The Census in Northern Ireland

Robert Beatty - NISRA

UK Data Service
Census User Research Conference
27 Sept 2013
The Census in Northern Ireland

- The Census is organised by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and overseen by the Registrar General for NI.

- NISRA worked with the census offices for England & Wales and Scotland to conduct the Census on the same day in 2011 and to provide comparable census results.
Separate NI Census Legislation

• The Census is conducted under the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969

• Subordinate legislation
  • Census Order and Census Regulations (2010)
    • Responsibility falls to the Department of Finance and Personnel, in particular the Registrar General for Northern Ireland
    • Census Office co-ordinate census planning and operations

• EU Obligations
2011 Overview

• NI Census held on 27 March 2011

• Scale
  • 703,000 HHs; 1,143 CEs; 1.81m People
  • 33 HQ staff (at peak)
  • 1,900 field staff
  • Cost – approx. £25m (10 year cycle)
2011 Overview

New Questions – UK / E&W

• Citizenship - (Passports held)
• Visitor details - (intended length of stay)
• Main language - (other than English)
• National Identity

New Questions – NI

• Migration
• Adapted Accommodation
• Nature of Disability
• Voluntary work
2011 Overview

NI Specific Questions (noting that most questions harmonised across UK)

• Religion
• Knowledge of Irish / Ulster Scots
• Ethnic Group

• [Migration
• Adapted Accommodation
• Nature of Disability
• Voluntary work]
## 2011 Operational Overview

### Joint working with ONS
- Questionnaire design
- Procurement
  - Questionnaire printing
  - Field staff supplies
  - Questionnaire tracking
  - Internet
  - Public interface services
  - Data capture / coding
  - Archiving and Decommissioning
- Downstream processing

### NISRA Workstreams
- NI Legislation
- Address Register
- Field operation
- Publicity
  - Harmonised with ONS
- Quality Assurance
- Coverage / Quality Surveys
- Output specification
  - Harmonised with ONS
- Output Production
- Output Dissemination
2011 Operational Overview

Approach

• Post-out / Post-back – supplemented by Hand Delivery;
• Fixed Geography for field staff;
• Underpinned by Census Address Register;
• Internet response (first time – 15% of returns);
• Central processing;
• Coverage Assessment / Adjustment (similar to 2001)
  – Coverage survey plus activity based health data;
• Quality Assessment – Census Quality Survey.
Operations review

• 2011 Census in NI – successful

• Field Operations worked well (94% of households responded)
• Internet solution well received and coped well with peak volumes
• Public Interface Systems were effective / responsive to needs
• No major Processing problems (upstream / downstream)
• Output production / dissemination going well
Dissemination

Primary Channel

Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service
- NINIS

www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis

- long standing dissemination vehicle in NI (since 2001)
- substantially re-developed and re-launched just prior to the Key Statistics release
- Open Government Licence applies

Also: NISRA WEBSITE: www.nisra.gov.uk
Output Geography

• Administrative Geography (26 Councils / 582 Wards)
  (Unchanged since 2001)

• 890 Super Output Areas unchanged since 2001
  (Minor tweaks)

• 5022 Census Output Areas superseded by
  4537 Small Areas
  (each comprising a whole COA or an aggregation of whole contiguous COAs)
Output Geography

- New Local Government Geography adopted by NI Assembly in late 2012
  - 11 Councils
  - 462 Wards
- NISRA plan to publish Key Statistics for new Council areas in 2014 (by estimation methods)
Output production (To date)

- **Jul 2012**: Population and household statistics at NI level
- **Sep 2012**: Population and household statistics at LGD level
- **Dec 2012**: Key Statistics down to LGD level
- **Jan 2013**: Key Statistics at lower geographies
- **Feb 2013**: Quick Statistics for all geographies
- **May 2013**: Detailed Characteristics covering Health, Religion and National Identity at NI level (*first cross-tabs*)
- **Jun 2013**: Detailed Characteristics covering Ethnicity, Country of Birth and Language at NI level
- **Sep 2013**: Detailed Characteristics covering Housing and the Labour Market at NI Level
Future Outputs

Autumn 2013: Detailed Characteristics at all remaining geographies

By March 2014: Local Characteristics for all geographies

2014:
- Specialised output, e.g. Eurostat, microdata, flow data
- UK outputs
- Grid square data
- 2011 NILS link
Results review

• **Census Day population** – 1.811 million
  • Up 7.5 per cent since 2001

• **703,300 households**
  • Up 12 per cent since 2001

• **Reduction in number of children**

• **Increase in the number of adults**
  • especially the elderly

• **Population ageing**
  • Median age up from 34 to 37 since 2001
Census Year Population Estimates (1911 – 2011)
Population ‘Pyramids’ (1911 and 2011)
Census Year Population Estimates by Age (1911 – 2011)
Age Distribution in an EU context

Proportion of 0-14 Year Olds in Northern Ireland compared to EU Countries
Northern Ireland Data: Census 2011 Population Estimates
Other countries: Eurostat 2010 Population Estimates as of 1st January 2010

Proportion of 65+ Year Olds in Northern Ireland compared to EU Countries
Northern Ireland Data: Census 2011 Population Estimates
Other countries: Eurostat 2010 Population Estimates as of 1st January 2010
Population Change between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses (% all usual residents)
Key Statistics – National Identity

National identity – combined responses (% usual residents)

- British only: 40
- Irish only: 25
- Northern Irish only: 21
- British and Northern Irish only: 6.2
- Irish and Northern Irish only: 1.1
- British, Irish and Northern Irish only: 1.0
- British and Irish only: 0.7
- Other: 5.0
Key Statistics – Media Coverage

A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN WHO WE THINK WE ARE

One in five see themselves as Northern Irish

Head-count numbers still prove emotional

Religion gap just 3% in Northern Ireland

The rise of the Northern Irish

Link between our religion and our politics is fast weakening

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The Future

Beyond 2011 Project

• Devolved responsibility, so decision will be made locally
• But, NI solution will be informed by the direction taken in England and Wales
• Northern Ireland consultation paper in 2014.
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