

census
2021

What you need to know

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What the census is and why you should take part

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. This helps to plan and fund public services in your area.

You should complete your census form on Sunday 21 March 2021 or as soon as possible after. Your answers should be about who is in your household on this day. You can submit your census form earlier, but if your circumstances change you'll need to let us know.

You must complete the census by law. If you do not, or if you supply false information, you could be fined up to £1,000. Some questions are clearly labelled as being voluntary. It is not an offence if you do not answer these.

Who to include in your census questionnaire

People who usually live here

Include everyone who usually lives here. This might include family members, housemates, tenants or lodgers. This is the address where they spend most of their time, and might be their permanent or family home.

People who are temporarily away

Include everyone who usually lives here, but who is temporarily away on Sunday 21 March 2021. This includes:

- people staying (or expecting to stay) somewhere else for less than 6 months, such as a hospital, care home or hostel
- members of the Armed Forces
- people staying at another address for work, holiday, travel or staying with friends or relatives (unless they are outside the UK for a year or more)
- people in prison with a sentence of less than a year, or on remand

People temporarily staying here overnight on Sunday 21 March 2021

Anyone who **does not have another UK address** should be included on your census form as a member of your household. This includes:

- people from the UK who do not have another address
- people from outside the UK who plan to stay in the UK for 3 months or more

Anyone who **usually lives at another address** should be included on your census form as a visitor. This includes:

- people who usually live at another UK address, such as boyfriends, girlfriends, friends or relatives
- people who are staying here for work, whose permanent or family home is elsewhere
- people who usually live outside the UK and are staying in the UK for less than 3 months
- people here on holiday

People who stay at more than one address

People with more than one UK address should be included on the census form at their permanent or family home. If they don't have a permanent or family home, they should be included on the census form at the address where they spend most of their time.

Children with parents who live apart

Children should be included on the census form at the address where they spend most of their time. If they spend time equally between two addresses, include them on the census form at the address where they are staying overnight on Sunday 21 March 2021.

Boarding school children and students away from home during term time

Include boarders and students staying away from home in the questions about who lives in this household. They will also be included on the census form at their term-time address.

Which questions to answer

The instructions on the form will guide you around questions that you do not need to answer. There are some questions that do not need answers depending on the household member's age:

- those under one year old do not need to answer question 13
- those under three years old do not need to answer questions 17, 18 and 19
- those under five years old do not need to answer questions 8, 9 and 24
- those under 15 years old do not need to answer questions 4 and 5

How we use your information and protect your privacy

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is running the census in England and Wales in March 2021.

The information we collect, why we collect it and how we use it

We collect information from your questionnaire under the Census Act 1920. This lets the ONS run a census in England and Wales. The Census Order and Census Regulations provide details for Census 2021. The census is a mandatory survey. It's a crime to fail to give information, or to give false information. This could result in prosecution.

By law, the ONS promotes and safeguards the production of official statistics that serve the public good. This means that we'll only ever use the personal data we collect to produce statistics or carry out statistical research that serves the public good. The statistics or research will not identify people.

We may record information about a property or an individual to protect those being interviewed and interviewers. We may also do this to support people to fill in their questionnaires. We'll hold the minimum amount of personal data needed for these things.

We'll collect information about how people fill in their questionnaires online so we can improve our online services.

Who can access the information?

We'll be working with third party suppliers who will help us carry out the census. They work under our instruction.

Our supplier, Serco Group Plc, will run the contact centre for the public. They'll record calls to the contact centre so that they and we can give a better customer service. At the end of the census, all recordings will be securely transferred to ONS. These will be held for research purposes for as long as we need to undertake the research, then will be securely destroyed.

Royal Mail Group Limited will collect paper questionnaires under its Census Paper Questionnaire Return Service.

Leidos Innovations UK Ltd, our Census Questionnaires Management supplier, will store, code and eventually securely destroy the paper questionnaires.

Visit www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/2021censussuppliers for a full list of our suppliers.

We keep the information we hold secure and confidential. We may make data available to accredited researchers where there's a clear public value and it's safe and lawful to do so. The ONS website has information on how we allow access to data for research, and a list of approved researchers who we've granted access to.

How long is personal data kept?

Under data protection law personal data should be kept for no longer than needed to fulfil the purposes for which it was originally collected.

We hold the least amount of personal data possible and have measures in place to delete personal data or make it anonymous, where appropriate.

The law allows information that's held for statistical purposes only, such as information from your questionnaire, to be kept for longer periods. The ONS will keep a data set of responses for the National Archives. We'll securely hold and control this data for 100 years.

We'll hold data that approved researchers use within our Secure Research Service. We'll remove any personal data that we do not need, such as names and addresses, as early as possible. We'll regularly review the data and delete it when it's no longer needed.

We'll hold information we've collected to protect those being interviewed or interviewers, such as information about a property or an individual. We'll delete most of this information at the end of the census. We'll sometimes hold data for longer, where keeping it continues to protect those being interviewed or interviewers.

We'll hold metrics containing information about how people fill in their questionnaires in a form where they can be identified only until the necessary statistical matching has taken place. We'll then make it anonymous and use it to improve our services.

How the law protects your information

The General Data Protection Regulation with the Data Protection Act 2018 determine how, when and why any organisation can process your personal data. Personal data is any information that can identify a living individual. These laws exist to make sure your data is managed safely and used responsibly. The laws also give you certain rights about your data and mean the ONS, as a user of personal data, needs to give you certain information.

The ONS is a statutory body. This means that it was created by legislation, specifically the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. All our collection and use of data comes from powers that can be found in that Act or other UK legislation.

The Census Act 1920 ensures that we treat personal data from the census securely. It's a criminal offence for ONS staff or our suppliers to misuse personal census data.

The census questionnaire meets requirements within the Human Rights Act 1998. It meets the requirement of the right to respect for a private and family life and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The legal basis to process the data

Data protection law requires that, to process personal data, one needs to do so under one or more conditions.

We'll process information from your census questionnaire under the following conditions:

"Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller."

"Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject."

We'll process information about a property or an individual and information about how people fill in their questionnaires under the following condition:

"Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller."

Under data protection law, one needs an extra condition to process special category personal data. For the census, this includes information about your racial or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs and sexual orientation. We'll process information from your questionnaire for this special category under the following two conditions:

"Processing is necessary for archiving in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes based on UK law."

"Processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest"

We'll process special category data about a property or an individual under the following condition:

"Processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest"

Your rights

As a data subject (someone whose personal data we hold), you have rights under data protection law. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please contact our data protection officer. However, please be aware that we may not have to comply if the data is being held for statistical purposes only. Compliance requirements are set out in the Data Protection Act 2018.

You have the right to request access to the information held about you from any controller that holds your personal data. You can ask them to amend any wrong or inaccurate information held about you. You have the right to object to us processing your data.

You have the right, in some circumstances, to ask for any controller to:

- erase any personal data they may hold about you
- stop processing your personal data
- pass any information they hold about you to another controller

Get more information on the rights available to you and the circumstances under which you can exercise them from the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk.

The data controller

The controller is the person or organisation that decides which personal data it'll process and why. For the census, the ONS is the controller and makes those decisions.

Contact the ONS by telephone, email or post:

Tel: 01329 444972

Email: census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk

Address: Census Customer Services, Office for National Statistics,
Segensworth Road, Titchfield, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 5RR

The data protection officer

Our data protection officer is the person charged with giving us advice and guidance on the ways we can best protect the information we collect and use. They're involved in all the major decisions we make about personal data.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding our use of your data, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please contact the data protection officer:

Tel: 0845 601 3034

Email: DPO@statistics.gov.uk

Address: Data Protection Officer, Office for National Statistics,
Segensworth Road, Titchfield, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 5RR

The Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent organisation tasked with regulating data protection in the UK. The ICO can give you extra information about data protection and your rights and deal with any complaints you may have about our use of your information. Contact the ICO:

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Address: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

How to get help



Visit our website at www.census.gov.uk



Phone us free on 0800 141 2021.



Use our Text Relay Service on (18001) 0800 141 2021.



Phone the free language helpline on 0800 587 2021.



Large print formats are available.



Information is available in Braille.



British Sign Language support is available online.



Census Support Centres

Our local Census Support Centres will be available while the census is happening.

You can get help if you're not confident online, you do not have a computer or you need help completing on paper.

Phone 0800 141 2021 to find your nearest centre.

