification for collecting these data in the census.</p>
National identity	Collect	Collect	<p>Whilst respondents told us more about uses of ethnicity information, there was clear evidence for a requirement for data on national identity in relation to policy development and monitoring by government, as well as some service planning and delivery decisions taken by local authorities.</p> <p>Additionally, asking a question on national identity increased the public acceptability of the ethnic group question by allowing all usual residents to express their affiliation with England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Britain.</p> <p>Some responses indicated how data on ethnicity and national identity are used in conjunction; for example when measuring community cohesion. The lack of currently available suitable alternative data sources also supports the decision to capture this information in the census.</p>

6. Equality implications of the updated view of ONS

The Equality Act 2010 and associated public sector equality duty require public bodies to work towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity with regard to nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These requirements are reinforced by secondary legislation in both England and Wales¹⁰ as well as by the Equality Objectives published recently by the Welsh Government which seek to address the key equality challenges faced in Wales and to support progress towards the well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The proposals made for the 2021 Census content will consider identified 'User requirements' for data alongside other factors such as 'Other considerations' and 'Operational requirements' specified in our evaluation criteria. In addition, it will be important to take account of the impact of any decisions that we may make on equality. Impacts can be:

- positive - actively promote equality of opportunity for one or more groups, or improve equal opportunities/relations between groups
- adverse or negative - cause disadvantage or exclusion (any such impact must be justified, eliminated, minimised or counter-balanced by other measures)
- neutral - have no notable consequences for any group

'Race' is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. In 1991, a question on ethnic group was included in the census for the first time in order to enable organisations to monitor equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies and to allocate resources. It was intended to capture the categories of person that were likely to be discriminated against due to their skin colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origins. However, it does not fully capture the complexity contained within the concept of 'race'. The question on passports held adds information on nationality.

ONS recommend that wherever possible a national identity question should be asked prior to the ethnic group question. The national identity question was developed by the ONS, in order to allow all respondents to identify themselves as English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British irrespective of their ethnic group.

The data have helped central and local government, as well as other public and private sector organisations, to meet their statutory obligation to ensure that people are not discriminated against because of their ethnic origin. The data are also used to inform resource allocation decisions, such as community programmes to support particular groups.

As discussed in the background section, there is a limitation to the number of response options for census questions but both the ethnic group and national identity questions include write-in options. This allows inclusion of any ethnic groups or national identities by enabling respondents to record their ethnic identity how they wish to be described.

These options were widely used in the 2011 Census, for example 333 thousand of all usual residents in England and Wales identified themselves using the 'other ethnic group: any other

¹⁰ *The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 and The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.*

ethnic group' write-in option. The responses to the write-in options are, where disclosure control procedures allow, included in the detailed ethnic group outputs allowing all groups to be recognised. This included data for up to 250 ethnic groups. Users can additionally commission tables on specific sub-groups.

Additionally, the 2011 Census question on national identity allowed respondents to tick more than one option, giving them the ability to accurately portray multi-dimensional characteristics. National identity tables portraying the multi-tick options at England and Wales geographical level down to output area have 33 categorisations. Further detail can then be obtained from the write-in responses.

In 2014, the Cornish were recognised as a National Minority under the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. ONS continue to believe that the provision of write-in options in the Ethnic Group and National Identity questions meet this user requirement. In the 2011 Census, 83 thousand usual residents wrote in 'Cornish' as their National Identity. Of these, 73 thousand lived in Cornwall, comprising approximately 14% of the population. The remaining 10 thousand resided elsewhere in England and Wales.

Despite the availability of write-in response options ONS has received feedback from some stakeholders expressing the need for the inclusion of more tick-box response options within the ethnic group and national identity questions. Dedicated tick-box options are included where the user need for the data is strongest as space on census forms is finite both online and on paper. With this limitation in mind, ONS intends to undertake a review of the ethnic group response options, and will consider this alongside the national identity and religion response options. This review is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

In addition, in order to encourage those with unlisted ethnic groups or national identities to use the write-in option the online guidance and help provided regarding this question will be reviewed.

Some consultation respondents also queried the continued use of colour terminology. This is considered to remain useful as colour is part of the definition of race in the Equality Act 2010 and previous question testing has found that use of colour terminology is essential to capture information on visible minority populations.

The next steps for this topic, discussed below, take into account the identified equality implications. As research and stakeholder engagement continues, if further equality implications emerge, these will be considered and mitigated where necessary. Further information on the research linked to question development and testing, and stakeholder engagement will be published as required.

7. Next steps

There is a clear user need for data on these sub-topics at local authority level and below to enable central and local governments to allocate resources, plan services, and monitor policies to help meet requirements under the Equality Act 2010. This includes using information to inform approaches to community cohesion and the elimination of discrimination. However, some respondents told us about changes that they would like to see to the response options for these questions.

- ONS intends to undertake a review of the ethnic group response options, and will consider this alongside the national identity and religion response options. This will involve consultation with stakeholder groups that have expressed an interest in this question.
- The review will follow a similar format to that undertaken prior to the 2011 Census whereby response options were prioritised. This methodology is described in the Information Paper “[Deciding which tick-boxes to add to the ethnic group question in the 2011 England and Wales Census](#)”¹¹. This methodology will be reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation. This will involve engagement with key stakeholders to ensure data needs to support the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 are well understood.
- Any changes to the response options, proposed as a result of this review, will then be tested to evaluate how well the response options are understood and how they work together as a set.
- There will also be consideration of the impact of any proposed changes on other users of the harmonised question on ethnic group.
- In parallel, there will be investigation of the best approach to presenting the current ethnic group question online on a range of devices, and implementing this for the 2017 large scale test. This will allow us to evaluate the design constraints that any changes to the response options would need to meet, without disrupting other important aspects for evaluation within that test.

These activities will be sufficiently progressed to provide a clear proposal for the 2021 Census questionnaire which will be included in the Census White Paper in 2018 before the questions are submitted to Parliament for approval in 2019.

¹¹ http://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/2011census/howourcensusworks/howweplannedthe2011census/questionnairedevelopment/finalisingthe2011questionnaire/ethnicgroupprioritisationtool_tcm77-183986.pdf

Annex A: List of organisations that responded, by sector

This list includes organisations that responded to at least one consultation question, or discussed collection of data, on the ‘Ethnicity and national identity’ topic. If multiple responses were received from an organisation the name only appears once.

Government department/public body

College of Arms	Health & Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	High Speed Two Limited
Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
Department for Education (DfE)	National Assembly for Wales
Department of Health (DH)	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Department for Transport (DfT)	Sport England
Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)	Welsh Government

Local authority

Arun District Council	Cumbria County Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council	Cyngor Sir Ceredigion/Ceredigion County Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Derbyshire County Council
Bedford Borough Council	Devon County Council - Public Health
Birmingham City Council	Dorset County Council
Blaby District Council	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Blackpool Council	Durham County Council
Bournemouth Borough Council	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Bristol City Council	East Sussex County Council
Broxbourne Borough Council	Essex County Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Gateshead Council
Carmarthenshire County Council	Gedling Borough Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Gloucestershire County Council
Chesterfield Borough Council	Greater London Authority
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Gwynedd Council
City of London Corporation	Haringey Council
City of York Council	Hertfordshire County Council
Cornwall Council	

Local authority (continued)

Horsham District Council	Salford City Council
Kent County Council	Sheffield City Council
Lancashire County Council	Shropshire Council - Intelligence and Research Team
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Snowdonia National Park
London Borough of Bexley	Somerset County Council
London Borough of Camden	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
London Borough of Hackney	St Helens Council
London Borough of Harrow	Surrey County Council
London Borough of Havering	Swansea Council
London Borough of Hounslow	Tameside Council
Manchester City Council	Torfaen County Borough Council
Mole Valley District Council	Tower Hamlets Council
Newcastle City Council	Uttlesford District Council
North York Moors National Park Authority	Walsall Council
North Yorkshire County Council	Waltham Forest Council
Northampton Borough Council	Warrington Borough Council
Northumberland County Council	Warwickshire Observatory
Oldham Council	Westminster City Council
Oxfordshire County Council	Wycombe District Council
Powys County Council	Wookey Parish Council
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Worcestershire County Council
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Wychavon District Council
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	

Health organisation

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	National Health Service England
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	Public Health Wales National Health Service Trust
Hywel Dda University Health Board	

Housing

Yarlinton Housing Group

Academic/research

British Sociological Association

Caribbean Atlantic Research in Britain (**CARIB**)

Centre for Longitudinal Study Information and User Support (**CeLSIUS**)

Economic History Society

Economic Social Research Council (**ESRC**) -
Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (**CoDE**)

Economic Social Research Council (**ESRC**) &
Medical Research Council (**MRC**)

Imperial College London – Small Area Health
Statistics Unit

Institute for Jewish Policy Research

Sikh Study Forum

UK Data Service and Administrative Data
Service

University of Wolverhampton

University of York - Centre for Housing Policy

Charity and voluntary

Bewnans Kernow

Chwarae Teg

Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg/Welsh Language
Society

Discrimination Law Association

Family and Childcare Trust

Friends, Families and Travellers

Irish in Britain

Khalsa Foundation

Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange
(Leeds **GATE**)

Mental Health Foundation

Muslim Council of Britain

National Association of British Arabs

National Sikh Heritage Centre and Holocaust
Museum

Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans
Association (**OLGA**)

Presbyterian Church of Wales

Royal Town Planning Institute

Shelter

Sikh Council UK

Tai Pawb

The Salvation Army

The Vegan Society

Commercial

CACI Ltd

David Simmonds Consultancy Ltd. (**DSC**)

First UK Bus

IAITH Cyf/Welsh Centre for Language Planning

Operational Research in Health Ltd (**ORH Ltd**)

Sainsbury's

Genealogist/family historian

Tasmanian Family History Society Inc.

Other

Academy of Social Sciences

Emergency Planning Society - West Midlands Branch

Golden Tree Productions

Health Statistics User Group (**HSUG**)

Market Research Society (**MRS**) and MRS Census & Geodemographics Group

Mebyon Kernow - the Party for Cornwall

New Economy

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (**IBG**)

Sangat Television

Sikh Council

Sikh Federation UK and Sikh Network

Tees Valley Unlimited

UK Race and Europe Network

