Census 2021
Your questions answered



Office for National Statistics

it's about us
census 2021

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The census is here

It informs decisions about the things that matter to your community.

In this leaflet, you will find the answers to commonly asked questions about **Census 2021**.

It's important to fill in your census questionnaire because it gives us the most detailed information we have about our society. You must complete the census by law.

Census data helps inform funding decisions on public services in your area. Whether it's planning new schools, doctors' surgeries or bike lanes, the information you share has an impact on the lives of everyone living in England and Wales.

When should I fill in my census questionnaire?

Census Day is Sunday 21 March – but you can fill yours in as soon as you get your access code in the post.

Your answers should be about the people who usually live in your household on this date – even if you're filling it in before then.

If your household circumstances change on Census Day, you can let us know.

If you need help, visit
www.census.gov.uk

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What is the census?

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. 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.

Do I have to take part?

If you live in England and Wales, you must take part in the census. Census information helps inform how billions of pounds of public funding is spent. By taking around 10 minutes per person to fill in the census questionnaire, you will help make sure your community gets the services needed now and in the future.





Will the government use the information I share to identify me?

No. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out the census in England and Wales. We only ever publish anonymous information from the census. In fact, it's a crime to share personal census information and anything you tell us is protected.

How will the census make a difference to me?

The census makes a difference to everyone. It's a once-in-a-decade chance to have your voice heard and help inform the future of your local area.





What if I do not identify with the census options?

The census asks you about your ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, religion and national identity. It's up to you to decide how you would like to answer each question. Do it in the way that you feel best represents you.



Could information I share affect my benefits or immigration status?

No. The information you share in the census cannot be used to influence benefit claims, a residency application, immigration status or your taxes.

The ONS is independent from government. This means officials dealing with payments or services you receive cannot see your census information.

What if I cannot fill in my census questionnaire online?

We know there are some people who will find this challenging. That's why we're here to help with a wide range of support services. We will make it easy for you, whatever your needs.

Services include:

- guidance and support in many languages and formats
- help over the phone, in a web chat or on social media
- a paper version of the questionnaire, if you prefer
- accessible census guidance, for example, in braille

If you need help, visit
www.census.gov.uk

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Why is the census asking me about my gender and sexual orientation?

This census asks voluntary questions about sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time. This is to give us more accurate information on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations.



This will help organisations combat any inequalities these groups face and show where services are needed. We will only ask people aged 16 years and over these questions.

If you do not feel comfortable identifying on the same form as the rest of your household, you can request an individual census questionnaire and answer separately.

Can I help friends and family fill in the census?

We've made the questionnaire as simple as possible.

If a friend or family member needs support, help them if you can. Always fill in your own census first.

You can also ask for help for yourself, or for someone else.

Census Day is Sunday **21 March**

It's easy to take part. If you need help to fill in your form, we've got it covered.



We will send you a letter with an access code.



Visit our secure website and enter your access code to get started.

If you, or anyone you know, needs help, a wide range of support services are available.

If you need help, visit **www.census.gov.uk**

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