



Georgia Gould MP  
Parliamentary Secretary  
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London  
SW1A 2AS

Sir Robert Chote  
Chair, UK Statistics Authority

15 July 2025

Dear Sir Robert,

Thank you for the UK Statistics Authority's recommendation on the future of the census. I am writing to confirm that HM Government is commissioning the Office for National Statistics to conduct a mandatory, questionnaire-based, whole-population census of England and Wales in 2031.

High-quality population and migration statistics underpin central and local government service delivery, resource allocation and policy development. In delivering the whole-population 2031 Census you may incorporate the innovative use of administrative data where possible and appropriate, but above all the census must meet the needs of the wide range of statistical users and provide accurate data to support informed decision-making across government, business, and civil society.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of close collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland as they deliver their own censuses in 2031, and with the Welsh Government to ensure our census reflects their specific national needs. Strengthening coherence in population statistics across the UK is essential for making accurate comparisons and supporting shared policy objectives. By working together, we can develop a harmonised approach that meets the unique needs of each nation while delivering a robust framework for nationwide census data.

The success of the 2021 Census demonstrated the potential of a predominantly online approach and achieved a remarkable response rate. This set a strong foundation for the 2031 Census to go even further, though efforts must be made by ONS to ensure inclusivity and to capture the characteristics of harder-to-reach individuals and communities who may have limited access to the internet.

The Future of Population and Migration Statistics (FPMS) programme has received substantial support from HM Government over the last few years. Spending Review 2025 has now concluded and a settlement has been reached to allow ONS to start preparatory work for Census 2031. This programme, and the ONS more widely, must continue to ensure all taxpayers' money is spent wisely and efficiently.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the FPMS programme team for the considerable work undertaken to date and their ongoing commitment to excellence in the field of statistics.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georgia Gould". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Georgia Gould MP  
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**