# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **2021 Census White Paper , *Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales*** |
| **DATE** | **14 December 2018** |
| **BY** | **Mark Drakeford AM, First Minister** |

This Written Statement informs members that the 2021 Census White Paper, *Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales*, was published by the UK Government today, 14 December 2018. The White Paper sets out the UK Statistics Authority’s detailed proposals for the 2021 Census in England and Wales.

It is proposed that, subject to UK Parliamentary approval, the next census of population should be taken in England and Wales on 21 March 2021.

Data from the census is used to make decisions which affect everyone in the country. High quality data about the population informs policy making, supports resource allocation and the planning of public services and helps us understand the lives of different groups in society, supporting our work to become a more equal Wales. Census data are widely used by businesses, local authorities, health authorities, and others. In Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act has increased the need for high quality data to support local assessments of well-being.

The design for the new census builds upon the last census in 2011, and takes account of the changing needs of society. The White Paper sets out the strategic aims for the census, explains the need for it, sets out the content and how it will be conducted and deals with matters of public interest such as data security and confidentiality. The White Paper also sets out the UK Statistics Authority’s proposals for the future of population statistics after 2021.

The White Paper sets out the recommendations by the UK Statistics Authority for the content and conduct for the 2021 Census. Following user engagement, they are recommending the same content as the 2011 Census with the following exceptions:

* New questions on:
  + Sexual orientation
  + Gender identity
  + Past service in the UK Armed Forces
* Drop questions on:
  + Year in which respondent last worked
  + Number of rooms in the household, on the basis that both have alternative sources
* Additional ‘tick box’ for Roma in the ethnicity question

The UK Statistics Authority is also recommending a predominantly online census, with a wide range of assistance to the public. However, they also recognise that not everyone will be able to, or want to fill in the Census online so they have set out their intention that paper forms will be made easily available.

The UK Statistics Authority plans to hold a census rehearsal in areas of England and Wales in October 2019.

As was the case for the 2011 Census, Welsh Ministers will be consulted on the Census Order during 2019 and will be responsible for making the Census Regulations for Wales in 2020. I would therefore ask you to consider the content of the White Paper to aid future scrutiny and also to ensure any issues that may arise are considered at an early stage.

My officials continue to work closely with the Office for National Statistics on the preparations for the next Census. They will work alongside the Office for National Statistics to ensure that the Census Regulations for Wales are drafted and developed alongside the Regulations for England.

The White Paper has been laid before the National Assembly for Wales and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-2021-census-of-population-and-housing-in-england-and-wales>.