

Response from ONS to 'A User's View of the 2001 Census'

ONS has responded very positively to this paper and has accepted it in the constructive spirit in which the document was intended.

This was the overall theme of the response letter received from Len Cook, National Statistician and Registrar General for England & Wales. Rather than respond individually to each point made in the paper, Mr Cook stated that he had asked that relevant aspects are followed up in the regular meetings held with the Association of Census Distributors and the MRS Census & Geodemographics Group. However, his letter did make a number of points, including the following:

- a) The document is seen as a contribution that ONS needs to keep alongside it, right up to 2011, and will be discussed at the UK Census co-ordination group.
- b) The importance of continuity from one Census to another was noted, and ONS are determined not to lose the benefit of the experience of 2001 in planning 2011.
- c) In response to the comment in the document concerning consistency between countries, a key aim for the 2011 Census is to promote UK harmonisation and to produce consistent, coherent and accessible statistics for the UK and for each component country. The Statement of Agreement, on the conduct of 2011 Censuses in the UK, may be found on the National Statistics web site at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/census/census2011/2011census_prog.asp
- d) Mr Cook took personal responsibility for the late changes in the approach to disclosure protection for England & Wales, and welcomed the document's thoughtful criticism of the decision.

- e) Mr Cook had not previously appreciated the MRS concern with Census outputs on approximate Social Grade, and is still particularly concerned about ONS difficulty with commissioned output.