
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Office for Statistics Regulation

Emma Rourke
Acting National Statistician
Office for National Statistics
(by email)

12 June 2025

Dear Emma,

Phase 3 assessment report: 2021 Census in England and Wales

Today we published our [Phase 3 assessment report of the 2021 Census in England and Wales](#) produced by ONS. This report is the third and final phase of our census assessment and it focused on the extent that ONS met its commitments made in response to our phase 2 report and how well the 2021 Census outputs met users' needs. This report does not cover statistics on gender identity based on census data.

In this report we recognise ONS's ambitious and innovative approach to Census 2021. ONS has delivered a successful census, providing many users with accessible and timely outputs to support analysis across a wide range of topics covered by the census. Many users commented positively on ONS's data visualisation tools, for example, the "create a custom dataset" tool. ONS also responded well to the requirements outlined in our [phase 2 report](#). This included carrying out a wide range of user engagement activities and the provision of sufficient documentation on quality and methods.

We identified a gap in ONS's work around the considerations users should make on the impact of the pandemic when using the data and have therefore set out a requirement which we expect ONS to address within 6 months. Subject to ONS meeting our expectations, we can reconfirm the accreditation of the 2021 Census in England and Wales outputs (excluding gender identity estimates).

We have also identified six recommendations for ONS to take forward in future work in population statistics. Addressing these recommendations will pay a part in ensuring that population statistics continue to meet the standards of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

I would like to thank your team for their helpful engagement throughout this assessment process. We will continue regular engagement while they work towards meeting our requirement, but if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter or the accompanying report, please get in touch.

I am copying this letter to Mary Gregory, Director of Population Statistics.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for OSR

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