Housing Information Group (HIG) meeting
28 January 2021

Attendees		
Helen	Bevan-Jones	Bron Afon Community Housing
Angie	Bowen	Carmarthenshire County Council
Nikola	Bowers	Office for National Statistics
Huw	Brunt	Public Health Wales
Ellen	Burgess	Office for National Statistics
Julian	Buxton	Office for National Statistics
Cerys	Clark	Cardiff County Council
Lee	Clarke	Cardiff County Council
Michael	Curties	Welsh Government
Elizabeth	Davies	Welsh Government
Christopher	Davies	Corporate Policy
John	Davies	Welsh Government
Keith	Davies	Ceredigion County Council
Mason	Davis	Welsh Government
Henry	Dawson	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Paul	Dingle	Welsh Government
Josh	Dixon	Welsh Government
Janine	Edwards	Conwy County Borough Council
Alwen	Edwards	Ceredigion County Council
Amanda	Everson	CWVYS
Sarah	Faire	Flintshire County Council
Jill	Fairweather	Welsh Government
Stephanie	Freeth	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
Cath	Gibbs	Welsh Government
Charlotte	Gibson	Welsh Government
Siwan	Gwyndaf	Welsh Government
Joseph	Herson	Office for National Statistics
Aaron	Isiminger-Martin	Office for National Statistics
Judith	Jenkins	Conwy County Borough Council
Amelia	John	Welsh Government (Chair)
Leanne	John	City and County of Swansea
Rhiannon	Jones	Welsh Government
Daniel	Jones	Welsh Government
Dave	Jones	Welsh Government
Simon	Lannon	Cardiff University

Sue	Leake	Welsh Government
Jim	McKirdle	WLGA
Elizabeth	McLaren	Office for National Statistics
Craig	Mcleod	Welsh Government
Ceri	Meloy	Tai Pawb
Chris	Moreno-Stokoe	Public Health Wales
David	Morgan	Pembrokeshire County Council
Edward	Morgan	Office for National Statistics
Laura	Morgan	Public Health Wales
Jenny	Murphy	Newport City Homes
Bonnie	Navarra	Housing Justice
Tom	Nevitt	Housing Justice
Rebecca	Olney	Welsh Government
Martin	Parry	Welsh Government
Sarah	Paul	Welsh Government
Jennifer	Pride	Welsh Government
Claire	Rayner	Office for National Statistics
Liam	Richards	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Michael	Roskams	Office for National statistics
Andrew	Sansom	Office for National Statistics
Rob	Simkins	Shelter Cymru
Robert	Smith	Cardiff University
Jiao	Song	Public Health Wales
Adele	Taylor	Welsh Government
Stephan	Tietz	Office for National Statistics
Jean	White	Welsh Government
Anthony	Wilkins	Office for National Statistics
Megan	Williams	Welsh Government
Nia	Wyn Jones	Gwynedd Council
Lowri	Wyn Morton	Gwynedd Council
Apologies		
Neal	Cockerton	Flintshire County Council
Cath	Gibbs	Welsh Government
Bryony	Haynes	Community Housing Cymru Group
Amanda	Jones	Welsh Government
Nick	Morris	Crisis
Jennifer	Pride	Welsh Government
Katherine	Raymond	Welsh Government
Catrin	Sneade	Powys County Council
Karl	Thomas	Welsh Government
Henry	Vaile	Welsh Government
Jean	White	Welsh Government
Christine	Whitehead	London School of Economics
Emma	Williams	Welsh Government

Welcome and Introduction

Amelia John (AJ), Welsh Government (WG), welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself as the Deputy Director for Housing Policy since June last year.

AJ commented that the pandemic had given a sharper focus and level of importance on many housing issues, particularly on the inequalities for some groups within our community. AJ welcomed the 2021 Census as a vital source of information, invaluable at all levels of housing (local and national) for many different groups of people.

AJ explained that the aim of today's session was, for those with an interest in housing, to hear the ONS plans for output from the 2021 Census and to ask questions and input into the processes and thinking behind the analysis and outputs.

Prior to the presentation AJ drew attention to the recently circulated WG [Housing Statistics and Research update.]

Overview of Census Outputs

Andrew Samson (AS) from ONS outlined the upcoming presentations around the 2021 census and welcomed comments in the chat bar for a question and answer session at the end of each presentation. First to present was Liz McLaren (Joint Branch Head of Census 2021 Outputs and Dissemination, ONS) covering slides 3 to 21.

Liz McLaren (LML) commented that the approach of the 2021 Census outputs was to be more flexible, timely and accessible than the 2011 Census.

LML shared the aim to deliver the last outputs from the 2021 Census by March 2023 which would be a big improvement in timeliness compared to the 2011 Census outputs, and commented that the 2021 Census timetable is subject to the challenges that the pandemic places on the data collection and how this impacts the processing timetable.

LML talked about the different data tables and the aim to make the data more visual and engaging. LML explained that in addition to the usual standard data tables, ONS would offer users the ability to *build your own tables* and are also testing the idea of *tables that flex.* The build your own tables will make the Census data accessible and suitable for all the needs of different types of users.

LML commented that the data will include single variable and cross-classification of multiple variables; different population bases – usual resident population, working day population etc. There will be bespoke origin-destination tables looking at flows such as those covering, for example, students, travel to work and second residences.

Within the build your own tables, LML noted the need to maintain the confidentiality of those who completed the questionnaire which would be covered by built–in statistical disclosure control checks.

LML added there are quite a few new elements within the data tables that are still being tested and considered, and requires further consultation. LML further added that ONS are keen to have user feedback and volunteers are always welcome to help with the research, and provided several useful links on slide 20.

Q&A Session 1

AS reviewed the questions and comments raised in the chat bar. The discussion focused on:

- Coverage of the geographical sub-areas - LML commented these would go down to output area level.

- The need for data on second homes/holiday homes which were missing from the published 2011 data ie KS016 which was published in 2001.

- Eligible age for participating in the census development – LML commented that for user research 16 is normally the age limit and below that age they need guardians permission.

- Much praise around the more flexible and accessible data eg able to download an app on your mobile.

- Citizen engagement. Chris Moreno-Stokoe offered guidance in implementing citizen engagement games. LML confirmed further work will be carried out to ensure the user interface engages well with users who aren't familiar with accessing the Census data.

Overview of Analysis Plans

Julian Buxton (Census Analysis Co-ordination, ONS) presented on slides 22 to 40. Julian Buxton (JB) outlined that the ONS census analysis coordination team work with 12 Census topic leads, one of which is housing to deliver the analytical work programme for Census 2021.

JB commented that current plans are that, at a national level, there will be an overview of housing data in 2011 and 2021 to highlight any changes over the last 10 years. He added there will be cross cutting analysis between health and housing, and a deeper dive into use of renewable energy sources and of under-occupancy/overcrowding. The aim will be to link to some other sources of data such as Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data, Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) data and data from the Land Registry for the analysis.

JB shared the research proposals and the range of data visualisation prototypes (slides 33 to 38). Slide 39 notes the Census Analysis timetable.

Q&A Session 2

ONS colleagues, Nikola Bowers (NB) and Aaron Isiminger-Martin (AIM) supported the Q&A session. AS led the discussions which focused around:

- Definitions of overcrowding and under-occupancy. Definition of overcrowding/under-occupancy is based on the bedroom standard and is measured using an occupancy rating. An occupancy rating is obtained by subtracting the number of bedrooms recommended according to the bedroom standard from the actual number of bedrooms available for use. A household is considered overcrowded if it has fewer bedrooms available than recommended, and under-occupied if it has more.

- Suggestions around integration of different areas of census data to see if there are other factors that could impact on outputs. For example, homelessness and available employment; access to support services; age; gender; crime etc. ONS agreed to look into these ideas.

- Analysing the range of Census data would be very useful at sub-group level as currently there is insufficient and inadequate data around linkages such as that learned throughout COVID around overcrowding and the Black, Asians and Minority Ethnic group people.

- What the source of data on floor space and renewable energy sources would be and whether information for these areas is derived from linked administrative data. ONS explained there are 2 main data sources - energy performance certificate data and VOA data. Questions in the Census itself on central heating now include renewable energy sources (such as solar thermal or heat pumps etc.)

- The different types of analysis that would be possible. For example, would an analysis of building age, tenure and attitudes and actions around building maintenance, energy efficiency and climate change adaptation be possible? ONS commented they are not currently covering this and it would need further consideration.

- Suggestion for potential for data linkage between Home Office data on migrants (including particularly asylum seekers) and Census data. ONS have not received a user need for this linkage before and agreed to review and update, but this linkage may likely not be possible. SL did share her concerns and the need to be confident in the security of the data and that identifiable data would not be passed to the Home Office.

- Mapping of potential housing hazards to several variables would be useful and important. For example, to look at tenure and building age in relation to energy efficiency.

AIM commented that he and NB are planning on distinguishing between talking about dwellings (occupied/unoccupied household spaces) and households living in dwellings in ONS analysis plans. Still early stages, but happy to receive questions. AIM encouraged anyone who has further questions regarding the Census Analysis Plans to drop a line to him or NB, or want to propose / discuss ideas, at either census.analysis.inbox@ons.gov.uk or better.info@ons.gov.uk.

Census Housing Datasets and Variables

Claire Rayner (Census Output Content Design, ONS) presented the planned housing outputs; specific tables for Wales; housing standard variables; and housing derived variables (based on combination of standard variables or other derived variables). Claire Rayner (CR) highlighted the new derived variable – household of multiple occupancy indicator (HMO). This presentation covers slides 41 to 54.

CR shared a range of housing questions that will be asked in 2021 Census, noting any changes to those questions asked in 2011 Census and new/additional questions to allow a deeper dive into the data. Number of rooms is no longer to be collected but number of bedrooms will be.

CR commented that ONS are trying to maintain a level of consistency with the 2011 data for comparable purposes whilst move forward on the use of administrative data such as the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data to replace Rooms data previously collected via a question on the Census form.

CR concluded the presentation with an invite to contact her (census.outputs@ons.gov.uk) with any new or different requirements for 2021 covering new cross-tabulations, Welsh-specific tables, or any changes within the housing sector that ONS should be aware of.

Q&A Session 3

AS led the discussions which largely raised several questions:

- HMOs. How are they defined?

- Vacant dwellings – how are they being enumerated in 2021?

- Location and format of the published data tables /datasets?

- Would there be a re-introduction of the standard table on second homes and vacant properties (available as KS016 in 2001 but not available in 2011)?

- Will space heating be differentiated from water heating to provide more nuanced data?

ONS agreed to take away these questions and respond in due course.

Measuring Overcrowding using VOA number of rooms in Census 2021

Stephan Tietz (Housing Based Admin Characteristics Lead, ONS) and Joe Herson (Housing Based Admin Characteristics, ONS) presented slides 55 to 68.

Based on users' feedback, ONS has changed a measurement from 2011 to 2021 in moving from census number of rooms question to the VOA number of rooms, noting that the administrative data excludes kitchens. To adjust for this definitional difference for the Census 2021, it is recommended that the VOA room occupancy rating calculation is adjusted by adding one room. This new variable should be referred to "occupancy rating (VOA number of rooms)". Question on the number of bedrooms (used by the LA for housing need) will still be asked and ONS commented that they will favour survey data over VOA data where there is a discrepancy.

ONS talked about different challenges under different types of properties and tenures: Student houses may use a living room as a bedroom so not be classed as overcrowded; and flats may have their kitchen and living room as one room.

Q&A Session 4

AS led an interesting discussion largely around the challenges generated by the pandemic:

- COVID has driven a number of changes with a snapshot picture looking very different to what may have been the case in the previous year to two. There are likely to be a range of impacts including people may have temporarily moved to bubble with another household; some rooms may have been converted into offices or a school room; longer term impact for remote working; differences in use of temporary accommodation and in relationship breakdowns.

Census Microdata

LML presented slides 69 to 75 on behalf of Nicola Haines.

LML talked about the 3 different types of microdata files (varying sample sizes) holding anonymised data with names and addresses removed which will be available for research. The safeguarded household file is new for 2021 Census.

Q&A Session 5

A question was asked in the chat around:

- It would be useful in the Safeguarded Household file to know what can be included and if this might also be segmented by tenure, so for instance exposure in a household to risks such as substance misuse.

- Since the meeting, ONS have replied to say that as substance misuse is not collected on census questionnaire, it cannot be included in the new household microdata file. Data linkage is not available from microdata files.

- If there are variables the group would like to see included in the new safeguarded household microdata file, please get in touch with the Census Outputs team at: census.outputs@ons.gov.uk.

Census Outputs Next Steps and Opportunities for Feedback

LML recapped on the key dates for the 2021 Census and reiterated these are subject to the challenges that the pandemic may place on data collection and the impact on the processing timetable. LML gave 3 useful links (slide 75): the Census output webpages; to register for Census 2021 updates; and a contact email address.

AS and AJ thanked the presenters and all who had contributed to the very useful and interesting Q&A sessions. AS will respond to any unanswered questions/comments in the teams meeting chat.

AOB

AJ reminded the regular attendees of the HIG that the next meeting will be on 20 May 2021.

Summary of the agreed ONS actions:

For ONS to consider the suggestions around integration of different areas of census data to see if there are other factors that look to impact on outputs. e.g. homelessness and available employment, access to support services, age, gender, crime etc.

ONS commented that the following analyses are not currently being covered and further consideration would be needed. For example, would an analysis of building age, tenure and attitudes and actions around building maintenance, energy efficiency and climate change adaptation be possible?

ONS agreed to take away the following questions and respond in due course:

- HMOs. How are they defined?

- Vacant dwellings – how are they being enumerated in 2021?

- Location and format of the published data tables /datasets?

- Would there be a re-introduction of the standard table on second homes and vacant properties (available as KS016 in 2001 but not available in 2011)?

- Will space heating be differentiated from water heating to provide more nuanced data?

Consideration for the Welsh Housing Information Group:

Welsh Housing Information Group to provide input into the variables they would like included in the new safeguarded household microdata file.