

Annex B: Making it easier for respondents to provide us with information

1. Improve the quality of our surveys

Whilst the long-term goal is to reduce our reliance on surveys to collect data, and move towards utilising administrative data, surveys aren't disappearing. ONS will continue to run surveys to be able to meet the needs of users. Maintaining the quality of our surveys is an important aspect of achieving our vision. There are a number of different aspects involved in doing this, which we will be focusing over the next three years:

Build field force capability:

- We will deliver a comprehensive survey operations and field force development programme across all field forces to invest in our leaders, support interviewers, champion and recognise best practice, exploit the latest management information approaches and foster a positive culture, adopting new ways of working, communicating and listening.
- We will implement best practice for reducing attrition on longitudinal surveys.
- We will explore the cost, benefits and issues of increased Sunday interviewing.
- As transformation work matures, we will review the structure and organisational design of the field forces to enable the transformation benefits to be fully delivered.
- We will deliver a face-to-face field capacity and cost model to inform workforce planning and business development.

Optimising respondent engagement:

- We will continue to improve our communications using the latest behavioural insights and we will ensure that respondent communications across ONS are aligned.
- Optimised incentives strategy implemented and aligned to latest research.
- Increase respondent awareness of ONS household surveys through ONS integrated marketing strategy and close working with Census.
- Improve engagement with local authorities through implementation of a post-Census engagement model.
- Through redesign of our business survey operations, we will improve our engagement and interaction with respondents by ensuring more balanced requests and reflect respondent preferences for method of communication and availability.

Transforming our surveys:

- To increase efficiency, the transformation statistical redesign of our surveys will continue, enabling them to be replaced, shortened, merged and translated online. Importantly, we will move to online participation as our primary method of data collection, with this being supported and supplemented by face-to-face and telephone interviewing. Further information on how we are transforming our business surveys and social surveys is below.

Contact us at: Social.Surveys.Operations.Division.Enquiries@ons.gov.uk

2. Transform our business surveys to ensure better use of administrative data, rationalising the use of surveys and their sample sizes, migrating these surveys to online collection, moving away from the use of paper

Business surveys play an important role in ONS Economic Statistics, however there is a need for them to evolve to offer more granularity, be collected in a way that is more applicable to the modern day and integrated with administrative data that will allow us to reduce our reliance on surveys and large samples. To achieve this, we will:

- By 2023, migrate all business surveys from paper to online collection.
- Transform the measurement of short-term economic statistics, using VAT and PAYE RTI data, reducing our reliance on business surveys and providing users more granularity.
- Transform the measurement of financial statistics through the integration of administrative data, better samples, reducing the number of surveys sent to this key sector of the economy.
- Assist Economic Statistics Group to improve the measurement of economic statistics meeting user's needs.
- Work with Economic Statistics to develop business data processing tasks in the new Data Access platform, standardising the statistical methods used across business surveys where appropriate.
- Continue to iterate and improve the systems and processes underpinning our data collection operation.

Contact us at business.stats@ons.gov.uk

3. Transform our social surveys to be online first where possible, rationalised to ensure information is only collected once, and underpinned by a modern, more efficient data collection operation

Social surveys remain vital to the work of ONS, however to preserve their value and relevance, surveys must evolve: how they look, how they work and how they are completed. To achieve this, we will:

- Undertake and publish analysis relating to the statistical quality of the first labour market survey data to be collected via an online first, mixed mode.
- Launch an online first, mixed mode Opinions and Lifestyle Survey in November 2019.
- Test approaches to collecting household and personal financial information online.
- By Spring 2020 launch the trial run of our Integrated Population and Characteristics Survey that will underpin our administrative data first 'system' for census and population statistics after 2021.
- Work with experts to investigate the ethics of collecting victimisation information online.

- Continue to iterate and improve the systems underpinning our survey data collection operation (e.g. fieldwork management tool, upgrade systems to Blaise 5, telephone operator systems).
- Develop our first social survey data processing tasks in the new Data Access Platform enhancing the code being developed for the Census processing rehearsal.

Contact us at ssd.transformation@ons.gov.uk

4. Complete the Census Rehearsal in Autumn/Winter 2019 in preparation for the 2021 Census

As part of our preparations for the 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS) will be holding a census rehearsal in autumn 2019.

The rehearsal is an important way for us to trial all our processes, systems and services are effective and working as they should before the 2021 Census. It's an end-to-end rehearsal of just about everything we will need to do for the real thing. The rehearsal will take place in just four selected local authority areas, where we will invite all households in Carlisle, Ceredigion, Hackney and Tower Hamlets to take part by filling in a census rehearsal questionnaire. In Tower Hamlets and Hackney, we will also be surveying Communal Establishments.

There are two phases of the Census Rehearsal: Collection, and Processing and Outputs.

The key objectives of the Collection Rehearsal are to enable us to go into 2021 feeling like we have done it before, prove out supplier, system and service integration, evaluate our ability to scale up to full census and to check census success factors are achievable.

The Processing and Outputs Rehearsal provides an opportunity to test the end to end flow of a large volume of data through the Processing environment and into Outputs for simulated dissemination.

The key objectives of the Processing & Outputs Rehearsal are to performance test individual processing modules, ensure end to end system integration is fit for purpose, provide time/resource estimates for 2021 live running and demonstrate capability to produce First Outputs within a year and test the dissemination of statistically plausible outputs, including statistical disclosure control methods.

The Processing and Outputs Rehearsal will run independently, and after, the collection rehearsal. It will utilise the data collected during the collection rehearsal in addition with data from other Census type collections to ensure the total volume supports the activities to be tested.

Contact us at census2021.transformation.programme@ons.gov.uk