

## **Beyond 2011 - A new paradigm for population statistics?**

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All of the indications are that the censuses held in 2011 across the countries of the United Kingdom have been highly successful – but there are clear signs that taking the census is becoming increasingly challenging and costly. The dynamic nature of populations, advances in information technology and demand for more frequent and more detailed statistics are driving changes in methods. This trend can be seen across many developed countries. The Office for National Statistics set up the ‘Beyond 2011’ Programme in April 2011 to take a fresh look at options to meet future user needs for population and small area socio-demographic statistics for England and Wales. A range of statistical options is being considered, including census-type solutions; administrative data solutions; and survey solutions. Countries that have moved towards administrative data solutions generally have established population registers. The UK does not have a population register, so producing statistics based on administrative data would require linkage of data from multiple sources, which are known to have multiple data quality problems, including: incorrect residential address information; duplicate records; inclusion of people who have died or have left the country; and omission of recent migrants to the country. New surveys and statistical methods are therefore being explored, both to address population coverage problems and to enable collection of data on additional topics not included in administrative data. Recommendations on the way forward will be made in 2014. This paper will provide a summary of research to date and emerging findings.

Key Words: census; population register; coverage survey; administrative data