

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 24/04/2023

Subject: 2021 Census Briefing

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SUMMARY

The Census takes place every ten years. Census day for Census 2021 ('Census 21') was on Sunday 21 March 2021, when the country was still under restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the extraordinary time the Census was taken, it remains the most authoritative source of data and information on the borough. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is releasing 2021 Census data in phases. In January 2023, the ONS finished publishing the first phase of their release plan, with data on the main topics.

This report provides a summary of headlines from the Census 21 first release of topic data. It also considers emerging key trends and findings for the Council. The report sets out the plans for the further analysis and reporting of the Census as more data is released through 2023, including developing new ward profiles and a borough profile.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Board to note the report and supporting **Appendix 1** that includes the emerging key trends and findings for the Council.
 2. For the Board to note the proposed plans for analysis of Census 21 data and offer suggestions of areas for more detailed analysis as part of these plans.
 3. For the Board to note and comment on the proposal for interactive ward profiles.
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Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The Census 21 analysis will provide detailed insight into the prosperity of residents, to help influence and inform future strategies and services to support residents.
Creating a compassionate council	Understanding our residents in depth from Census 21 analysis will help improve services and ensure that residents have services that are tailored to their needs.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The Census 21 analytical plans include publishing data and analysis to help the Council, voluntary and community organisations and providers to better understand residents, thereby helping to better plan and provide services to residents to meet local needs.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Providing a better understanding of residents and the borough from the Census 21 will deliver value for money and positive outcomes for residents and the community.
Taking pride in H&F	The Census 21 analysis will ensure the demography of the borough is understood both locally and nationally.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Analysis of Census 21 supports the climate change agenda, by understanding trends in our local residents' population and economy.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

Summaries of the topic data released by ONS produced by the Business Intelligence service were used in preparing this report, including:

- Headline of Topic Summaries
- Demography Deep Dive
- Ethnicity Deep Dive
- Health Deep Dive
- Housing Deep Dive
- Labour Market Deep Dive

DETAILED ANALYSIS

First release of Census data

1. The Census of the Population takes place every ten years and is a legislative process governed by the Census Act 1920 and residents are required to complete the Census by law which makes it the most authoritative data source on the population.

2. Census Day for Census 21 took place on Sunday 21 March 2021. It provides a snapshot of the usual population of the borough on this date. The usual residential population only counts anyone who had stayed or intended to stay in the borough for a period of 12 months or more, as of 21 March 2021.
3. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is releasing 2021 Census data in phases. This is a new approach for this Census. In January 2023, the ONS finished publishing the first phase of its release plan, which is the subject of this report. This includes data on the main topics, including population, demography, migration, ethnicity, religion, labour market, travel to work, housing, education, health, disability and unpaid care.

Census 21 in context

4. It is worth reminding that Census 21 came at an extraordinary time during the Covid-19 pandemic. Census Day was when the nation was still under the restrictions of the third national lockdown. It came before the 'Stay at home' order ended and society and the economy gradually re-opened. During these extraordinary times, families and communities adjusted how and where they lived.
5. There is evidence, from the comparison of locally held data with the Census and other intelligence, to suggest that Census Day took place at a time when students/young people, families with 2nd homes, families with very young children, and male EU migrant workers may have temporarily relocated outside of H&F. For example, the male population in Census 21 fell by 3.4%, particularly among the 25-44 age range. In addition, migration slowed due to international restrictions, with a reduction, for example, in migration from New Zealand and Australia, with almost half of residents in 2021 compared to 2011 (from a population of around 7,000 to 3,300).
6. Because of this, and the definition of the usual resident population, we are concerned that Census 21 does not provide a true and accurate picture of the borough's population today. We estimate that the difference in the population may be around 14,500 people (6,200 households) based on internal data held on Council Tax dwellings.
7. This could impact on H&Fs and our partners ability to fund, plan and provide essential services to our residents in the years ahead. A significant proportion of our and other London borough's funding – via the local government funding settlement and other grant awards - relies on Census or other estimates of population. H&F is participating in discussions with other central London boroughs who share similar concerns. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, and counterparts, have written to government seeking a commitment that future local government funding models will be based on fair and accurate population estimates, ensuring that appropriate adjustments or mitigations are put in place to take account of the extraordinary time the 2021 Census was conducted.

8. Despite these concerns, the Census remains the most authoritative and most in-depth source of data to understand the borough's population and communities. The interpretation of the size and demography of our population is extremely important to the delivery of services our residents receive. We have therefore started analysis of the results of Census 21, to help us understand more about the borough.

Census 21 emerging implications

9. Appendix 1 to this report provides analysis of key findings from the release of the first phase of the Census data, including key changes by ward. Appendix 1 also sets out emerging key trends and findings for the future planning of Council services and strategies. The detail of this analysis is not therefore repeated here.

Future Census data releases

10. In phase two through to summer 2023, ONS will publish combinations of Census 21 data. This will provide more detailed characteristics by each topic area, through combining multiple variables from the data (known as 'cross-tabs'). A variable is a particular characteristic of a person or household, for example, religion or accommodation type. This will provide, for example, the ethnicity of residents by tenure type.
11. Phase 3 will start from late spring/ early summer 2023, when the ONS will release data on workplace, workday and out-of-term populations. More detailed tables on ethnicity, country of birth, religion and migration are also proposed.
12. The ONS will also publish revised estimates for the population (Mid-Year Estimates) later this year for June 2022. Mid-Year Estimates will include population estimated by single age band.

Plans for Census analysis

13. The Business Intelligence (BI) service will provide a suite of products to share the results of Census 21. This includes analysis of each **topic summary** which have been made available and will be published on the council's website.
14. A new **Borough Profile** will be produced in Autumn 2023. This will provide a high-level view of the borough's residents and what H&F is like as a place. Data from other government sources will be used alongside the Census.
15. New **ward profiles** will also be made available through an interactive Power BI dashboard and ward report. This will show how people live, work and thrive in each ward, with comparisons to other wards, the borough overall and London. This dashboard and report will be available to the public via the website and will be launched in phases. Phase 1 of the dashboard will be released in June 2023, with data on population, age, gender, ethnicity, tenure and jobs for all 21 wards.
16. The BI service will also undertake **thematic analysis** on specific topics of interest and importance. The first series of thematic analysis are equalities in the

borough – to provide a baseline of protected characteristics against deprivation; the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the population; and Mid-Year Estimates for June 2022.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Census 21 Briefing