

Making sure every person counts in Census 2021: Information for paid supporters



In March, all households in England and Wales will be asked to take part in Census 2021. This is a once-in-a-decade survey which provides everyone from central government to the charity sector with the most accurate estimate of our communities.

The census is run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics.

Households will be sent a letter inviting them to take part in early March. Census day is Sunday 21 March.

Why is the census important?

Information from the census will help to show where there are inequalities in society. It will provide further understanding of our living arrangements, health, education, and the jobs we do. This data will help inform policy at a local and national level — such as decisions on doctors' surgeries, house planning, and new bus routes – for years to come.

Data from the ONS shows that people with learning disabilities are at a greater risk of death from Covid-19. This census will not only give us important insights into the impact of the pandemic on our society but will also provide up-to-date information on the health of our population.

Supporting someone to fill in their census questionnaire

If you offer professional support or are a carer for someone who needs assistance to complete the census questionnaire, you are allowed to help them. If possible, you should read the questions and answer options aloud to the person you're helping, filling in the form with the answers they give. You can read the answers back to them at the end to check they're right.

The person you're helping will have a letter or a paper questionnaire. Both contain an access code, so you can complete the census online even if they have a paper version.

If you are a care home manager, you will be asked to complete a communal establishment manager's form. You will also need to distribute a questionnaire pack to each resident and try to make sure individual forms are completed on behalf of any resident who is unable to complete it themselves. These forms will be delivered to care homes by a census officer ahead of Census Day on 21 March.

Getting help with the census questionnaire

The ONS is taking steps to make sure that the census is accessible to everyone even if we are in lockdown. Although the ONS is encouraging people to fill in the questionnaire online, paper questionnaires will be available for those who need them.

People will be able to complete their questionnaire over the phone with help from trained staff via the free phone contact centre. Anyone can call on **0800 141 2021**.

There are also a range of support options available. The online questionnaire is compatible with most assistive technologies. This means that people using supportive software such as screen readers should find it compatible with their programme.

The online help pages on the census website cover important topics such as why certain questions are included in the census and what they mean. This text should be accessible to anyone with a reading age of 8 or above.

You can order an Easy Read information leaflet about the census from the contact centre.

People with speech or hearing impairments can use a text relay prefix when calling the contact centre. Text relay offers text-to-speech and speech-to-text translation services. Just dial **18001** before the number of the contact centre.

The ONS also wants to give people face-to-face help with filling in their online questionnaires. This will happen at local Census Support Centres where it is safe to do so. The ONS will monitor the COVID-19 situation to decide whether these centres can open.

Keeping everyone's information safe

No-one can identify any individual in the census statistics when they are published. They contain no personal information. Census records will be kept secure for 100 years and only then can future generations view them.

For more information about all the help available, please visit www.census.gov.uk or phone for free on **0800 141 2021**.