
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Office for Statistics Regulation

Alison Byrne
Chief Executive
National Records of Scotland (NRS)
(by email)

19 May 2026

Dear Alison

Assessment of the 2022 Census in Scotland

Today we have published our [phase 3 assessment report](#) of the 2022 Census in Scotland. This report, our third and final report, focussed on assessing how well NRS's census outputs have met users' needs and revisited the requirements outlined in our [phase 2 report](#) published in 2023. On behalf of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, I am pleased to confirm their status as accredited official statistics having been found to comply with the standards of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

NRS has been dedicated to delivering high quality and accessible census outputs which have met the needs of a wide range of users. Following quality challenges caused by lower-than-expected response rates during census data collection, NRS conducted rigorous quality assurance to understand and assure the reliability of the census results and put in place appropriate mitigations to ensure the statistics' quality. NRS ensured its outputs were informed by input from users and proactively communicated with the public, including diligence in effectively communicating uncertainty where needed. NRS also developed a range of innovative tools that have generally enhanced users' experience of using the 2022 outputs. This approach to recognising user needs, alongside NRS's rigorous approach to quality assurance, were reflected in the high level of satisfaction in the outputs reported to us by users.

NRS has responded thoroughly to the requirements outlined in our [phase 2 report](#), such as by providing accessible information on data quality and strengthening engagement with users. NRS has clearly explained definitions and methods, and strongly evidenced working with the other UK census offices to address the comparability of its outputs to the 2021 censuses in the rest of the UK.

To inform future population work, our assessment report includes five recommendations for NRS to address. The recommendations are largely focused on carrying forward lessons from the 2022 Census into the design and delivery of the 2031 Census. The recommendations include building on lessons learned, working with users requiring data-zone level outputs, and continuing collaboration with other UK census offices to support

comparability of outputs. NRS should also continue to build on feedback regarding the useability of the flexible table builder, as well as working with expert user groups during question design and development ahead of the next census. NRS should aim to address these recommendations within six months, or demonstrate how they have been incorporated into planning for the 2031 Census.

I would like to thank your team for their positive contribution and engagement throughout the assessment process. If you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter or the accompanying assessment report, please get in touch.

I am copying this letter to Alastair McAlpine, Chief Statistician, Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for OSR