



Northern Ireland  
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann  
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

# Northern Ireland Census 2011 Benefits Realisation Report

January 2018



Department of

**Finance**

An Roinn

**Airgeadais**

[www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk)

# The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and has been in existence since April 1996. The Agency also incorporates the General Register Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland. NISRA's core purpose is to provide a high quality, cost effective, statistics, research and registration service that informs policy making and the democratic process and the wider public.

## **The overall corporate aims of NISRA are to:**

- provide a statistical and research service to support decision making by Northern Ireland Ministers and Departments and to inform elected representatives and the wider community through the dissemination of reliable official statistics; and
- administer the marriage laws and to provide a system for the civil registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland.

NISRA can be found on the internet at [www.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.nisra.gov.uk)

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## Executive Summary

### *Introduction*

The primary aim of the Northern Ireland Census is to estimate the size and nature of the whole population across the main administrative and statistical geographies. Information from the Census is used across a wide range of sectors and underpins national and local decision-making.

The investment of time and resources in a national census can only be justified if the results are accessible to users and meet their needs. This report summarises the results of the 2011 Census benefits realisation exercise, the objectives of which have been to:

- demonstrate compliance with user engagement aspects of the UK Statistics Code of Practice
- raise awareness of the 2011 Census outputs
- provide further insight into the diverse nature of key Census users
- document the benefits of 2011 Census outputs to key users
- better understand the impact of Census outputs in informing the decisions of key users
- enhance the user experience in the next Northern Ireland Census in 2021

### *Methodology*

In addition to a Census User Satisfaction Survey, the benefits realisation exercise encompassed:

- face-to-face interviews and follow-up discussions with senior NISRA statisticians
- a self completion survey issued to key users
- a focus group discussion with Demographic Statistics Advisory Group members

### *Benefits realised*

This report documents benefits realised by key users of the 2011 Census across a wide range of themes, namely: resource allocation; targeting investment; funding bids; service planning; regional and local comparisons; policy making and monitoring; equality and diversity assessments; social and academic research; and benchmark for other data sources. Although it does not represent a complete stock take of benefits realised, and does not estimate their monetary value, the Office for National Statistics has estimated the annual benefits realised from the Census for England and Wales at almost £500 million. On a population percentage share basis, the £25 million cost of conducting the 2011 Northern Ireland Census would be offset by equivalent benefits to users within two years.

### **Successes**

In reporting the successes of the 2011 Census, key users highlighted attributes that make the Census an essential evidence source for decision makers across a wide range of sectors, namely:

- their unique robustness when disaggregated at Small Area level or for small population groups
- they are available free of charge to users at the point of delivery
- their ready accessibility through NINIS (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System)
- their comparability over time and across countries of the UK
- the geographical continuity in output geographies between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses
- the additive nature of the tabular outputs

Many key users also complimented the high level of customer service provided by Census Office staff and the extent of consultation / engagement with users. In addition, several users praised the utility of the Output Prospectus, the transparent prioritisation of outputs and the fact that the main output releases have been published on schedule and in formats facilitating further analysis.

### **Suggested areas for improvement or innovation**

Although key users generally welcomed the re-launch of NINIS as the primary means of disseminating 2011 Census outputs, several indicated they would like greater autonomy or flexibility in analysing Census data and / or generating outputs. While some users would prefer direct access to the data, the consensus is for a move away from numerous 'pre-canned' outputs towards a flexible, online table-building facility, enabling users to determine their own categories.

Some users highlighted the potential to match and link Census data to administrative or social survey data. For instance, they advocated linking Census data to income or benefits data to bring additional granularity to a wide range of functions, including: resource allocation; targeting investment; funding bids; equality and diversity assessments; and social or academic research. Linkage to social survey data could also provide important socio-demographic background on non-responding households to enable NISRA to apply weight adjustments, develop strategies to improve response rates, and potentially reduce the amount of sensitive information collected through such surveys, thus facilitating a 'collect once, use many times' approach.

### *2011 Census User Satisfaction Survey*

Consistent with the views of key users, the vast majority of Survey respondents were satisfied with the communication, range, timeliness, accessibility and dissemination of the 2011 Census outputs and supporting information, although some suggested improvements to the NINIS search facility, download speeds and table-building flexibility.

Most Survey respondents expressed satisfaction with: the 2011 Census outputs and / or supporting information; the statistical commentary; the outputs prospectus; the quality assurance and methodology reports; the definitions and output classifications; and the data visualisation / interactive content on NINIS. Many respondents also praised NISRA performance in relation to: consulting with users about the 2011 Census; keeping users informed about Census plans; producing outputs in a timely way; and producing sufficient outputs and supporting information.

## 1. Introduction

The Census of Housing and Population is the largest statistical investigation carried out in Northern Ireland. A census has been run periodically in Northern Ireland (or Ireland) for two hundred years; with the first Census of Ireland held in 1813 and the most recent Northern Ireland Census held on 27 March 2011.

The primary aim of the Northern Ireland Census is to estimate the size and nature of the whole population across the main administrative and statistical geographies. Information from the Census is used across a wide range of sectors and underpins national and local decision-making.

Central and local government, the health and education services, the academic community, commercial businesses, professional organisations, the voluntary and community sector and the public at large all need reliable and comprehensive information on the number and characteristics of people and households if they are to plan, resource and conduct their activities effectively. Their information needs are currently best met through the conduct of a census every ten years, and by updating the population estimates each year benchmarked on the preceding Census.

The investment of time and resources in a national census can only be justified if the results are accessible to users and meet their needs. As a National Statistics product, the Northern Ireland Census is assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (the Code)<sup>1</sup>. Developed by the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority), the Code comprises eight high level Principles and three Protocols, supplemented by 74 specific practices. Principle 1, 'Meeting user needs', is supported by five practice principles, and the design and aims of user engagement are illustrated in Protocol 1, 'User engagement'.

During its three-stage Special Assessment of the 2011 Censuses in the UK<sup>2</sup>, the Authority recommended that NISRA should undertake a benefits realisation exercise. This report represents NISRA's response to this recommendation.

In addition to demonstrating the extent of compliance with the Code, the additional objectives of this benefits realisation exercise have been to:

- raise awareness of the 2011 Census outputs
- provide further insight into the diverse range of Census users
- document the benefits of 2011 Census outputs to users

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice for Official Statistics is available from: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/>

<sup>2</sup> Special Assessment of the 2011 Censuses in the UK is available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/how-our-census-works/how-we-planned-the-2011-census/independent-assessments/special-assessment-of-the-2011-censuses-in-the-uk/index.html>

- better understand the impact of Census outputs in informing decisions in the public, private, academic, voluntary and community sectors
- enhance the user experience in the next Northern Ireland Census in 2021

This report begins by giving background in relation to:

- Northern Ireland Census users
- user engagement
- community liaison
- dissemination of outputs<sup>3</sup>

The main body of the report uses a case study approach to describe some of the benefits users have realised from the 2011 Census. Subsequently, the report documents the views of users on those aspects of the 2011 Census they feel have been successful and those they feel could benefit from improvement or innovation ahead of the 2021 Census.

While the focus of this report is on the known benefits realised from the 2011 Northern Ireland Census, the reader may gain further knowledge of the benefits of a census by referring to similar work by the National Records of Scotland (NRS)<sup>4</sup> and the Office for National Statistics (ONS)<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. The Diverse Nature of Key Census Users

Figure 1 below illustrates the diverse nature of key census users, including those from the public, political, commercial, academic, and voluntary and community sectors. These users include three bodies that provide guidance to NISRA:

- the Demographic Statistics Advisory Group (DSAG), which includes expertise from a range of backgrounds, including academia, the business and voluntary sectors, the Equality Commission and local government
- the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC), a statutory body<sup>6</sup>, which advises NISRA
- the Statistics Co-ordinating Group (SCG), an inter-departmental group with senior management representation from all Northern Ireland Executive departments

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<sup>3</sup> Further detail regarding these areas is contained in the Northern Ireland Census 2011 General Report is available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2011-census-general-report>

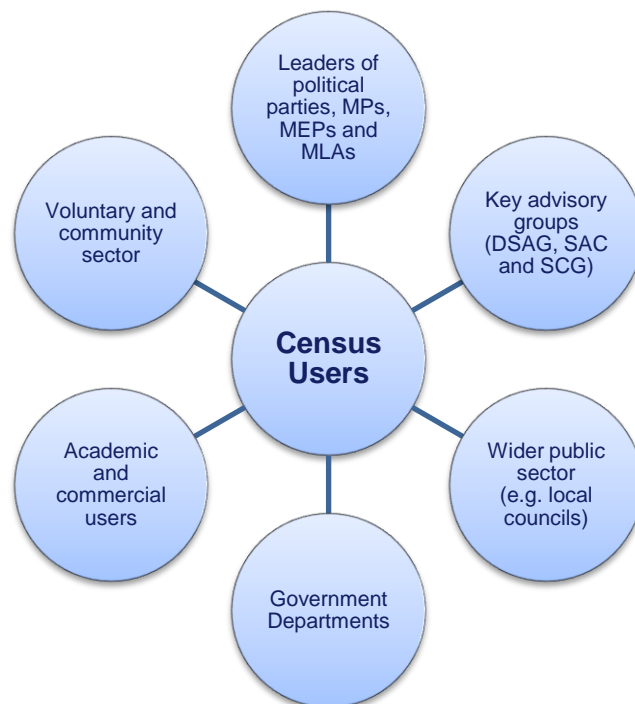
<sup>4</sup> Scotland's Census 2011 General Report is available from: <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/scotland%E2%80%99s-census-2011-general-report>

<sup>5</sup> ONS Census 2011 Benefits Evaluation report is available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/2011-census-benefits/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> The SAC was established under the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 is available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1988/595/contents>



**Figure 1: Key Census Users**



*Key to Figure 1:*

- MP Member of Parliament
- MEP Member of the European Parliament
- MLA Member of the Legislative Assembly
- DSAG Demographic Statistics Advisory Group
- SAC Statistics Advisory Committee
- SCG Statistics Co-ordinating Group

### 3. 2011 Census User Engagement

The delivery of the Census has, historically, been characterised by engagement with key users and the wider population in Northern Ireland. User engagement is undertaken to involve users in the development and delivery of the Census and to ensure that Census outputs meet the needs of users. The engagement process for 2011 was continuous throughout the design, implementation and output dissemination and helped build productive user-producer relationships. As well as undertaking more general user engagement, NISRA actively sought the views of DSAG, SAC and SCG members on an ongoing basis.

In light of the diverse range of census users, engagement activities for the 2011 Census were wide ranging. For instance, activities such as publicity campaigns, through both traditional and social media (such as NISRA's Facebook page<sup>7</sup>), were used to raise general awareness that a census was to take place and the benefits it would bring, and were aimed at a population-wide audience. In addition, engagement with DSAG, SAC and SCG

<sup>7</sup> NISRA's Facebook page is available from: <https://www.facebook.com/nisra.gov.uk>

members reflected the potential usage of the Census by (and associated benefits to) the Northern Ireland Executive and a wide range of key sectors across Northern Ireland.

### *Topic consultation*

User engagement began well ahead of Census Day 2011, with an initial topic consultation, 'The Future Provision of Demographic Statistics in Northern Ireland (Towards the 2011 Census)<sup>8</sup>, running from December 2004 until March 2005. Details of the topic consultation were sent to 1,100 key users, and 50 responses were returned.

The topic consultation sought the views of users on several issues that were fundamental to the development of the 2011 Census, namely:

- the general provision of population statistics, including where improvements should be pursued and how these might be achieved
- the high level operational implications associated with enhancing the population base for the 2011 Census
- the 2011 Census question content

Where possible, NISRA aimed to respond positively to user requirements highlighted through the topic consultation process. For example, in response to lobbying by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) for more detailed information on health, a new question on long-term conditions was included in the 2011 Census. The response categories to this new question were aligned as far as possible with the activity limitations and disabilities used in the Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitations and Disabilities (NISALD), conducted in 2006/07. The outputs from this question would better inform the allocation of health expenditure and enable comparisons to be made between the Census and NISALD results.

In other instances, however, it did not prove possible to meet user needs. For example, despite its potential importance to a range of users, in particular equality monitoring, a question on sexual orientation was not included in the 2011 Census. After considering the evidence, both positive and negative, it was concluded that the sensitive nature of such a question, as well as the practical and privacy difficulties associated with collecting valid responses on this topic on a household form, may have an adverse impact on response levels to both the question and the Census itself.

### *Questionnaire development and consultation*

Further engagement with users took place in relation to the content of the 2011 Census questionnaire. The development of the questionnaire also illustrates the close working arrangements between NISRA, ONS and NRS. For example, following the topic

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<sup>8</sup> 'The Future Provision of Demographic Statistics in Northern Ireland (Towards the 2011 Census)' is available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/2011-census-information-paper.pdf>

consultation, ONS led eight UK-wide 2011 Census topic groups, which took forward the development and testing of questions.

### ***Census outputs roadshows and information events***

In keeping with the user engagement principle of maximising accessibility, NISRA organised a series of public facing Census outputs roadshows and information events at venues across Northern Ireland, including Belfast, Cookstown, Derry / Londonderry, Enniskillen, Lisburn and Omagh. User feedback was generally positive to these activities as well as to the frequent Census newsletters and a publicity campaign fronted by local personalities.

### ***Community liaison strategy***

The 2011 Census community liaison strategy built on the success of the innovative community liaison activities carried out for the 2001 Census. A key concern addressed by the community liaison programme was publicising the Census 'hard to count' groups that can be difficult to engage with and encourage to participate, for example, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities and low income families. Through meetings and seminars, much emphasis was placed on collaboration with the many organisations in Northern Ireland representing specific groups of the population, such as the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Age Concern (now Age UK), Royal National Institute for the Blind, Royal National Institute for the Deaf (now Action Hearing Loss) and the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA).

The benefits of community liaison were visible through articles on the 2011 Census in general and specialist media and interviews on local radio and TV. While it is impossible to attribute increases in response rates to community liaison initiatives, it is believed the process encouraged hard to count groups to participate in the 2011 Census.

## **4. Dissemination of 2011 Census Outputs**

The high level output needs of Census users were consulted on jointly by NISRA, ONS and NRS. Through the consultation process, NISRA aimed to gain an understanding of user requirements to ensure these were met as far as possible.

The consultation process provided the information necessary to produce and publish the 2011 Census Output Prospectus<sup>9</sup>. This document contains the release plans for the Northern Ireland 2011 Census outputs, including an outline of the statistics to be produced and their expected publication timescale, thus enabling users to forward plan their use(s) of Census outputs. The Prospectus is a dynamic document, subject to ongoing amendment to reflect changes to the content, design or timing of Census outputs, for example, to better fulfil user requirements, for data quality issues or as a result of issues relating to statistical disclosure control (a method of protecting the attributes of respondents through record

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<sup>9</sup> 'Northern Ireland Census 2011 Output Prospectus' is available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2011-census-output-prospectus>

swapping). Such changes were consulted on with key users and announced to a wider audience through Census newsletters and the Census area on the NISRA website<sup>10</sup>.

In disseminating the results of the 2011 Census, NISRA placed emphasis on responsiveness to user requirements on content, format and means of access and on high standards in the production of statistics. The Census product base was widened for 2011, providing better access to Census outputs, following open data principles and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (the Code).

The aims for dissemination of the 2011 Census results included:

- the publication of all Census outputs in open, explorable formats available from a single web platform, the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System<sup>11</sup> (NINIS), so that users can easily find the outputs they need
- integration of supporting information (for example, metadata) enabling users to understand and interpret the outputs
- the simultaneous publication of outputs and supporting metadata, so that users have the information they need to understand the outputs and how they relate to or differ from previous Census outputs or other current outputs.

Realising the benefits of a census entails having the outputs used as widely as possible. In attempting to achieve this, NISRA developed new products for 2011, for example, the introduction of Census 'short stories' and infographics. These new products presented Census outputs on topics such as National Identity, Older People and Religion<sup>12</sup> in a more accessible, effective and visually appealing format.

The 2011 Census also saw innovation in the main means of dissemination of Census outputs by making use of ongoing advances in technology. Whereas the 2001 Census had seen the introduction of electronic dissemination of outputs (through Microsoft Excel spreadsheets on CD, the NISRA website and on request through Census Customer Services), with every main output replicated in printed reports, the primary focus of the 2011 Census has been on online availability of tables (in Open Source format where feasible) through the re-launched NINIS website supported by online statistical bulletins, data visualisations such as interactive maps and population pyramids and relevant technical information. Printed publication of 2011 Census outputs has been restricted to laid reports for the Northern Ireland Assembly, a Key Statistics Summary Report and the 'Census 2011: Ireland and Northern Ireland' comparison report (produced jointly with the Republic of Ireland's Central Statistics Office).

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<sup>10</sup> NISRA's Census web pages are available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2011-census>

<sup>11</sup> Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) is available from: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis>

<sup>12</sup> Census Short Stories are available from: <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/census2011analysis/index.aspx>

Due to the breadth and depth of census results, the 2011 Census statistics have been published in several releases. The four main releases are:

1. Population and Household estimates
2. Key Statistics and Quick Statistics
3. Detailed Characteristics
4. Local Characteristics

These main releases have been supplemented by further, smaller scale releases, covering, for example:

- Headcount and Household Estimates for Postcodes in Northern Ireland
- Headcount and Household Estimates for Settlements
- Alternative Populations (Daytime Population, Workplace Population and Short-term Residents)
- Combined Grid Square Product for Northern Ireland
- Key Statistics for the New 11 Districts in Northern Ireland
- Key Statistics for District Electoral Areas (2014) in Northern Ireland
- Key Statistics for Settlements in Northern Ireland

NISRA Census Customer Services also provides a bespoke commissioned outputs service to Census users. At the time of writing, 353 commissioned tables have been published on NINIS. Examples of topics covered by commissioned tables include: Marital and Civil Partnership Status by Age by Sex; Knowledge of Irish by Long-Term Health Problem or Disability; and Type of Long-Term Health Condition by Ethnic Group<sup>13</sup>.

Where the impact of statistical disclosure control on the usefulness of the outputs would be too great, special access arrangements have been put in place for Approved Researchers to analyse 2011 Census microdata. These microdata are samples of individual and household records which have been anonymised to protect the confidentiality of respondents. The microdata samples have been used by academics and researchers to develop more sophisticated analyses of population data than are available from the standard published Census tables, for example, in studies of the health and labour market status of specific groups within the population such as carers, people with disabilities and ethnic and religious minorities. Figure 2 shows the range of secure and safeguarded microdata products available from the 2011 Census.

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<sup>13</sup> 2011 Census commissioned outputs are available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/2011-census/results/commissioned-output>

**Figure 2: Secure and Safeguarded 2011 Census Microdata Products**

<p><b>Secure: Individual Controlled Access Microdata Sample (iCAM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licence: Approved Researcher</li> <li>• Sample Size: 10 per cent</li> <li>• Availability: NISRA Secure Environment</li> <li>• Geography: LGD</li> </ul>	<p><b>Secure: Household Controlled Access Microdata Sample (hCAM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licence: Approved Researcher</li> <li>• Sample Size: 10 per cent</li> <li>• Availability: NISRA Secure Environment</li> <li>• Geography: LGD</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safeguarded: Individual Regional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licence: End user</li> <li>• Sample size: 5 per cent</li> <li>• Special user agreement</li> <li>• Geography: Northern Ireland</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safeguarded: Individual LGD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licence: End user</li> <li>• Sample size: 5 per cent</li> <li>• Special user agreement</li> <li>• Geography: LGD (less variable detail)</li> </ul>
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A microdata teaching file is also freely available for anyone to download under the terms of the Open Government Licence<sup>14</sup>. This 'taster' file, of particular use in teaching, contains anonymised records on a limited set of variables for a random sample of 1 per cent of people in the 2011 Census output database for Northern Ireland.

In addition to outputs available direct from NISRA, some 2011 Northern Ireland Census outputs are also made available from ONS, which has responsibility for disseminating 2011 Census statistics for the UK as a whole (such as those required to fulfil international obligations as well as those meeting the requirements of domestic users including Key Statistics, Quick Statistics, Origin-Destination and Migration). These statistics, together with interactive maps and tools, are available on the 2011 UK Census web pages<sup>15</sup>.

A new European Union (EU) regulation<sup>16</sup> requiring Member States to make available to Eurostat a set of harmonised 2011-based census-type statistics came into force on 9 July 2008. Census outputs from all EU Member States can be accessed from the dedicated EU Census Hub<sup>17</sup> platform, which went live on 31 March 2014. In this respect, ONS has provided Census data cubes to Eurostat on behalf of NISRA and NRS. Following a similar

<sup>14</sup> More information on the Open Government Licence is available from: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/>

<sup>15</sup> ONS Census 2011 website is available from: [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)

<sup>16</sup> 'European Union (2010) Commission Regulation (EU) 1151/2010 of 9 December 2010 Eurostat/ Methodologies and Working Papers EU legislation on the 2011 Population and Housing Censuses' is available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=OJ:L:2010:324:TOC>

<sup>17</sup> EU Census Hub is available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/CensusHub2/query.do?step=selectHyperCube&qhc=false>

process, ONS has also provided UK Census outputs to the United Nations Statistical Division as part of the UK commitment under the 2005-2014 World Census Programme.

## 5. 2011 Census Benefits Realised by Key Users

This section of the report outlines the benefits reported to NISRA Census Office by key users of the 2011 Census outputs, while Section 8 additionally covers the results of the 2011 Census User Satisfaction Survey. Although the analysis below is not a complete stock take of benefits realised by all users of the Northern Ireland Census, and does not estimate a monetary value of such benefits, ONS has estimated the annual benefits realised from the 2011 Census for England and Wales at £500 million. As Census outputs are, where possible, harmonised across the UK, it is likely that the extent of benefits accrued will have been comparable across users of outputs produced by the three Census Offices. On a population percentage share basis, therefore, this would equate to annual benefits from the 2011 Northern Ireland Census of around £15 million. In essence, therefore, the ten-year cost to the Northern Ireland Executive of conducting the 2011 Northern Ireland Census (£25 million) would be offset by equivalent benefits to users within 2 years.

### *Methodology*

The benefits realisation exercise in relation to key users was predominantly qualitative in design and delivered in two main stages (in 2012 and 2015). The approach encompassed:

- face-to-face interviews and follow-up discussions with senior NISRA statisticians in all government departments and other public sector organisations with a NISRA presence (in October and November 2012)
- a self completion survey issued to key Census users, including senior NISRA statisticians and DSAG members (in February 2015)
- a focus group discussion with DSAG members on 25 February 2015

A list of organisations that provided information is included at Annex A; this list reflects the names of the Northern Ireland Executive Departments prior to their restructure in 2016.

The timing of the initial information collection allowed users to provide examples of anticipated usage of the outputs, much of which may have been planned ahead of the 2011 Census, and also provided an opportunity for Census Office to promote details of the then forthcoming outputs and encourage utilisation and ideas for cross-tabular outputs, with particular reference to questions introduced in 2011. The second stage took place in 2015, after the majority of planned outputs had been released, and so enabled users to have taken stock of their actual usage of the 2011 Census outputs, to highlight additional potential uses and to consider the delivery of the outputs against what had been set out in the Output Prospectus.

Each information gathering exercise sought the views of key census users in relation to:

- benefits realised from 2011 Census outputs
- aspects that were successfully delivered
- potential areas for improvement or innovation

Using a case study approach, the following themes are used to describe below a range of reported benefits of the 2011 Northern Ireland Census outputs:

- 1) *Resource allocation*
- 2) *Targeting investment*
- 3) *Funding bids*
- 4) *Service planning*
- 5) *Regional and local comparisons*
- 6) *Policy making and monitoring*
- 7) *Equality and diversity assessments*
- 8) *Social and academic research*
- 9) *Benchmark for other data sources*

Given the level of comparability across the three Census Offices, the results of this benefits realisation exercise can be augmented by the results from similar work undertaken by ONS and NRS.

### **1) Resource allocation**

Of particular note is the use of Census outputs in the equitable allocation of substantial resources to Northern Ireland and across lower level geographical areas.

The importance of estimating accurately the population for resource allocation purposes is reflected in the use by the UK Treasury of the Barnett funding formula. Rather than determining the total allocation of resources to Northern Ireland, this formula adjusts public expenditure at the margins and not baseline expenditure. In other words, it estimates the additional funding that would flow to Northern Ireland as a result of an increase in the budget for a service delivered on a comparable basis in England, England and Wales or Great Britain. The formula neither applies to services unique to Northern Ireland nor to demand led expenditure such as welfare benefits. The outcome of the formula is known as the 'consequential', namely the amount of additional spending made available to Northern Ireland.

A recent example of the out-working of the Barnett formula occurred in January 2015. After announcing significant reductions in departmental budgets in the Northern Ireland draft



budget at the end of 2014, the Minister for Finance and Personnel announced an additional £150m had been allocated to Northern Ireland. This additional money was the result of an increase in budget allocated to the National Health Service (NHS) in England and the consequent allocation to Northern Ireland estimated by the Barnett formula.

Spending on health represents a significant proportion of the total spending of the Northern Ireland Executive and, therefore, the equitable distribution of the health budget is a key requirement for DHSSPS. For example, the budget for health in 2011/12 (the year of the 2011 Census) amounted to £4.4bn, of which £3.7bn (84 per cent) was allocated using the weighted capitation methodology, which distributes resources on the basis of the needs of the populations served rather than using a simple allocation based on the previous level of resource allocated.

The weighted capitation formula is used to allocate funding by geography (Local Commissioning Groups) across nine Programmes of Care. This formula uses population outputs from the 2011 Census plus socio-economic variables, including the more detailed health information collected in the 2011 Census, to create 'needs' indicators. All variables have the potential to be 'predictors' of health care need and, by definition, of expenditure.

## **2) Targeting investment**

The benefits of Census outputs to the private sector fall broadly into two categories. Firstly, they provide an intermediate input to the geo-demographic resellers and specialist consultants who, in turn, generate added value. Secondly, they help to inform the business decisions of a large and varied set of commercial sector users including market researchers, retailers and financial service providers. For instance, to inform multi-million pound investment decisions, such as suitable locations for new stores and related decisions on marketing, recruitment, products to stock and service provision, the commercial sector utilises a wide range of data sources. These decisions depend heavily on the availability of relevant, accurate, localised data that can be compared across different regions of the UK.

In this respect, the store location gravity models used by large retailers typically incorporate a wide range of comparable UK-wide Census outputs. Although such decisions may be taken at a headquarters location, their impact (and related benefits) can be felt right across the UK, including Northern Ireland. For instance, in a presentation to the Market Research Society<sup>18</sup>, Sainsbury's reported using Census outputs such as usually resident, workplace and daytime populations, car availability, ethnic profile, single-person households and proportion of pensioners as input variables to its gravity model along with socio-economic profiling tools such as ACORN.

According to Sainsbury's, the benefits of Census outputs in targeting investment for new stores include: their breadth of coverage (across the UK); their depth of coverage (number

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<sup>18</sup> The Value of Census Information in Location Planning at Sainsbury's – Presentation on the Marketing Research Society's website about how census data is used to inform location and resource decisions for new Sainsbury's stores. [https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/Annette\\_Dellevoet\\_presentation.pdf](https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/Annette_Dellevoet_presentation.pdf)

of variables); availability at the Small Area level of geography; the availability of alternative population estimates (such as daytime population); they provide a basis for geo-demographic classifications; they underpin population estimates and projections; and, they are normally free of charge to the user at the point of delivery. However, they also reported some disbenefits of Census outputs, including: the fact that the ten-yearly snapshot they provide gradually becomes outdated; workers and students are difficult to locate and quantify accurately; and, the impact of statistical disclosure control.

### **3) Funding bids**

The fact that they are generally free of charge to the user at the point of delivery and easily accessible primarily through the NINIS website, coupled with their statistical robustness, make Census outputs a key source of supporting information for funding bids by the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. NICVA, in its role as an umbrella organisation for voluntary and community groups in Northern Ireland, provided examples of the uses member organisations have made of 2011 Census outputs in this respect.

For instance, Loughgiel Community Association Ltd<sup>19</sup> used 2011 Census outputs in applying for funding under the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) Supporting People programme<sup>20</sup> with a view to meeting the housing needs of older people in the local area. In this respect, they used Census outputs for Small Areas in the surrounding (Ballymena) area to provide robust supporting evidence in relation to the specific target population group, namely older people.

The HUBB Community Resource Centre in Lower North Belfast used 2011 Census Small Area population estimates to inform a community audit of services and needs of the population in their local area. On foot of the audit, it put forward a funding bid to the Department for Social Development (DSD) to help bridge a perceived gap between the needs of the local population and the level of service provision. This incorporated 2011 Census demographic and socio-economic outputs for electoral wards in Lower North Belfast.

Ilex, the urban regeneration company for Derry City and Strabane District Council area, reported providing 2011 Census outputs to local voluntary and community groups as an evidence base for funding bids. It reported that "The Census is usually the only source to generate data at a sub-Local Government District (LGD) level". For instance, Ilex provided a local social enterprise with 2011 Census outputs on qualifications, age and economic activity within the Council area, which were used in applying for funding under the European Social Fund (ESF).

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<sup>19</sup> The Loughgiel Community Association Ltd website is available from: <http://www.loughgiel.co.uk/index.html>

<sup>20</sup> Supporting People information is available from: [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/supporting\\_people\\_programme.htm](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/supporting_people_programme.htm)

#### **4) Regional and local comparisons**

The Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) reported using 2011 Census outputs to identify Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) areas and Ulster-Scots homelands across Northern Ireland and compare their demographic and socio-economic characteristics with those of the wider population. The 2011 Census was the first to record people's ability in Ulster-Scots, providing an opportunity to analyse the incidence of Irish and Ulster-Scots speakers across Small Areas in Northern Ireland. The DCAL Research and Survey Programme 2012-2016 indicates that, "Using the Northern Ireland Census and data from the Continuous Household Survey, this study will aim to establish the number of Irish and Ulster-Scots users in Northern Ireland. It will also aim to estimate the level of ability users have in each language with the aim of establishing baseline data on the usage of Irish and Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland".

Outputs from the 2011 Census are based primarily on the boundaries of the local government structures in place on Census Day 2011; namely, 26 Local Government Districts (LGD1992), composed of 582 electoral wards and grouped in turn into 101 District Electoral Areas (DEAs). New local government structures took effect from 1 April 2015; these are based on 11 LGDs, composed of 462 electoral wards (grouped into 80 DEAs). In recognition of this change, and to assist the new Councils with additional responsibilities such as community planning, Census Office published 2011 Census Key Statistics for the new LGDs (LGD2014) on 30 January 2014 and Key Statistics for the new DEAs (DEA2014) on 8 March 2016.

In this respect, Belfast City Council reported using 2011 Census outputs to produce demographic and socio-economic profiles of the Small Areas constituting the new Council area and making comparisons between Belfast and other council areas regarding population attributes such as age structure and labour market outcomes.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe) reported that the statistics most often requested by MLAs relate to the population of their Assembly Areas and that the reform of local government has increased the amount of information requested by MLAs. In addition to having produced its own reports based around the 2011 Census Key Statistics and Detailed Characteristics outputs, RaISe indicated that the main Census outputs used include basic demographic variables, health and wider socio-economic variables.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board Statistics and Research Branch reported using 2011 Census demographic outputs to make comparisons across LGD, policing area and Super Output Area (SOA) levels to ascertain whether the memberships of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) reflect those of the policing areas they represent in terms of characteristics such as sex, age and religion. These PCSPs, in turn, utilise LGD and electoral ward level 2011 Census demography outputs within their crime and information audit reports. As well as acting as denominators for the production of crime and anti-social behaviour rates, Census outputs are used to differentiate Small Areas by, for

example, levels of educational attainment, proportions of younger and older people and other variables with a relevant relationship to local policing needs.

### **5) Service planning**

Regardless of whether services are provided by central or local government, other statutory bodies, the private sector, the academic sector or voluntary and community organisations, their efficient and effective delivery to the right people in the right locations is dependent on relevant, comprehensive and up-to-date statistical information on their target populations.

The Department of Education (DE) uses 2011 Census outputs in the planning of the schools estate. Given the structure of education in Northern Ireland, which includes Controlled, Maintained, Voluntary, Integrated and Irish-medium sectors, DE requires statistics on the religion, or religion brought up in, of the child population. While surveys such as the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) collect religion and age, unlike the Census, they cannot provide the robust outputs required by DE at the lower levels of geography.

TransportNI, part of the Department for Regional Development (DRD), reported having used 2011 Census origin–destination outputs, aggregated at Small Area, in developing and applying a new Northern Ireland Strategic Transport Model. This £1.8m three-year project, which ended in early 2016, aims to inform the evidence base for the development of longer-term transport policies / strategies in Northern Ireland. DRD also reported using 2011 Census outputs on people with long-term mobility or dexterity conditions and availability of a car or van to inform planning for Park and Ride services and accessible public transport.

NIHE usually estimates three key government housing indicators at LGD level using the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (NIHCS), namely: the decent homes standard; dwelling unfitness; and, fuel poverty. In 2011, budgetary requirements necessitated a temporary reduction in the achieved NIHCS sample size from 3,000 to 2,000 dwellings, which would have made it impossible to deliver robust figures for these indicators at the required geography. To overcome this important issue, NIHE commissioned Building Research Establishment (BRE) to develop a suitable model using the 2011 NIHCS data in conjunction with 2011 Census data. In partnership with NISRA Census Office statisticians, NIHE researchers developed a linear regression model which was incorporated into the BRE work to enable LGD outputs to be produced. The resulting cost savings for NIHE have been estimated at £250,000.

Ilex reported its intention to use 2011 Census outputs in the production of the community plan for Derry City and Strabane LGD. Council working groups will use these outputs to baseline the socio-economic position of the local population to help identify areas where intervention is required and make recommendations regarding the content, objectives and desired outcomes of the community plan.

## **6) Policy making and monitoring**

Policy-making by public bodies needs to take account of statistical trends and informed predictions of social, political, economic and cultural trends, and of the likely effect and impact of the policy. NISRA produces a range of statistics to inform evidence based policy making, with the 2011 Census being a key primary data source.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) has used 2011 Census-based outputs on population and household projections to support the evidence base for the development of a Financial Capability Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>21</sup>.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has used 2011 Census population estimates to: calculate and monitor recorded crime and anti-social behaviour rates at various geographic levels, including Northern Ireland, policing area and electoral ward; in the allocation of policing resources; and, for general management information purposes.

DSD reported using Census outputs to: baseline evaluation metrics for the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Renewal strategy; monitor change in key metrics such as worklessness; and, contextualise the results of its policy modelling of the impact of Welfare Reform on the people of Northern Ireland.

## **7) Equality and diversity assessments**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998<sup>22</sup> (Section 75) places a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and assess the impact of their functions across key equality population groups. In complying with this Act, public bodies are required to assess the impact of their functions with regard to nine equality groups as follows:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without
- between persons with dependants and persons without

Section 75 requires public bodies to gather all available evidence to assess the equality impact of their policies and programmes. To assist bodies with undertaking equality screening and equality impact assessments (EQIAs), the 2011 Census provides a key data source for seven of the nine equality groups at levels of disaggregation not available from statistical surveys; the two groups not covered are sexual orientation and political opinion.

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<sup>21</sup> Details on development of the strategy is available from: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/financial-capability-northern-ireland-2014>

<sup>22</sup> Northern Ireland Act 1998 is available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75>

Although more contemporaneous data may become available as 2011 Census outputs become more dated, the scope of some policies and programmes mean that the Census remains the primary data source. For example, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) reported using Census outputs to baseline EQIAs, although its preference is to utilise contemporaneous data when the Census outputs become more out-dated.

The Department of the Environment (DoE) reported using 2011 Census outputs when conducting the EQIA for the graduated driver licensing and in contextualising information for the associated consultation. In addition, NISRA's Regional Reporting and European Union Programmes Branch (RREP) reported using 2011 Census outputs to inform EQIAs for European Programmes, for example, to inform baselines for INTERREG VA<sup>23</sup> in relation to travel between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (RoI), and in allocating monies for the Peace III<sup>24</sup> programme.

Linked to the Racial Equality Strategy, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has used 2011 Census outputs on country of birth, passports held, ethnic group, main language and year of most recent arrival in Northern Ireland to develop an algorithm to supplement data on minority ethnic groups or migrants gathered through statistical surveys or administrative data sources.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) reported that, to enable compliance with Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, employers will use 2011 Census religion or religion brought up in outputs for Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) as an evidence base for three-yearly reviews of the composition of their workforce and employment practices. As set out in the Fair Employment Code of Practice<sup>25</sup>, the purpose of an Article 55 Review is to:

- determine whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment
- take affirmative action if fair participation is not being secured by members of the Protestant and Catholic communities
- set goals and timetables as part of affirmative action
- take account of the guidance in the Fair Employment Code of Practice

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<sup>23</sup> The new INTERREG Programme for 2014-2020 is one of 60 programmes across the European Union designed to promote greater levels of cross-border co-operation. Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland share a number of common features with other border areas across Europe where developmental problems are exacerbated by the existence of borders.

<sup>24</sup> Peace III is the EU Programme for Peace & Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland and is a distinctive European Structural Funds Programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promoting reconciliation.

<sup>25</sup> Fair Employment Code of Practice is available from:

<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/FECCodeofPractice@09-07.pdf>

NIHE reported using 2011 Census religion or religion brought up in outputs to ascertain whether the Shared Communities Programme is being delivered equitably with respect to the religious composition of NIHE housing estates.

NISRA Human Resources and Consultancy Services (HRCS) reported using 2011 Census labour market, demographic, qualifications and religion or religion brought up in outputs in the publication Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)<sup>26</sup>. Specifically, the outputs consisted of the economically active population above particular qualification thresholds within Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) classes, tabulated by sex, age and religion or religion brought up in. This enabled the report to include quantification of the extent to which the representation of various equality groups (for example, females) within NICS occupational categories differs from the wider labour market.

DRD reported using 2011 Census outputs for an equality screening regarding a decision on the location of a proposed pedestrian bridge across the River Lagan in Belfast. The outputs used were method of travel to work or study, disaggregated to electoral ward level, for specific equality population groups, within particular locations across Belfast.

In relation to its consultation on a proposed Rural Proofing Bill for Northern Ireland<sup>27</sup>, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) reported that 2011 Census outputs would be used to update the rural / urban classification of areas across Northern Ireland as part of the evidence base required for rural proofing of government policies and programmes.

### **8) Social or academic research**

The Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) comprises two major data linkage studies; namely, the NILS and the Northern Ireland Mortality Study (NIMS). These have been developed, maintained and managed by NISRA as a resource for research.

NILS 'core' data are obtained from approximately 500,000 persons drawn from the Health Card Registration data and then linked to data from Census returns (1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011), Vital Events (births and deaths), Migration and Property data. The result is a regularly updated 30-year, de-identified, longitudinal, record level dataset.

NIMS is a large-scale data linkage study that links the 2001 and 2011 Census returns for the whole of the enumerated population (approximately 1.6 million individuals) to subsequently registered mortality data from the General Register Office (GRO). Although larger than NILS, it is more limited in scope, focusing only on the linkage of mortality data. It allows researchers to focus on more detailed analyses of specific cause of death, some of

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<sup>26</sup> Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service is available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/ni-civil-service-human-resource-statistics/equality-statistics>

<sup>27</sup> For more information on the consultation and Rural Proofing is available from: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/rural-needs>

which may not be possible in NILS because of small numbers in sub-populations and the analysis of less common causes of death (for example, accidental death).

As they are uniquely available on a consistent basis over a long period of time at the relevant individual, household and spatial scales, record level data from the 2011 Census and previous years are essential for NILS and NIMS projects. Examples of NILS projects that have used 2011 Census data include: 'Religious Identities and Social Change in Northern Ireland 1991 – 2011'; 'Relationships with Mortality, Fertility and Health'; 'Health, housing tenure, and entrapment 2001-2011: Does changing tenure and address improve health?' and, 'A descriptive and empirical analysis of labour market change in Northern Ireland between 1991 and 2011, with a focus on the investigation of historic and emerging labour market inequalities'. Record level data have also been used in Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC) social research projects, for instance, relating to under-participation in higher level education.

DHSSPS Community Information Branch used 2011 Census commissioned outputs to produce the report 'Kinship Care – Children Living in Households without a Parent Present Northern Ireland 2011'<sup>28</sup>. The statistics presented in this paper cover a range of topics about children and those caring for them, including: age; sex; ethnic group; religion or religion brought up in; health; economic activity and, relative deprivation.

### **9) *Benchmarking for other statistics***

As the Census seeks to gather information from all households / people in Northern Ireland it is, particularly at the time it is taken, the most accurate and comprehensive source of statistics on the whole population of Northern Ireland. As a result, its outputs are widely used to quality assure or benchmark other statistics, including the wider NISRA social survey programme.

NISRA Central Survey Unit (CSU) reported using 2011 Census outputs as part of its quality assurance processes for its social surveys, mainly to gauge their representativeness across a range of key variables.

The Census is also used to 'weight' or 'gross up' survey results to be reflective of the total population of Northern Ireland. As sample surveys do not seek to gather information from the total population, returns are often multiplied by a factor based on Census results to enable them to reflect the likely incidence of a variable of interest in the relevant population. For instance, DSD used 2011 Census results as inputs to their grossing regime for the Family Resources Survey. A similar process is used in relation to the Labour Force Survey, the survey returns for which are grossed up to be reflective of the Northern Ireland population aged 16-64.

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<sup>28</sup> Kinship Care – Children Living in Households without a Parent Present Northern Ireland 2011' is available from: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/kinship-care-%E2%80%93-children-living-households-without-parent-present-northern-ireland-2011>



NISRA Demographic Statistics reported using 2011 Census population estimates as the foundation for Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates and revising such estimates between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. These statistics are, in turn, used in estimating population projections by household type and for those living in communal establishments.

## 6. 2011 Census Successes Highlighted by Key Users

In reporting the successes of the 2011 Census, key users highlighted attributes that make the Census an essential evidence source for decision makers across a wide range of sectors, namely:

- their unique robustness when disaggregated at Small Area level or for small population groups
- they are available free of charge to users at the point of delivery
- they are readily accessible through the re-launched NINIS
- their comparability over time and across countries of the UK
- the geographical continuity in output geographies between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses
- the additive nature of the tabular outputs

A common theme mentioned was the utility that the Output Prospectus has provided; specifically, the document has enabled users to know what and when particular results would be published. For example, NIHE stated, “outputs well prioritised and publication in line with timescale”, while NISRA HRCS said, “results were made available within reasonable timescales, in machine readable formats that facilitated further analysis”.

Dr Ian Shuttleworth of the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen’s University, Belfast (QUB), who is also Director of the NILS, reported the “geographical continuity in output geographies between 2001 and 2011” as a success, and added that “disclosure control was also more user friendly in 2011 than in 2001”.

Transport NI reported that all aspects of the service received from Census Office were “well done”, and made specific reference to: timescales; quality of the product and customer liaison. Several other key users praised the level of customer service received from Census Office staff and the extent of consultation / engagement with users.

In general, key users recognised the Census as a unique source of lower level geography and / or small population group outputs. For example, for equality monitoring purposes, it is not possible to source attributes of minority ethnic groups below Northern Ireland level with an acceptable degree of robustness from other sources. Both DRD and DEL reported the Census to be the only suitable source of TTWA outputs, while PSNI and Land and Property Services (LPS) highlighted the importance of Census population estimates at lower level geographies, which have traditionally been unavailable through sources such as the mid-

year population estimates. DHSSPS and DSD mentioned that potential sources, such as administrative data, would need to contain comprehensive coverage of the Section 75 equality categories to enable them to become viable alternatives to Census outputs.

## 7. Areas for Improvement or Innovation Suggested by Key Users

With the aim of maximising the potential benefits of the next Northern Ireland Census in 2021, key users were asked about areas of the 2011 Census where improvement or innovation might be beneficial.

One area for improvement, mentioned to NISRA by Transport NI, and also to ONS by Dr Barry Leventhal of the Market Research Society's Census and Demographic Users Group, is the need to complete the full range of outputs more quickly. Dr Leventhal stated that the 'tail of outputs' had taken too long to deliver, citing a 'bottleneck' to output delivery caused by statistical disclosure control procedures and a diminishing of staff resources after delivery of the 2011 Census.

Generally, users recognise that, for several reasons including respondent burden, public acceptability and likely accuracy of responses, not all topics raised through the 2011 Census topic consultation process could have been included in the questionnaire. While some users, such as NIHE, see the absence of income as a particular issue, they acknowledge the problems with this and, as a result, are keen for NISRA to make further progress in linking administrative data routinely collected by government, for instance, relating to income and benefits, to Census returns and, so, enable a potentially wider range of output variables. This, in turn, could bring additional granularity to a wide range of functions, including: resource allocation; targeting investment; funding bids; equality and diversity assessments; and, social research.

NISRA CSU reported on a potential new and innovative application of 2011 Census record level data. In light of declining response rates to social surveys, and with a view to establishing whether non-respondents (both 'refusers' and non-contacts) differ substantially from respondents, CSU has proposed data matching between Census and social survey returns. The aim of such work would be to establish the magnitude of any differences that emerge between the two sources across a range of variables (for example: age; sex; religion; employment status; qualifications; geography; child dependents; and car / van availability), and to consider (a) given such differences, whether to apply weight adjustments and (b) strategies to improve response rates across relevant variables. Potentially, this could also reduce the amount of sensitive information collected through surveys, thus facilitating a 'collect once, use many times' approach.

Although key users generally welcomed the re-launch of NINIS as the primary means of disseminating 2011 Census outputs, several indicated they would like greater autonomy or flexibility in analysing Census data and / or generating outputs. While some users would prefer direct access to the data, the consensus is for a move away from numerous 'pre-canned' outputs towards a flexible, online table-building facility, enabling users to determine their own categories.

## 8. Findings from the 2011 Census User Satisfaction Survey

The 2011 Census User Satisfaction Survey was a voluntary survey of Census users who had either contacted Census Customer Services with information-related queries or played a key part in the development and management of the 2011 Census. Conducted between 8 and 26 September 2014<sup>29</sup>, the Survey gathered feedback from 42 respondents on:

- the uses they have made of the 2011 Census outputs
- the timeliness, content, dissemination and accessibility of the outputs
- their overall level of satisfaction with the outputs
- potential areas for improvement, including future outputs and their means of dissemination

Survey respondents were most likely to have used the 2011 Census outputs for regional / local comparisons, social / academic research or market research / information services / data analytics. Among the main practical applications for these outputs have been: targeting resources; completing funding applications; and supporting consultancy / research. The themes most likely to have been of interest to users are: Demography; Labour Market; Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion; Health; and Housing and Accommodation.

The Survey results confirm that the dissemination of the 2011 Census outputs has been of a high quality and fit for purpose. Consistent with the views of key users, the vast majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the communication, range, timeliness, accessibility and dissemination of the outputs and supporting information, although some suggested improvements to the NINIS search facility, download speeds and, citing limitations presented by traditional tables, greater table-building flexibility.

Most Survey respondents expressed satisfaction with: the 2011 Census outputs and / or supporting information; statistical commentary; outputs prospectus; quality assurance and methodology reports; definitions and output classifications; and data visualisation / interactive content on NINIS. In addition, the bulk of those who have used the statistical bulletins expressed satisfaction with: how well they highlight key messages, provide context, or aid interpretation and understanding; their readability; their data visualisation; and their linking to source data / tables.

Many Survey respondents also indicated that NISRA has performed well or very well in relation to: consulting with users about the 2011 Census; keeping users informed about Census plans; producing outputs in a timely way; and producing sufficient outputs and supporting information.

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<sup>29</sup> 2011 Census User Satisfaction Survey Summary Report is available from:  
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2011-census-user-satisfaction-survey-summary-report>

## **Annex A: Key Users Contacted as part of Benefits Realisation Exercise**

### **Northern Ireland Executive Departments**

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Policy and Economics Division)

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Research and Statistics Branch)

Department of Education (Statistics and Research Team)

Department for Employment and Learning (Analytical Services Unit)

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Analytical Services Unit)

Department of the Environment (Analytical Services Branch)

Department of Finance and Personnel (Central Survey Unit; Demographic Statistics; General Register Office; Human Resource Consultancy Services; Regional Reporting and EU Programmes Branch; Land and Property Services Statistics Branch; and Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch)

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Public Health Information and Research Branch; Project Support Analysis Branch; Hospital Information Branch; Community Information Branch; and Information and Research Unit)

Department of Justice (Analytical Services Group; and Community Safety Unit)

Department for Regional Development (Central Statistics and Research Branch; and Transport Projects Division, TransportNI)

Department for Social Development (Analytical Services Unit)

Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (Equality Directorate Research Branch)

### **Other Public Sector/Statutory Bodies**

Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company (Strategy & Regeneration Research and Evaluation Team)

Northern Ireland Assembly (Research and Information Service)

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (Research Department)

Northern Ireland Policing Board (Statistics and Research Branch)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (Statistics Branch)

Probation Board for Northern Ireland (Information and Research Branch)

## **Voluntary and Community Sector**

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

### **Demographic Statistics Advisory Group**

Tony Dignan: Independent Researcher (Economic Research and Evaluation)\*

Joe Frey: Head of Research, Northern Ireland Housing Executive\*

Professor Adele Marshall: Director of Research, Centre for Statistical Science and Operational Research, Queen's University, Belfast

Jocelyn McCarley: Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

Professor David Martin: Geography and Environment, University of Southampton (and Deputy Director of the Administrative Data Research Centre for England)

Colin McIlheney: Global Research Director, PricewaterhouseCoopers\*

Darren McKinstry: Director of Policy and Research, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Sharon McNicholl: Corporate Policy and Strategic Planning Manager, Belfast City Council (and member of the Statistics Advisory Committee)\*

Dr Dermot O'Reilly: Centre for Public Health, Queen's University, Belfast (and Director of the Administrative Data Research Centre for Northern Ireland)\*

Dr John Power: Head of Research and Information Service, Northern Ireland Assembly\*

Richard Ramsey: Chief Economist, Northern Ireland, Ulster Bank (and member of the Statistics Advisory Committee)

Dr Ian Shuttleworth: School of Geography, Archaeology & Palaeoecology, Queen's University, Belfast (and Director of the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study Research Support Unit)

*Note \* indicates present for the focus group discussion held on 25 February 2015.*