

How we sound

Census 2021 tone of voice

A guide to how we write and talk about the census

What do we mean by “tone of voice”?

Everyone has their own writing style.

We express ourselves daily in everything from conversations to emails and texts.

Our voice may not change, but what we say – and how we say it – will change depending on who we’re writing or speaking to.

For instance, how we write to our parents is different from how we write to our friends, and different again from how we address our boss.

That’s our tone of voice.

What’s a tone of voice guide?

A tone of voice guide sets out the distinctive style and personality of an organisation – how its brand sounds.

It’s a tool to help you use the “voice” of that organisation in all your communications.

It’ll also show you how to adapt this voice by changing your tone.



Why do we need a tone of voice guide?

At the Office for National Statistics (ONS), we'll be speaking to everyone in England and Wales about Census 2021.

That's over **56 million people** of all ages and cultural backgrounds, with different needs and concerns.

We need to convey every message, whether it's in a leaflet, letter, advert or tweet, in one clear, consistent voice.

But the tone of voice we use also needs to be flexible. We need to be able to adapt it to the people we're talking to.

This guide offers some tips on how Census 2021 should sound.

It sits alongside the [Census 2021 brand guidelines](#), helping us to create one memorable and consistent personality.

Because **how** we say it is just as important as **what** we say.



What's Census 2021's tone of voice?

Before you can have a tone of voice, you need a personality.

Everyone has one. It's what makes us stand out from the crowd.

Census 2021 is no different. We have our own collective personality that makes us who we are. And this defines our tone of voice.

The census tone is usually a balance between informed and informal.

Informed

The census provides information that's essential to many different people and organisations. So, we need to sound knowledgeable, professional and reassuring.

Informal

That said, we do not want to be too formal. It's important for us to speak in a friendly, conversational and enthusiastic way.

Note: This guide should be used alongside the [ONS style guide](#).



Can we ever change our tone?

The short answer is, yes.

You've the same voice all the time, but your tone changes occasionally. For example, you might use one tone when you're with your family and another when you're with colleagues.

It's the same for the census. Our voice doesn't change much, but our tone changes from time to time.

You may want to sound a bit more enthusiastic when talking about the importance of the census.

"The census is unique. There's simply nothing else that gives so much detail about us and the society we live in."

Or you can sound more formal when telling people about data security.

"We have a strict security regime that follows government standards. This includes physical and IT security measures to protect your data, covering people, processes and technology."

And reminding people that it's a legal requirement to fill in their census form would need a more urgent tone.

"Every household must fill in a census questionnaire. It's compulsory by law and you could receive a fine if you do not take part."

You just need to strike the right balance.

Whether informed or informal, enthusiastic or urgent, it's important not to go too far in one direction. We still need to speak with a single voice, so the reader knows it's us.



What should our content aim to achieve?

When you write about the census, remember these basic principles.

Empower

Help people to understand the census by giving them the information they need and encouraging them to take part.

“You’ll be able to complete the online census questionnaire on smartphones and tablets, as well as laptops and desktop computers.”

Respect

Speak to people in a way that you would like to be spoken to. Do not patronise or “talk at” people. Be considerate, inclusive and understanding.

“While we’d like as many people as possible to take part online, you can ask for a paper questionnaire if you need one.”

Educate

Think of yourself as a guide to the census. Use your knowledge to answer the questions that you know people are likely to have.

“During Census 2021, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) field officers will visit some households. These field staff will give you help and encouragement if you’ve not yet filled in your census form.”



How do we write in our tone of voice?

When you're writing about the census, here are some tips to keep in mind.

Be clear

Use simple words and sentences.

"The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales."

Be friendly

Write in the same way that you'd speak to a friend.

"We aim to make things as easy as possible for everyone, but if you need help taking part in the census, we've got it covered."

Be useful

Give people the information they're most likely to need.

"Visit one of our local Census Support Centres for help in person and use one of our devices to fill in the online questionnaire."



Tone tips: grammar and language

When it comes to writing about Census 2021, we keep our content clear and consistent by sticking to specific rules of grammar and language.

While we follow the [ONS style guide](#), there are a few style points that we've tweaked to achieve the right tone for the census.

Here are the main things to focus on.

Use positive contractions

Using contractions can help make text sound friendly and conversational. Only use positive contractions though – negative ones can be difficult to read.

USE

"We'll..."

"It's..."

"Do not..."

"Should not..."

DO NOT USE

"We will..."

"It is..."

"Don't..."

"Shouldn't..."

Use active verbs

Use active verbs. Avoid passive verbs. In active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action. In passive voice, the subject has the action done to it.

USE

"Everyone in England and Wales must fill in a census form."

DO NOT USE

"A census form must be filled in by everyone in England and Wales."

Address the reader directly

A great way of making content feel more conversational is to address the reader directly. Try to use "you" when you're referring to them.

USE

"You can get help by calling the census helpline."

DO NOT USE

"Respondents can get help by calling the census helpline."

Talking about the Office for National Statistics

It's important that the reader understands you are writing as a representative of the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

When you first refer to the ONS, write the name in full.

"At the Office for National Statistics (ONS) we're..."

After that, you can use the acronym or change to "we" and "us".

If you're mentioning other organisations in your content, it might be better to use "the Office for National Statistics" or "the ONS", just to be clear.

Explain where necessary

Think about the terms you're using that the reader might not understand. You could either use an alternative (if possible) or explain clearly and concisely.

"You'll get a letter in the post with a code on it that you can use to log in on the website. This code will be 16 numbers that people can use to access the online census questionnaire."

Use plain English

The best way to make sure you're writing in plain English is to think about how you'd say something if you were speaking to the reader face to face. Do not use overly formal or complicated words – there's usually a simpler alternative.

USE

"Before"

"Need"

"Carry out"

"Related to"

DO NOT USE

"Prior to"

"Require"

"Undertake"

"Pertaining to"

Tone tips: putting it all together

Here's an example of how you might put together a piece of content using all the points mentioned.

You do not need to squeeze them all into your copy, though – just use the ones that are appropriate.

So, what is Census 2021? It's an important survey that asks everyone in England and Wales the same questions about the same day.

Conversational

This paints a picture of how we live. It's a vital tool to help decide where to spend billions of pounds, **for instance on roads, schools or hospitals.**

Explain

Address the reader

There'll be help on hand if **you** need it to **fill in** your questionnaire. You can request a paper version if you prefer.

Plain English

There'll also be support available in different languages and accessible formats.

Positive contraction



Dictionary

There are certain terms we use all the time when talking about the census. Here's how we write them to make sure we're being consistent across our communications.

For general style points, we follow the ONS style guide.

Census

The name of the next census is "Census 2021".

When referring to previous censuses, the format is the other way around, for example "the 2011 Census".

When referring to "the census" generally, start with a lowercase "c".

Census Coverage Survey

This is the name of the survey, so use capitals at the start of each word.

Census Day

The information that's collected for the census needs to be about who usually lives in the household on Census Day, which is Sunday 21 March 2021. When we refer to Census Day it is always capitalised.

Census field staff/Census officers

These are census staff who visit households that have not yet responded to the census. Do not say "census enumerator".

Census Support Centres

These centres will be available to support people with filling in the online questionnaire.

People who are not confident online or cannot get connected can go to one of these centres to get face-to-face help. They can bring their own smartphone, tablet or laptop. There'll also be devices at the centre they can use.

Click

Avoid using "click" as an action (such as when giving instructions on how to fill in the online questionnaire). This assumes that the user will have a desktop computer with a mouse.

Instead, use "select" to make sure you cover all devices, including tablets and mobiles.

Complete

See "fill in".

Count

For plain English, we refer to the census as a “count” of people and households, even though the result of this is an “estimate” of the number. Some examples of the ways we use the two terms are:

“The census is a count of all people and households in England and Wales”.

“The census counts people and households”.

“The census gives us the most accurate estimate of the number of all people and households in England and Wales.”

Country

Do not use words like “country”, “national” and “nationwide” when referring to the census.

The ONS is responsible for the census in England and Wales. Please make this clear wherever possible when you refer to the scope of the census.

Data

Use “information” rather than data where possible and appropriate (See “information” for more detail).

To consider if you do use the word data:

Strictly speaking, “data” is a plural word. In formal documents such as statistical reports and publications, we would follow the ONS style guide and always refer to this in the plural.

Easier

Avoid saying the census questionnaire is easier to fill in using a particular method (online or on paper). This may not be the case for all respondents.

Estimate

See “count”.

Fill in

We tend to use “fill in” more than “complete”, as it’s more informal.

This should be used in the context of “filling in the census questionnaire”, not to mean taking part in the census.

Example: “It’s important for everyone to fill in the census questionnaire”.

“Fill in” tends to be used for specifics around, for example, the process of “filling in the questionnaire”. You may use “complete” for higher-level statements such as “Who should complete the census questionnaire?”.

Form

See “questionnaire”.

Information

Wherever possible, use “information” rather than data when referring to the information provided by the census (that is, “census information” rather than “census data”). Britain Thinks research has shown that the word “information” is better received by respondents.

An exception to this may be where there is too much repetition of the word “information” in the same piece of text.

Invite

See “invitation”.

Invitation

Use “invitation letter” when talking about the initial contact letter in public communications. For consistency, avoid using “invite letter”.

National

See “country”

Nationwide

See “country”.

Our

See “us”.

Questionnaire

We refer to the census form (paper and online) as a “questionnaire”. When we want to be more informal, we also use “form”.

Quicker

Avoid saying the census questionnaire is quicker to fill in using a particular method (online or on paper). This may not be the case for all respondents.

Select

Use this instead of “click” when describing how to do something online.

Survey

We refer to the census as a whole, as a “survey”. Do not use “survey” to talk about the physical (or electronic) census questionnaire itself.

Take part

We use “take part” when we’re talking about the action of participating in the census.

For example: “More than 26 million households will be taking part in the census”.

Tick-box

Lowercase and hyphenated.

Us

See “we”.

We

Where possible, use “we”, “us” and “our” when talking about the Office for National Statistics, to make content sound more personal.

When doing this, make it clear who you’re referring to by writing “Office for National Statistics (ONS)” at the first mention, and then using “we” and “us” after that.

The only exception to this is where other organisations are mentioned alongside the ONS. In this case, we need to use “the ONS”, so we’re clear who we mean.



Census descriptions

We've collected together some of the Census 2021 topics that you're most likely to write about.

We've split each of them up into four descriptions. These are:

- A comprehensive description, when you need to go into detail
- A concise description, when you need to get the message across, but space is tight
- A short description, when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics
- A short and tweet description, when you need to fill a social media post

How to use these descriptions

These are "raw" descriptions. We want you to take the sections you need and craft your own census content.

Remember to consider the context and format.

Will it go on a poster, in a leaflet or online?

Who is reading it?

What are the most important things they need to know?

What is the census and why should I take part?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. It's been happening for over 200 years.

The census is unique. There's simply nothing else that gives so much detail about us and the society we live in. It tells us what our needs are now, and what they're likely to be in the future. It also gives a snapshot of how we live, for future generations to look back on.

Knowing what your community's needs are helps plan and fund public services in your area and across England and Wales. This means the information you give in the census informs things that affect all of us, like transport, education and healthcare.

Information from the census is also important in helping lots of other people and organisations do their work.

Charities and voluntary organisations often use it as evidence to get funding. It helps businesses to understand us as customers and, for example, decide where to open new shops. Plus, those doing research, like university students and people looking into their family history, use the information.

Without the census – and without you telling us about you, your household and your home – it would be much more difficult to do this. That's why it's so important you take part.

You'll be helping make sure you and your community get the services you need for the next 10 years and beyond.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. The census is unique. There's simply nothing else that gives so much detail about us and the society we live in.

All kinds of organisations, from local authorities to charities, use the information to help provide the services we all need, including transport, education and healthcare. Without the census, it would be much more difficult to do this.

By taking part, you'll be helping make sure you and your community get the services needed now and in the future.

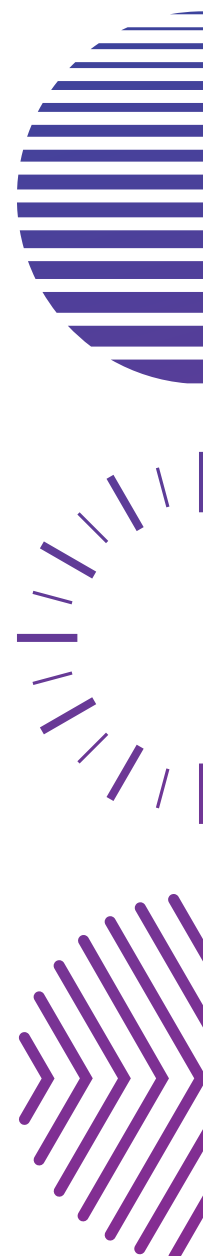
The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. This helps to plan and fund public services in your area.

By taking part in the census, you'll help make sure your community gets the services it needs.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. It's important you take part, because census information helps to plan and fund public services in your area.



Why is the census important?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

The census is important because it gives the most detailed information we have about our society. There's simply no other way of getting this detail.

But more than that, it's what we all use census information for that makes it so vital. In one way or another, it has an impact on the lives of everyone living in England and Wales.

The government, local authorities and other public bodies use census information to help them make decisions on how to plan and fund public services. These include areas like transport, education and healthcare. We all use public services, whether it's a trip to the doctors or a daily commute to work on the train. This means the census affects all of us.

The census is also essential to charities and voluntary organisations. They use it to identify where people need their help and as evidence to support applications they make for funding. For example, the Mental Health Foundation uses census information to find those most at risk of mental ill health and give them support. Chances are, there's a charity in your area that simply could not do their work without census data.

When you add to that all the businesses, academics and genealogists who use the census for information, you've got one incredibly important survey. The census helps many different people and organisations to build an understanding of us all and to meet our needs, whatever they may be.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

The census is important as it gives essential information that's used for things that affect us all.

We all use services like transport, education and healthcare, and census data helps the government and local authorities to decide how to plan and fund them.

Census information is also important to charities, as they use it to reach those who need help and as evidence for securing funding. Businesses, academics and genealogists also rely on it to complete their work.

All of this makes the census a vital survey that helps people and organisations work out what our needs are and how to meet them.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

The census is important as it gives essential information that's used for things that affect us all.

The government and local authorities use census information to help plan and fund services like transport, education and healthcare. Charities and businesses also use it to inform their work.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

Did you know that the census has the power to improve all our lives? The government and local authorities use census information to help plan and fund public services. And charities and businesses use it to inform their work, too. All this makes it a pretty important survey.



What will I need to do for Census 2021?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

Census 2021 is an important survey. It asks everyone in England and Wales the same questions about the same day and paints a picture of how we live. It's a vital tool to help decide where billions of pounds are spent, for instance on roads, schools or hospitals.

If you live in England and Wales, you must fill in the census form by law or you could be fined up to £1,000.

Census 2021 is the first digital-first census. You'll get a letter in the post with a household access code or individual access code on it which you can use to log in on the website.

The code is unique to each household and is private and secure. We at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) follow laws to keep your information safe.

The information you provide needs to be about who usually lives in the household on Census Day, which is Sunday 21 March 2021.

You can complete your questionnaire before 21 March. But if your household circumstances change on Census Day, you'll need to let us know.

You can also submit your questionnaire on Census Day or as soon as possible after.

The time it will take to fill in the census will depend on the number of people in your household. It's likely to take around 10 minutes per person.

You'll have to answer a few questions about your household before moving on to individual questions. Anyone living in the household who's aged 16 years or over can fill in these questions on their own if they want to. You can save it and come back to it later to finish off as well.

There'll be help on hand at our local Census Support Centres to fill in your questionnaire. You can request a paper version if you prefer. There'll also be support available in different languages and accessible formats.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

All households should complete the census on Sunday 21 March 2021 or as soon as possible after. You can complete your questionnaire before 21 March. But if your household circumstances change on Census Day, you'll need to let us know. If you live in England and Wales, you must fill in the census form by law or you could be fined up to £1,000.

You can fill in the questionnaire online. There'll be help available at our local Census Support Centres if you need it. You'll have to answer some questions about your household and some individual questions. Anyone aged 16 years or over can fill these questions in on their own if they want to.

You can request a paper version if you prefer. There'll also be support and guidance available in different languages and accessible formats.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

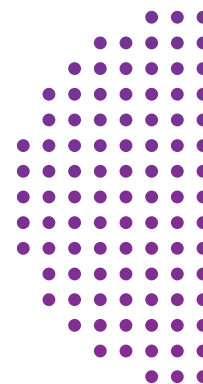
You can fill in your census questionnaire online and get help to do this at our local Census Support Centres. There'll be questions about your household, and some about each person living there. If you're aged 16 years or over, you can answer these privately.

You can request a paper version and there'll be support in different languages and accessible formats.

All households should complete the census on Sunday 21 March 2021 or as soon as possible after. You can complete your questionnaire before 21 March. But if your household circumstances change on Census Day, you'll need to let us know. You must complete the census questionnaire by law, or you could be fined up to £1,000.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

For Census 2021, we'll be asking questions about your household and you individually. There will be plenty of help out there if you need any support to fill in your questionnaire. And don't forget, filling in your questionnaire is a legal requirement.



Security and confidentiality

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

The census asks questions about you, your home and the people who live in it. The census has a proud 200-year history of keeping this personal information safe.

When we release census statistics, they will not show it's you. We publish them so public bodies can better understand the needs of the different types of people living in different areas. However, we make sure that they include no personal information.

We'll keep your actual census record secure for 100 years. Only then can future generations see it. For example, from January 2022, you'll be able to see what people put on their census forms in 1921.

We have a strict security regime that follows government standards. This includes physical and IT security measures to protect your data, covering people, processes and technology.

We use the information we collect in the census solely to produce statistics and for statistical research. No one will use it to sell you anything or find you, and government staff that directly serve the public cannot see it.

The law protects you, too. All our systems, staff and suppliers, and the way we do things must protect your confidentiality by law. It's a crime to share personal census information unless required or permitted by law. Laws in place that cover protection of your data include the:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Census Act 1920
- Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007

We follow these to the letter.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

The census asks questions about you, your home and the people who live in it. The census has a proud 200-year history of keeping this personal information safe.

We have a strict security regime that follows government standards. This includes physical and IT security measures to protect your data, covering people, processes and technology.

What's more, no one can tell who you are in the statistics we publish. We make sure that they include none of your personal information.

All our systems, staff and suppliers, and the way we do things must protect your confidentiality by law.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

We keep any personal information you give to us safe.

We have a strict security regime in place that follows government standards. Before we publish our statistics, we make sure that they include no personal information. All our systems, staff and suppliers, and the way we do things must protect your confidentiality by law.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

Rest assured, we keep the personal information you give us in the census safe and confidential by law. We follow strict government security standards. What's more, when we publish our statistics, we make sure that they include no personal information.



What is the Census Coverage Survey?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

We try our hardest to make sure we count everyone in a census. However, no census is perfect, and it can miss a number of people or count some more than once. To make sure this number is as small as possible, we carry out a second, separate survey called the Census Coverage Survey (CCS).

The CCS is a short survey we hold six weeks after the census in a selection of different postcode areas. Together, the postcodes we choose make up a picture of different types of areas across England and Wales.

If we choose your postcode, one of our interviewers will come to your door and ask you some questions. They'll be similar questions to those on the census questionnaire, just fewer of them. Our interviewers will be wearing an Office for National Statistics (ONS) identity card when they call.

We then compare the information from the CCS with the information from the census. The combined results give the most accurate estimates possible of people and households in England and Wales.

And the most accurate estimates mean better planning and funding of vital services such as transport, education and healthcare for you and your community.

By taking part, you play an important role in helping to bring these important services to your area.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

The Census Coverage Survey (CCS) is a short survey we hold six weeks after the census. We run it to make sure the number of people we miss or count more than once in the census is as small as possible.

The CCS asks a few of the questions from the census in a sample of postcodes across England and Wales.

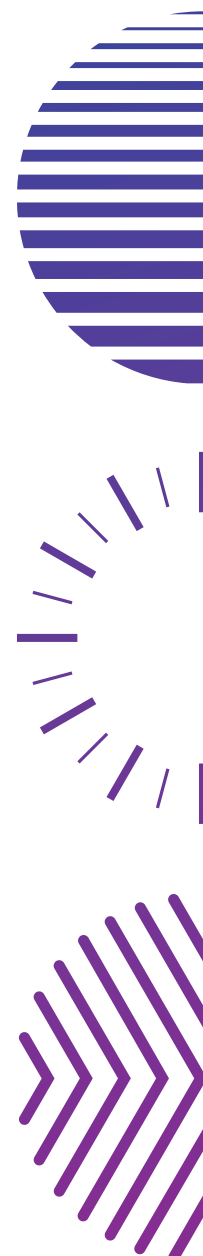
The compared results from the CCS and the census give the most accurate estimates of people and households in England and Wales. This means better planning and funding of vital services such as transport, education and healthcare for you and your community.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

The Census Coverage Survey (CCS) is a short survey to make sure the number of people missed or counted more than once in the census is as small as possible. The compared results from the CCS and the census give the most accurate population estimates for planning and funding services.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

Ever gone over something to make sure you've not missed or repeated anything? Well, the Census Coverage Survey is a bit like that. This short, post-census survey is part of the ONS's work to give the most accurate population estimates possible for planning and funding services.



Will I be able to get help with filling in my census questionnaire?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

Census 2021 will be the first digital-first census. Ahead of Census Day – Sunday 21 March 2021 – we'll send you a letter with a household access code or an individual access code. Simply go online and enter the code into our secure website to start.

You'll be able to complete the online census questionnaire on smartphones and tablets, as well as laptops and desktop computers.

We aim to make things as easy as possible for everyone, but if you need help taking part in the census, we've got it covered.

For starters, we'll have a census help area on our website. It'll cover everything from who to include on the questionnaire, to how to answer each question.

If you cannot find what you're looking for, there'll be a dedicated contact centre where we'll be on hand to help. You'll be able to get in touch with us by phone, webchat, email, social media or text message.

We'll also be setting up local Census Support Centres across England and Wales. These are local venues where you can go to get help in person to fill in the online questionnaire. And do not worry if you do not have a smartphone or tablet, they'll have devices you can use.

Our census field staff will also be out visiting households that have not yet returned their questionnaires to offer help and encouragement, if needed.

While we'd like as many people as possible to take part online, you can ask for a paper questionnaire if you need one. We'll also be offering support and guidance in a range of different languages and accessible formats.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

We're aiming to make it easy for everyone to take part in Census 2021. But if you need help, we've got it covered.

For starters, we'll have an online help area on our website. There'll also be a dedicated contact centre offering help via phone, webchat, email, social media or text message.

If you can't get online or need help completing the census online, you'll be able to visit one of our local Census Support Centres. They'll offer help in person to fill in the online questionnaire. And do not worry if you do not have a smartphone or tablet, they'll have devices you can use.

We'll also be offering guidance in a range of languages and accessible formats.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

There'll be plenty of help available to you for Census 2021. We'll be providing online help on our website, a dedicated contact centre and help in person to take part online at our Census Support Centres. We'll also be offering support and guidance in a range of different languages and accessible formats.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

If you need help with taking part in Census 2021, we've got it covered. We'll be providing online help, a dedicated contact centre and help in person to take part online. There'll also be support and guidance in a range of languages and accessible formats.



How can I get help taking part in the census online?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

Census 2021 will be the first digital-first census, and we'd like as many people as possible to take part online.

If you're not confident online or do not have a computer, smartphone or tablet, get help in person to fill in the online questionnaire at our local Census Support Centres.

Our support centres are located across England and Wales, so there'll be one near you. They'll be open throughout the time the census is happening.

When you go to the centre, there are a few things you'll need to bring or know. You'll need to:

- **bring** the letter we'll send you, which will have a code you can use to access the online questionnaire
- **know** dates of birth and qualifications for all those living in your household
- **know** the month and year you arrived to live in the UK (if you were not born here)
- **know** the types of passports those living in your household have
- **know** your previous address if you've moved in the last 12 months

You can bring your own smartphone, tablet or laptop if you want to use it. There'll also be devices at the centre you can use if you want to.

You will not need to bring proof of the information you give.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

Census 2021 will be the first digital-first census, and we'd like to help you take part online.

If you're not confident online, or do not have a computer, smartphone or tablet, you'll be able to go to a local Census Support Centre.

There you can get help in person to fill in the online questionnaire. You can bring your own smartphone, tablet or laptop or use one of the devices at the centre.

We'll be setting up the centres across England and Wales, so there'll be one near you. They'll be open throughout the time that the census is happening.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

We'd like to make it as easy as possible for you to take part in Census 2021 online.

That's why we'll be opening local Census Support Centres across England and Wales. These will be places where you can go to get help in person to fill in the online questionnaire. You can bring your own smartphone, tablet or laptop or use one of the devices at the centre.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

We'd like to make it easy for you to take part in Census 2021 online. Visit one of our Census Support Centres for help in person and use one of our devices to fill in the online questionnaire. You'll find the centres across England and Wales.



Field staff jobs

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

The census only happens every 10 years and counts every person and household in England and Wales. To help us do this, we at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) need a big team of field officers to make it run smoothly. For Census 2021, this includes a team of around 30,000 people.

Our field team is vital to our success.

In a census officer role, you'll be the friendly face of the census on the ground. You'll visit people who've not yet filled in their form, offering help and encouragement to take part.

In a census supervisor role, you'll manage the field operation in your area – supporting and motivating a team of officers.

In a census manager role, you'll lead a team of supervisors. You'll also plan and put in place everything that's needed to get the best results.

Working on the census, you'll have the chance to meet people from all walks of life. You'll learn new skills and add valuable experience to your CV.

What's more, you'll be part of something that's vital to us all. The information you'll collect will help with decisions on planning and funding future services in your community.

So, join the team and make a lasting impact.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

For a census to succeed, we need a big field team – those out in communities helping people to take part. In fact, for Census 2021, there'll be around 30,000 people in this team.

This will include:

- census officers who visit homes and are the face of the census
- supervisors who manage the area field operation
- managers who plan and act to get the best results

In every role, you'll meet people from all walks of life and gain valuable experience.

What's more, the information you'll collect will help with decisions on planning and funding services in your community.

So, join the team and make a lasting impact.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

Our census field team is a vital part of Census 2021. You'll gain valuable experience by helping people from all walks of life take part. And, since the information you'll collect will help with decisions on planning and funding services in your community, you'll also make a lasting impact.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

Want to make a lasting impact on your community while adding to your CV? Then join our team of field staff to help people take part in #Census2021. Information from the census will help with planning and funding services in your area. Find out more at www.censusjobs.co.uk



Field staff visits

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

Shortly after Census Day during Census 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS) field officers will start visiting some households. Because the census counts every person in England and Wales, we'll need at least 30,000 field staff.

They'll visit homes to give help and encouragement to those who've not yet filled in their census form. They can answer any questions and offer advice.

Census field staff will be visiting homes from 9am to 8pm on Mondays to Saturdays and from 10am to 4pm on Sundays and bank holidays. We'd prefer not to disturb your evenings or weekends, but this is when most people are home.

Your safety and security are very important to us. Our field staff will:

- follow a strict code of practice
- wear and show you an ONS identity card
- give you a number to call and check they're genuine, if you have any concerns

If you'd prefer us not to visit you, the best thing to do is to complete your census form and send it back as soon as possible.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

During Census 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS) field officers will visit some households. These field staff will give you help and encouragement if you've not yet filled in your census form.

Your safety is very important to us. For peace of mind our field staff will show you an ONS identity card.

And, if you'd prefer us not to visit you, simply submit your completed census form as soon as possible.

The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

During Census 2021, field staff will visit households to help you if you've not yet filled in your census form. For peace of mind they'll show you an Office for National Statistics (ONS) identity card. If you'd prefer us not to visit, simply submit your completed form.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

Not filled in your census form yet? One of our field officers might visit to help and encourage you to do so. They'll show an @ONS identity card. If you'd prefer us not to visit, simply submit your completed form as soon as possible.

What is the Office for National Statistics?

The comprehensive description – when you need to go into detail

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics. We report directly to the UK Parliament but we do not work for any political parties. We're not a money-making organisation.

We're part of the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) that works to promote and safeguard the production and publication of statistics that serve the public good.

Put simply, that means we:

- tell people, through our publications, about social and economic matters
- help develop and assess the public policy on which laws are based
- regulate the quality of our statistics

We're responsible for planning and running the census in England and Wales. We work alongside the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). These agencies run the censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland. We work together to make sure the three censuses create a clear picture of the UK.

As well as running the census, the ONS holds many business and social surveys all over the UK. Our statistics cover everything from inflation through to education and everything in between.

Official statistics benefit society and the economy in general. Statistics can help hold the organisations that spend public money to account, protecting our democracy.

The concise description – when you need to get the message across, but space is tight

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics. We report directly to the UK Parliament but we do not work for any political parties. We're not a money-making organisation.

We plan and run the census in England and Wales. We work with the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). These agencies run the censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Together we make sure the three censuses create a clear picture of the UK.

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The short description – when you don't have much space, and you only need the basics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics. We report directly to the UK Parliament but we do not work for any political parties.

We plan and run the census in England and Wales, working with other statistical agencies to create a clear picture of the UK.

The short and tweet description – when you need to fill a social media post

Who runs Census 2021 in England and Wales? We do. We're the Office for National Statistics (@ONS) – the UK's largest independent producer of national statistics. We report directly to the UK Parliament but we do not work for any political parties.

