



# **Final recommended questions for the 2011 Census in England and Wales**

## **Ethnic group**

**October 2009**

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## 1. Summary

Question development for the 2011 Census began in 2005. An iterative and comprehensive process of user consultation, evaluation and prioritisation of user requirements, and qualitative and quantitative question testing has been carried out to inform decisions on the questions to be included in the 2011 Census. This paper presents the final ethnic group question recommendations for the 2011 Census in England and Wales.

An ethnic group question was first included in the England and Wales census in 1991, with the primary aims of enabling organisations to monitor equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies and to allocate government resources more effectively. The development of the ethnic group question for the 2011 Census is interlinked with that of the newly introduced national identity question. In 2003 ONS published a *Guide to the Collection and Classification of Ethnic Group Data* recommending that wherever possible a national identity question should be asked as a companion to the ethnic group question.

To determine the need for an ethnic group question in the 2011 Census, consultations with key users of census data were held in 2005 and 2007. The consultations revealed strong demand for the question on ethnic group. Overall, 92 per cent of respondents to the 2007 consultation expressed a requirement for information on ethnic group. Respondents to the consultations helped to recognise a number of ways in which information on ethnic group would be used, including:

- Policy delivery including meeting statutory requirements under the Race Relations Act
- Resource allocation and service provision
- Understanding and representing the interests of specific groups

A variety of quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been employed to test the questions recommended for inclusion in the 2011 Census. Qualitative question testing on the ethnic group question has primarily been conducted by the data collection methodology (DCM) branch in ONS through a programme of cognitive testing running since February 2005. Quantitative question testing has been conducted at various intervals since May 2006 using a variety of methodologies.

As a result of the research and testing programme, a number of changes from the 2001 Census ethnic group question have been recommended, including:

- a 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box is added under the 'White' heading
- an 'Arab' tick-box is added under the 'Other ethnic group' heading
- the 'British' tick-box from 2001 be renamed to 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' (in England), 'Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' (in Wales – English language questionnaire) and 'Cymreig/Seisnig/Albanaidd/Gwyddelig Gogledd Iwerddon/Prydeinig' (in Wales – Welsh language questionnaire)
- the 'Chinese' tick-box is moved to the 'Asian/Asian British' heading
- the 'African' tick-box is moved to come before the 'Caribbean' tick-box

Any changes to the ethnic group categories in the 2011 Census may reduce the comparability with information collected in the 2001 Census. However, none of the recommended changes are expected to have a large impact on comparability.

The questions presented below are those that are recommended for the 2011 Census, subject to Parliamentary approval which ONS hopes to obtain by the end of 2009.

**Figure 1.1: Final recommended ethnic group question for England**

**16** What is your ethnic group?

➔ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

**A White**

English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**C Asian / Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**E Other ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Figure 1.2: Final recommended English language version of the ethnic group question for Wales**

**16** What is your ethnic group?

➤ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

**A White**

Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

**B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

**C Asian / Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

**D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

**E Other ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group, write in

**Figure 1.3: Final recommended Welsh language version of the ethnic group question for Wales**

**16** Beth yw'ch grŵp ethnig?

➤ Dewiswch **un** o'r adrannau o A i E, yna ticiwch **un** blwch sy'n disgrifio'ch grŵp neu'ch cefndir ethnig

**A** Gwyn

Cymreig/Seisnig/Albanaidd/Gwyddelig Gogledd Iwerddon/Prydeinig

Gwyddelig

Sipsi neu Deithiwr Gwyddelig

Unrhyw gefndir Gwyn arall, nodwch

**B** Cymysg / grwpiau aml-ethnig

Gwyn a Du Caribïaidd

Gwyn a Du Affricanaidd

Gwyn ac Asiaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Cymysg/aml-ethnig arall, nodwch

**C** Asiaidd / Asiaidd Prydeinig

Indiaidd

Pacistanaidd

Bangladeshaidd

Tsieineaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Asiaidd arall, nodwch

**D** Du / Affricanaidd / Caribïaidd / Du Prydeinig

Affricanaidd

Caribïaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Du/Affricanaidd/Caribïaidd arall, nodwch

**E** Grŵp ethnig arall

Arabaidd

Unrhyw grŵp ethnig arall, nodwch

## 2. Introduction

The next census will take place on 27 March 2011. The proposed topics to be included were announced in the 2011 Census White Paper published in December 2008. To view the White Paper and read further information about how the content of the 2011 Census was determined, please refer to the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/question-and-content-recommendations-for-2011/index.html>

Question development for the 2011 Census began in 2005. An iterative and comprehensive process of user consultation, evaluation and prioritisation of user requirements, and qualitative and quantitative question testing has been carried out to inform the decisions on the questions to be included in the 2011 Census. The questions for England and Wales have been developed with the Welsh Assembly Government and through close collaboration with the census offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland. A key aim of this collaboration is to minimise differences between questionnaires across the UK, though it is recognised that differing circumstances will sometimes require different solutions. A paper on the UK differences in census questions will shortly be available on the ONS website.

This paper outlines the development of the ethnic group questions for England and Wales, including the Welsh language version. There are equivalent papers which present the recommendations for each of the other questions within the ethnicity, identity, language and religion (EILR) topic area. Questions on the following topics have been recommended:

- National identity
- Ethnic group
- Knowledge of Welsh language (Wales only)
- Main language
- Spoken English proficiency
- Religious affiliation

These questions complement the suite of migration questions that have been recommended:

- Country of birth
- Usual address one year ago
- Month and year of arrival to the UK
- Intended length of stay in the UK
- Passports held (as a proxy for citizenship)

A previous information paper *Recommended questions for the 2009 Census Rehearsal and 2011 Census: ethnic group* outlined user requirements and documented the development of the ethnic group question prior to December 2008. Since that point ONS has conducted a final phase of testing to refine and finalise the question in preparation for the 2011 Census. The relevant findings arising from the final testing are incorporated in the updated information paper which presents the final question recommendations for ethnic group in the 2011 Census. These recommendations are subject to Parliamentary approval which ONS hope to obtain by the end of 2009.



## 3. Background

### 3.1 History of the ethnic group question

An ethnic group question was first included in the England and Wales census in 1991, after being asked in the National Dwelling and Household Survey in 1976 and the Labour Force Survey in 1979.

The question was introduced to enable organisations to monitor equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies and to allocate resources. 'It was not intended to establish the 'ethnic' composition of the population as it might be understood by sociologists, anthropologists and historians' rather to 'capture in a common sense or pragmatic way the categories of person that were likely to be victims of 'racial discrimination'' (Moore and Hickman 2007).

The 1991 Census question had nine tick-boxes:

- White
- Black-Caribbean
- Black-African
- Black-Other
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other ethnic group

In 2001 the number of tick-boxes grew from nine to sixteen and to aid navigation they were grouped under five headings: 'White' (including a new 'Irish' tick-box); a new 'Mixed' category; 'Asian or Asian British'; 'Black or Black British' and 'Chinese or other ethnic group' (figures 3.1 and 3.2).

**Figure 3.1:** 2001 Census, question for England and Wales

**Figure 3.2:** 2001 Census, Welsh language version of the question

**8 What is your ethnic group?**

♦ Choose ONE section from A to E, then ✓ the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

**A White**

British  Irish

Any other White background, *please write in*

**B Mixed**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, *please write in*

**C Asian or Asian British**

Indian  Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background, *please write in*

**D Black or Black British**

Caribbean  African

Any other Black background, *please write in*

**E Chinese or other ethnic group**

Chinese

Any other, *please write in*

**8 Beth yw eich grŵp ethnig?**

♦ Dewiswch UN adran o A i E, yna rhwch ✓ yn y blwch priodol i nodi eich cefndir diwylliannol.

**A Gwyn**

Prydeinig  Gwyddelig

Unrhyw gefndir Gwyn arall, *nodwch*

**B Cymysg**

Gwyn a Du Caribiaidd

Gwyn a Du Affricanaidd

Gwyn ac Asiaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Cymysg arall, *nodwch*

**C Asiaidd neu Asiaidd Prydeinig**

Indiaidd  Pacistani

Bangladeshi

Unrhyw gefndir Asiaidd arall, *nodwch*

**D Du neu Ddu Prydeinig**

Caribiaidd  Affricanaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Du arall, *nodwch*

**E Tsieineaid neu grŵp ethnig arall**

Tsieineaid

Unrhyw un arall, *nodwch*

ONS set up an evidence-based work programme of research, consultation, testing and analysis to review and improve the 2001 ethnic group question. This included consultation with data users and providers; qualitative and quantitative question testing; commissioning an equality impact assessment and working with Scotland and Northern Ireland to harmonise the question where possible. Development focused on how to improve the question taking into account the lessons learnt since

2001 as well as the changes in population structure, user needs, clarity and acceptability.

### **3.2 Ethnic group and national identity**

The development of the ethnic group question is interlinked with that of the national identity question. ONS first considered introducing a question on national identity following public and political concerns that the ethnic group question in the 2001 Census for England and Wales did not provide a tick-box for respondents to identify themselves as 'English', 'Welsh', 'Scottish' and 'Northern Irish' but only allowed for 'British', whereas people could record themselves as 'Scottish' in the ethnic group question in the 2001 Census in Scotland.

Further research concluded that classifying ethnic groups was best achieved separately from national identity. In 2003 ONS published a *Guide to the Collection and Classification of Ethnic Group Data* recommending that wherever possible a national identity question should be asked as a companion to the ethnic group question.

The 2007 consultation with users of census data identified that ethnic minority populations wanted to express their affiliation with England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Britain, particularly those who were born in the UK. In the 2001 Census there were no specific tick-boxes in the ethnic group question to record British national identities for those who are not white. In England and Wales 70,000 people wrote Black British under 'Other Black' to express their Britishness. Evidence also suggests that respondents are happier to express their ethnic group if they can also express their national identity. Without this opportunity there is a risk that proportions of ethnic minority populations could refuse to answer the ethnic group question or the census as a whole. Due to the close association of these questions, the introduction and development of the national identity question has formed part of the decision making process on the ethnic group question.

Full detail on the national identity question development process and recommendations are available on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/question-and-content-recommendations-for-2011/index.html>

## 4. User requirements

The inclusion of questions in the census must be supported by a clear user requirement for the information. The user consultation process for the 2011 Census began in 2005 with a formal three month consultation on census content to which there were over 120 responses commenting on the subject of ethnicity and national identity, from a variety of central government, local authority and other data users. In this consultation, respondents were asked to consider and comment on ethnic group and national identity as a combined category since the two questions are closely associated. A summary of the comments relating to ethnic group and national identity can be found at

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/consultations/closed-consultations/consultation-on-2011-census---responses/ethnicity--identity--language---religion.pdf>

A summary of responses from Wales or about Welsh issues in the 2005 topic consultation was published by the Welsh Assembly Government:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/pop-2007/pop-2006/hdw200603081/?skip=1&lang=en>

In addition to this another formal three month consultation exercise was carried out between December 2006 and March 2007 (referred to throughout the paper as the 2007 consultation) to refine the user requirements for information on ethnicity, identity, language and religion from the 2011 Census. In the 2007 consultation, respondents were asked to consider and comment on the ethnic group and national identity questions separately. The report of the 2007 consultation can be found at

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/consultations/eth-group-nat-iden/over-sum-rep.pdf>

A summary of responses from Wales or about Welsh issues was published by the Welsh Assembly Government:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/pop-2007/hdw200710312/?lang=en>

### 4.1 Requirements for information on ethnic group

As a result of responses received to the 2005 consultation on census content, ethnic group was assigned as a category one topic, meaning that there was a very strong requirement to include it in the 2011 Census. Strong demand for information on ethnic group was also expressed in the 2007 consultation. Table 4.1 below shows that 92 per cent of respondents to the 2007 consultation had a requirement for information on ethnic group, with the greatest requirement coming from central and devolved government.

**Table 4.1** 2007 consultation respondents requiring information on ethnic group

Organisation type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	96	4	23
Experts, community & special interest groups	87	13	130
Local & regional government	97	3	86
Local service providers	93	7	44
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>283</b>

Respondents to the consultations identified a number of reasons for requiring information on ethnic group, including:

- Policy delivery including meeting statutory requirements under the Race Relations Act
- Resource allocation and service provision
- Understanding and representing the interests of specific groups

#### **4.1.1 Policy delivery including meeting statutory requirements**

Consultation respondents emphasised the use of ethnicity data to enable better understanding of the social and economic position of different ethnic groups, and to help to identify cases of social exclusion. Information on ethnic group is used to inform policy development and monitoring and enable public bodies to meet their statutory obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and other equality legislation. The Race Relations Act (as amended) requires public bodies and organisations to monitor employment practices and to address the needs of ethnic minority groups.

The information would also support and inform the work of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) – since succeeded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC's role is to promote race equality and to enforce compliance with the Race Relations Act. They stated that *'for public bodies to continue to meet their statutory duties [under the Race Relations Act] from 2011 it is essential that there is access to nationally accurate information about the ethnic makeup of the UK population. The Census remains the main data source for public bodies to measure their progress on race equality.'*

The Department for Education and Skills (now known as the Department for Children, Schools and Families) stated that the information is used *'to demonstrate how we monitor and comply with our 'duty to promote' race equality, both as an employer and within our policies/functions'*.

A London borough authority commented that *'The Race Relations (Amendment) Act requires local authorities to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote good race relations...The visible minority and the Black/White categorisation reflect the fact that discrimination can act on the basis of skin colour, and this needs to be identified.'*

#### **4.1.2 Resource allocation and service provision**

Information on ethnicity is used in the formulae for grant allocation by a number of government departments. In response to the 2005 consultation the Department for Health (DH) stated that *'the ethnicity indicators from both the 1991 and 2001 Censuses have been found to significantly explain need in the various models used in resource allocation'*.

The information would also inform local resource allocation. In 2005 a city council stated that the information would be used to *'examine the incidence of various aspects of well-being and deprivation amongst different groups. This leads on to the allocation of resources, both from mainstream spending and other initiatives, e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal and New Deal for Communities'*. In 2007 a city fire and rescue service commented that identification of vulnerable groups would aid *'targeting and delivery of community safety initiatives and education to different ethnic groups.'*

### 4.1.3 Understanding and representing the interests of specific groups

An interest group commented that information on ethnic group was crucial 'to understand more about the changing population of the UK, the difficulties faced by some ethnic groups interested in enterprise, and levels of self employment amongst different ethnic groups'.

A number of respondents expressed a requirement for a question that would cover ethnic groups for which there is currently a lack of data and for which there is no tick-box in the current ethnic group classification. One example of such a group is Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now known as the Department of Communities and Local Government) stated that the collection of such information would 'enable those authorities responsible for providing accommodation, education and health services to ensure that the needs of the Gypsy and Irish Traveller community are accurately assessed and resources properly targeted'.

### 4.2 Requirements for comparability with 2001 Census data

Any changes to the ethnic group categories in 2011 may reduce the comparability with information collected in 2001. Respondents to the 2007 consultation that indicated a requirement for information on ethnic group were asked whether they had a need to compare ethnic group information from the 2001 and 2011 censuses (tables 4.2 and 4.3). Overall, 53 per cent of respondents needed to compare information on high level ethnic group categories (that is 'White', 'Mixed', 'Asian/Asian/ British', 'Black/ Black British' and 'Other ethnic group') and 67 per cent of respondents needed to compare information on single ethnic group categories (that is individual tick-boxes).

**Table 4.2:** 2007 consultation respondents' need to compare information on combined ethnic group categories

Organisation type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	59	41	22
Experts, community & special interest groups	37	63	104
Local & regional government	79	20	81
Local service providers	41	59	39
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>246</b>

**Table 4.3:** 2007 consultation respondents' need to compare information on single ethnic group categories

Organisation type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	77	23	22
Experts, community & special interest groups	54	46	110
Local & regional government	90	10	83
Local service providers	51	49	39
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>254</b>

The majority of respondents from government organisations need to make comparisons between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, particularly for single ethnic groups. Local service providers or experts, communities and special interest groups were less concerned about comparability.

The most commonly cited reasons for requiring comparability were to monitor trends, analyse changes in local populations, allocate services and identify emerging ethnic groups. In general, respondents recognised that some level of change to the classification was desirable to provide more accurate or detailed information, although impacts on comparability should be minimal so that trends can still be identified.

### 4.3 Suitability of proposed ethnic group categories

Respondents to the 2007 consultation who had indicated a requirement for information on ethnic group were asked whether they thought the ethnic group categories included in the 2007 Census Test would fully meet their needs. Overall, 25 per cent of those respondents thought that the combined ethnic group categories would fully meet their needs and 22 per cent thought that the single ethnic group categories would do so (tables 4.4 and 4.5).

**Table 4.4:** 2007 consultation responses on the suitability of combined ethnic group categories in the 2007 Census Test questionnaire

Organisation type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Partially (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	36	45	18	22
Experts, community & special interest groups	14	71	15	108
Local & regional government	30	33	37	84
Local service providers	42	42	17	36
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>250</b>

**Table 4.5:** 2007 consultation responses on the suitability of single ethnic group categories in the 2007 Census Test questionnaire

Organisation type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Partially (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	45	14	41	22
Experts, community & special interest groups	13	59	28	112
Local & regional government	24	25	52	85
Local service providers	30	38	33	40
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>259</b>

Respondents gave the following reasons for the unsuitability of the ethnic group categories in the 2007 Census Test questionnaire:

#### Combined ethnic group categories:

- combined ethnic group categories are too broad
- mixed categories are limited as most refer to White and another ethnic group
- 'Asian or Asian British' is too broad

#### Single ethnic group categories:

- 'Other White Background' covers a vast and varied population
- 'Chinese' has moved into the 'Asian or Asian British' combined group
- 'Black African' is too broad
- 'Arab' is confusing and too broad
- 'Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller' should be categorised under the 'White' combined group and not 'Other ethnic group'



- 'Welsh' should be recorded as an ethnic group and not as a sub-group of 'White'
- unable to identify British Irish and second generation Irish
- additional ethnic groups should be included

The diversity of both ethnic groups and opinions on how the information should be collected, in combination with the space constraints present on the census questionnaire, make it difficult to provide categories that satisfy the needs of all data users. However, where possible these concerns were taken into consideration during the question development process detailed in section 6.

#### 4.4 Acceptability of proposed ethnic group categories

Respondents to the 2007 consultation were asked whether they found the ethnic group terminology used in the 2007 Census Test clear, understandable and acceptable. The majority of respondents (70 per cent and over) thought the category headings ('White', 'Mixed', 'Black or Black British', 'Asian or Asian British', 'Other ethnic group') were acceptable (table 4.6).

**Table 4.6:** 2007 consultation respondents who found the terms for the combined ethnic group categories in the 2007 Census Test questionnaire acceptable

Organisation type	White (%)	Mixed (%)	Black or Black British (%)	Asian or Asian British (%)	Other ethnic group (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	100	100	95	88	100	18
Experts, community & special interest groups	76	75	73	54	60	112
Local & regional government	89	82	84	80	86	78
Local service providers	88	79	86	88	92	42
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>251</b>

Around two-thirds (62 per cent) of respondents found the terms used in the single ethnic group categories acceptable (table 4.7).

**Table 4.7:** 2007 consultation respondents who found the terms for the single ethnic group categories in the 2007 Census Test questionnaire acceptable

Organisation type	Acceptable (%)	Not acceptable (%)	Total respondents
Central & devolved government	74	26	19
Experts, community & special interest groups	52	48	104
Local & regional government	71	29	78
Local service providers	67	33	42
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>243</b>

Respondents gave the following reasons for finding the terms used in the combined and single ethnic group categories unacceptable:

- Terminology confuses different concepts of ethnicity



- Inconsistent use of 'British' in some combined ethnic categories
- Use of colour (White and Black) to define ethnicity is confusing or unacceptable
- Use of the term 'Mixed' is confusing or unacceptable
- Use of the term 'Asian' is confusing or unacceptable

These concerns were taken into consideration during the question development process detailed in section 6.

## 5. Methods of question testing

A variety of quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been employed to test the questions recommended for inclusion in the 2011 Census.

### 5.1 Qualitative testing

Qualitative testing on the ethnic group question has been conducted by the data collection methodology (DCM) branch in ONS through a programme of cognitive testing which began in February 2005.

#### 5.1.1 Cognitive testing

DCM was commissioned to carry out a programme of cognitive question testing on census questions. The aim of this testing was to develop questions that collect accurate and meaningful information that meet user requirements, minimise the burden on respondents and are designed to conform as closely as possible to best practice of questionnaire design. The testing was split into the following phases:

- Pre-testing for the 2007 Census Test (February 2005 – April 2006)
- Whole Questionnaire Testing for the 2007 Census Test (June 2006 – August 2006)
- Testing with Somali respondents in Wales carried out by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) (June – July 2007)
- Testing for the 2009 Census Rehearsal
  - **Wave 1** (November 2006 to January 2007)
  - **Wave 2** (April to May 2007)
  - **Wave 3** (July to September 2007)
  - **Wave 4** (October and November 2007)
  - **Wave 5** (January to March 2008)
  - **Wave 6** (April to July 2008 )
  - **Welsh language testing, Wave 1** (October to November 2007)
  - **Welsh language testing, Wave 2** (June to July 2008)
- Testing for the 2011 Census
  - **Wave 7** (March to April 2009)
  - **Whole questionnaire testing – English language** (June and July 2009)
  - **Whole questionnaire testing – Welsh language** (June and July 2009)

#### 5.1.2 Focus groups on colour terminology

Twelve focus groups were conducted with 109 members of the public during April and May 2007 to explore issues surrounding the acceptability of colour terminology for the ethnic group question. These were held in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Participants were allocated to one of four 'participant groups' based on their ethnic self-identification. The division into 'participant groups' was based loosely on the different ethnic identifications possible in response to the 2001 Census for those of a 'Caribbean', 'African', 'Black' or 'Mixed' background.

### **5.1.3 'White Welsh/British' focus groups in Wales**

Six focus groups were conducted by the Welsh Assembly Government in Wales during December 2007, specifically with respondents who self-identified as 'White'. Participants were of various ages and socio-economic backgrounds and the groups were held in Cardiff, Carmarthen and Wrexham. Three of these focus groups were held in Welsh, and the other three in English.

## **5.2 Quantitative testing**

ONS has also conducted quantitative question testing at various intervals since May 2006 using a variety of methodologies.

### **5.2.1 Lambeth Postal Test**

From June to July 2006, a test of postal enumeration procedures was carried out in the London Borough of Lambeth. Although this test was designed to test aspects of the field operation for the 2011 Census, it allowed the opportunity to analyse and evaluate the performance of the questions. A response rate of 25 per cent was obtained and 366 household questionnaires were returned, giving 787 individual respondents. Some of this data was analysed to help inform the development of the ethnic group question prior to the 2007 Test.

### **5.2.2 2007 Postal Test**

The ONS questionnaire design and content (QDC) team ran a postal test of 10,400 households across England in April 2007. Although the main objective of this test was aimed at testing issues related to questionnaire length, it also provided valuable information on the acceptability and understanding of definitions and questions.

### **5.2.3 2007 Census Test**

A large scale census test was carried out covering 100,000 households in England and Wales on 13 May 2007. The Test took place in Bath and North East Somerset, Camden, Carmarthenshire, Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent. A detailed evaluation of the 2007 test can be found on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-project/2007-test/index.html>

### **5.2.4 2008 Postal Test**

In July 2008 two postal surveys were carried out, each with a sample of 10,200 households, one across England and the other in Northampton. The main purpose was to test any impact on response rates of including a question on intended length of stay in the UK.

The test also allowed valuable analysis to be conducted on the performance of questions developed for the 2009 rehearsal.

### **5.2.5 March 2009 Postal Test**

In March 2009, a postal test was conducted with the primary aim of assisting the development of questions relating to the student population. 20,000 questionnaires were sent to three separate sample areas. 10,000 were sent to a random sample of households in England, 5,000 were sent to Durham city and 5,000 were sent to an area of central Norwich. The latter two areas were chosen because they are known to have a high concentration of students, along with a number of other characteristics desirable for testing.

### **5.2.6 July 2009 Postal Test**

In July 2009, a postal test was conducted with the primary aim of gaining evidence to inform the decision of whether or not to include a Kashmiri tick-box in the 2011 Census ethnic group question. 27,000 questionnaires were sent to areas of England expected to have large Kashmiri populations. Half of the questionnaires included a Kashmiri tick-box and half did not. Results from the two samples were analysed to address a number of key research questions.

### **5.2.7 Opinions (Omnibus) survey question testing**

The Opinions (Omnibus) survey is an ONS run, multi-purpose survey based on interviews with a monthly sample of around 1,200 adults (aged 16 and over) in private households. It currently forms part of the Integrated Household Survey (IHS). One adult is selected from each household to answer the questions. It differs from the census in that all interviews are carried out face-to-face by members of the general field force of interviewers in ONS.

In September, November and December 2007, an additional question was included on this survey which asked respondents whether they were comfortable with the colour terms used in the 2001 Census question on ethnic group. Respondents chose their answers from a showcard displaying 'very comfortable', 'somewhat comfortable', 'somewhat uncomfortable' and 'very uncomfortable'.

## 6. Development of the question

This section provides a detailed description of how the question evolved from the beginning of testing through to the finalisation of the recommendations. It uses evidence gathered from all the strands of research described in the previous sections.

### 6.1 Single-response vs multiple-response

Ethnic group information from previous UK censuses has been based on asking people to tick one box only.<sup>1</sup> In 1991, respondents were instructed that ‘if you are descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which you consider you belong, or tick the ‘Any other ethnic group’ box and describe your ancestry in the space provided’. Specific categories were introduced in 2001 to record people with a ‘Mixed’ ethnic background. A similar approach has been used in other censuses (for example Bermuda, Singapore and Tuvula) while others have offered a single generic ‘Mixed’ response (for example Zimbabwe, Jamaica and Peru) (Morning 2006).

Population projections estimate that dependants from the ‘Mixed’ group will show strong growth in numbers (Salt and Rees 2006), and as inter-ethnic unions increase and more people become confident in expressing multiple identities it may become inefficient to include sub-categories for all the main ethnic ‘mixes’ in the population, leading to greater use of the write-in box. Write-in answers are more costly to process than tick-boxes and it is left to the data analysts to decide whether and how to group different answers together.

Since 2000 several countries have provided multiple-response information on ethnicity or related topics in their censuses, including the USA<sup>2</sup>, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Morning 2006). ONS therefore considered whether a multiple-response question in England and Wales, based on asking people to tick all categories that apply, would allow people to record their ethnic group more efficiently and accurately than the 2001 approach.

ONS considered the issues from the perspective of both people who answer the questionnaire and data users in a number of ways:

- in the 2007 consultation ONS specifically asked people for their views on the merits of a multiple-response question
- ONS also tested the ethnic group question as a single-response question, as a multiple-response question and without an instruction, leaving the respondent the opportunity to multi-tick if they so decided
- ONS also looked at previous testing and external research.

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2001 Census in England and Wales around 2 per cent of respondents ticked more than one answer to the ethnic group question, despite the instruction to tick only one box. They were re-allocated to a single ethnic category during the data processing stage.

<sup>2</sup> Although according to Huntingdon (2004), in the USA this option was only chosen as a compromise following resistance to the introduction of a separate ‘Mixed’ category by ‘Black interest’ groups. These groups appear to have been concerned that there would be a weakening of Black identity making ethnic minorities generally more vulnerable to discrimination.

### 6.1.1 Respondent preferences

One of the identified advantages of a multiple-response ethnic group question was that it could provide a more accurate measurement of ethnicity, particularly in ethnically diverse populations. Allowing multiple responses enables people with complex, mixed or multiple ethnicities to reflect this in their response to aid self-expression.

However, testing revealed a concern that some respondents might be confused by a multiple-response option and in practice this approach does not appear to be clearly favourable. When a cultural background question that allowed respondents to choose more than one answer was tested in 1997–98 several respondents did not notice the instruction to tick all that apply and felt that the categories<sup>3</sup> were limited, although those that did notice the instruction said it gave them more choice.

ONS concluded that 'multi-coded questions should be avoided in a predominantly single-coded form because respondents fail to recognise that ticking more than one box is allowed. If a multi-coded question is included, the instruction to tick all that apply must be made very prominent' (Beishon and White, 1998). ONS consequently introduced specific 'Mixed' categories in the 2001 Census.

In 2006 the University of Kent ran a pilot study to find out how people with a mixed ethnic identity describe and classify their ethnicity. Participants completed three ethnic group questions which had differing options for the identification of 'mixed' ethnic identities:

1. three tick-boxes 'White and Black Caribbean', 'White and Black African' and 'White and Asian' and an 'Any Other Mixed background' write-in box (as used in the 2001 England and Wales Census)
2. a single tick-box 'Any Mixed Background' and a write-in box (As used in the 2001 Scotland Census)
3. an option to multi-tick all applicable ethnic groups

The majority of participants found version 1 easiest to complete and version 3 most difficult. Almost equal numbers thought that version 1 and 2 best enabled them to describe their racial/ethnic identity. Only one-fifth preferred version 3, the multi-tick option. The aspects of version 1 that respondents most disliked were that all the mixes included 'White' and so were too limited.

In cognitive testing in 2006-07 ONS tested a multiple-response question without a 'Mixed' combined category. There were not enough respondents with a mixed ethnic group to draw firm conclusions about a multiple-response question. However, a small number of respondents identified with a mixed/multiple ethnic group. One respondent, who answered the ethnic group question on behalf of their child, did not mind whether the question was single or multi-tick as long as they were able to record their child's 'mixedness'. Another respondent was used to ticking a single 'Mixed' box and was unsettled not to find it, explaining that 'Mixed' is a specific identity and therefore an acceptable term. They eventually declared their ethnicity by writing in the 'Other ethnic group' section.

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<sup>3</sup> 'English', 'Irish', 'Scottish', 'Welsh', 'British', 'Other European', 'Caribbean', 'African', 'African Indian', 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi', 'Any other group'.

## 6.1.2 Data user preferences

In the 2007 consultation, some users of census data recognised that multiple-response information on ethnic group could have some benefits for the accuracy and depth of information, especially on mixed or multiple ethnicities, and on acceptability to respondents. However, a number of disadvantages were also identified.

Disadvantages of a multiple-response question included a possible difficulty in implementing and interpreting multiple-response data. Some data users thought that a multiple-response category would change the concept of a 'Mixed' group. For example if a respondent ticked an 'Indian' and an 'African' tick-box it could be because they have a Gujarati mother and a Nigerian father or because they have an Indian heritage but grew up in East Africa.

Other disadvantages included preventing robust single counts of individual ethnic groups by inflating numbers, producing too many ethnic group combinations to construct meaningful outputs for data users, making it more difficult to avoid disclosive statistics, and complicating cross-tabulation and comparability with previous data.

Concerns were also expressed regarding loss of continuity with information based on the single-response 2001 Census classification and an adverse impact on existing systems measuring ethnic group. Since ethnicity categories used in the census are used by many organisations as a basis for a range of data collection systems, the proposed change would have a significant impact and would be difficult for organisations to implement

For the 2011 Census ONS concluded that respondents would not find the multiple-response version more acceptable or clear and that multiple-response data would be less useful for data users.

### **Multiple or single-response recommendation**

It is recommended that the ethnic group question is a single-response question.

## 6.2 Question content and phrasing

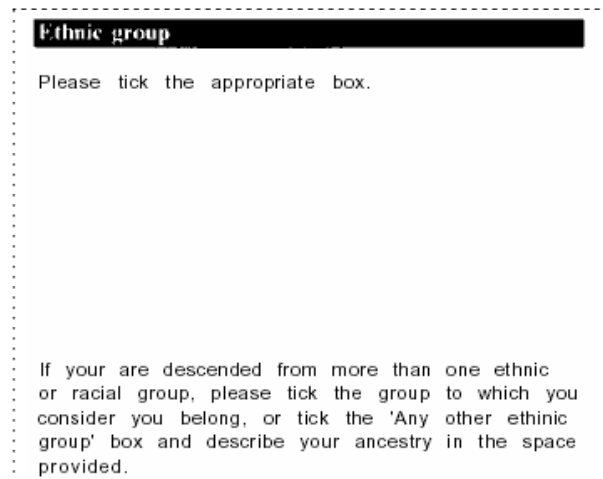
### 6.2.1 Question phrasing

The UK census questions have always used the term 'ethnic group' rather than 'race'. Racial terminology was deemed less appropriate for the census, as it is a scientifically discredited concept, and a categorisation that is imposed on an individual by others. Ethnicity, as a social science term relating to cultural identification with a group, was seen as valid and acceptable.

However the measurement of ethnicity in the UK is influenced by the legal framework, which specifically refers to 'racial grounds' – namely colour, race, nationality, or national or ethnic origins. In fact the ethnic group answer categories used in the 1991 and 2001 questions combined concepts of colour, ethnic origins and national origins.

The 1991 Census question was titled 'ethnic group' and instructed respondents to 'Please tick the appropriate box/ If you are descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which you consider you belong, or tick the 'Any other ethnic group' box and describe your ancestry in the space provided' (Figure 6.1).

**Figure 6.1:** Extract of 1991 ethnic group question



The image shows a dashed-line border containing the text of the 1991 Census question. At the top, the title 'Ethnic group' is written in white on a black rectangular background. Below the title, the instruction reads: 'Please tick the appropriate box.' There is a large empty space for ticking boxes. At the bottom of the dashed box, a second instruction reads: 'If your are descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which you consider you belong, or tick the 'Any other ethnic group' box and describe your ancestry in the space provided.'

Pre-2001 testing probed to find out what people understood by the terms 'ethnic group', 'ethnic origin', 'ancestry', 'cultural origin' and 'cultural background'.

**Ethnic group** was interpreted in different ways. Respondents made reference to place of birth, place of parents' birth and racial characteristics together with cultural practices such as religion and language (Beishon and White 1998). Some understood it to mean an individual's current ethnic status, or reflecting the cultural differences between groups, which is consistent with what ONS intended. It was also 'seen as representing ancestral heritage' (Sykes et al, 1996) or understood 'in terms of colour... or country of birth' (Rainford, 1997).

**Ethnic origin** was mainly understood to mean the ethnic background of a person's parents or grandparents (Sykes et al, 1996). It was also interpreted as 'where a person came from', sometimes linked to a person's parents' origin. Some thought it was similar to ancestry (Rainford, 1997).

People found **ancestry** ambiguous, as they were unsure whether to refer to their parents' and grandparents' generation or to earlier generations. For example, '[some] respondents ticked 'of African ancestry', although their parental background was in the Caribbean, because they thought of several generations back in their family history. This also led to some multi-ticking of the ancestry sub-groups' (Rainford, 1997).

Most groups were able to express themselves adequately when asked about '**cultural origin**' with reference to roots/place of origin and culture/way of life (Beishon and White 1998).

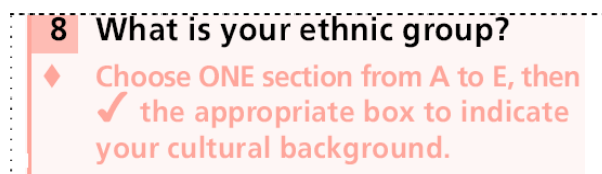
The term **cultural background** was interpreted in a very similar way to cultural origin. People tended to focus more on the term 'background' as opposed to 'origin' and so there was more emphasis on 'way of life' and 'the way people were brought up' rather than ancestry or where you are from (Beishon and White 1998).



Based on these interpretations, it was recommended that ethnic group should be used for the main question as this encompasses the widest range of attributes. On balance ‘cultural background’ was recommended as the best term for an instruction as lifestyle is likely to have more influence on people’s needs for services and so more closely matched the main user requirement (Beishon and White 1998).

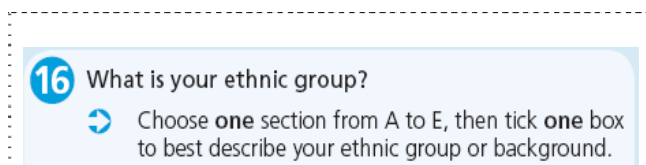
The 2001 Census question therefore asked: ‘What is your ethnic group? Choose one section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background’ (Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2:** Extract of 2001 ethnic group question

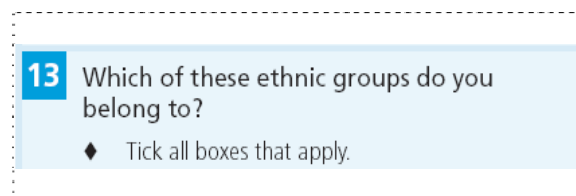


During testing for the 2011 Census, the question ‘What is your ethnic group?’ (Figure 6.3) and an alternative version that prompted multiple-response options, ‘Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?’ (Figure 6. 4) did not reveal any differences in how respondents interpreted the question. The questions were tested with individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. The majority of respondents were able to answer the question and provide an adequate response.

**Figure 6.3:** Extract of ethnic group question using phrasing ‘What is your ethnic group?’



**Figure 6.4:** Extract of ethnic group question using phrasing ‘Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?’



Respondents who participated in cognitive testing acknowledged that while they understood generally what the question was asking, ‘ethnic group’ was not an easy concept to define. Respondents sometimes had difficulty verbalising what they thought ‘ethnic group’ meant, particularly those who had a lower educational level or for whom English was not their first language. Some individuals spoke of this difficulty:

*‘... I don’t know really. I mean I obviously know what it means, but I don’t know how to expand on that.’ (Wave 5)*

Cognitive testing found that the term ‘ethnic group’ was frequently linked to a variety of factors that fitted with concepts that data users were interested in. These factors included: race, skin colour, lineage, religion, shared culture, heritage, language, beliefs and tradition, genetic make-up, heritage, background and geography. Example comments include:

*‘It comprises race, ancestry, culture. There are a lot of things bundled up with ethnicity.’ (Wave 5)*

*'The cultural groups from where you belong.'* (Wave 4)

*'Ethnic group...ma fe i neud da lliw eich croen.'*

*[Ethnic group...it's to do with the colour of your skin.]*

(Welsh cognitive testing, Wave 2)

Respondents differed in the extent to which they thought the various factors played a part in defining the term 'ethnic group' as they understood it.

Evidence from cognitive testing suggests that respondents consider ethnicity to be less subjective than national identity. Ethnicity was seen as a fixed concept, unlike national identity, which could be changeable. As respondents from cognitive testing said:

*'Probably your national identity is whatever country you relate to the most, where you've lived the longest and where you feel more at home, but your ethnic group is definite.'* (Wave 2)

*'Mae'r naill...hunaniaeth genedlaethol yn fater o arddel rhyw fath o hunaniaeth...mae'r llall...grŵp ethnig...yn ffaith. Mi allwn i arddel bod yn ddu fel ryw fath o safiad dros ormes y dyn du...ond mae arddel mod i'n ddu o ran grŵp ethnig yn hurt...allwch chi ddewis eich hunaniaeth...ond efo'r llall ych chi'n cael eich geni yn un peth'*

*[The one...national identity...is a matter of professing some kind of identity...the other...ethnic group...is a fact. I could profess to be Black as a sort of stand against the oppression of the Black man, but professing that my ethnic group is Black would be ridiculous...you can choose your identity...but with the other, you are born one thing.]*

(Welsh cognitive testing, Wave 1)

Some respondents in the Welsh language cognitive testing mentioned that, while they understood that 'national identity' and 'ethnic group' were different concepts for some people, they were not different concepts for them. These respondents had ticked 'Welsh' for national identity and for ethnic group:

*'I fi grŵp ethnig ydy rhywun fel Mwslim neu rywun sy'n dod o Tseina – carfan bach o bobl ymhlith y mwyafrif gwyn, 'di o ddim yn berthnasol i fi.'*

*[For me an ethnic group is someone like a Muslim or someone from China – a small group of people amongst the White majority, it's not relevant to me.]*

(Welsh cognitive testing, Wave 1)

*'Dim gwahaniaeth i rywun fel fi – ond os nad wyt ti'n Brydeiniwr, o leiaf ti'n gallu bod yn fwy penodol o dan grŵp ethnig.'*

*[No difference to someone like me – but if you're not British [noun], at least you can be more specific under 'ethnic group'.]*

(Welsh cognitive testing, Wave 2)

Many respondents said that they were familiar with being asked an ethnic group question on questionnaires. This experience of completing similar questions about ethnic group may influence how respondents interact with the question and give them an awareness of how such a question should be answered.

While understanding the question and being able to provide an answer was relatively easy for most respondents, some found it difficult. These included people who were not born in the UK and/or for whom English was not their first language, those born in the UK who had a low level of education and those who were not familiar with answering an ethnic group question. All these respondents were, however, able to provide an answer. They often used the available response options to understand what the question was asking and identified the best fit, rejecting those that they clearly did not belong to. The following comment demonstrates this:

*'...it says British on here, English on here, I'd tick that because I know I'm not any of the rest of the other, you know, groups down there. I know I'm not Irish and I know I'm not a Gypsy or Traveller. So the most identifiable to me would be British.'* (Wave 6)

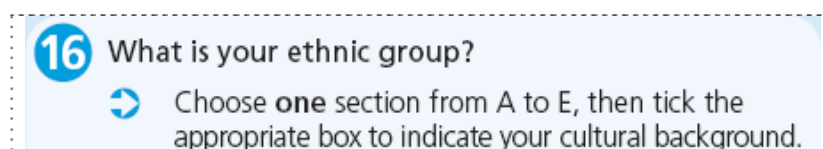
ONS concluded that it is more suitable to continue to ask 'What is your ethnic group?' instead of 'What do you consider your ethnic group to be?'. This provides a distinction from national identity, for which the recommended phrasing 'how would you describe your national identity?' is more subjective.

## 6.2.2 Instruction to aid the interpretation of 'ethnic group'

As the term 'ethnic group' can be understood to include a variety of factors, ONS has included instructions to explain what is meant by the term and so collect consistent data. ONS tested the question with and without instructions.

Initial testing for the 2011 Census included the term 'cultural background' in the instructions (Figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.5:** Extract of ethnic group question using the term 'cultural background'

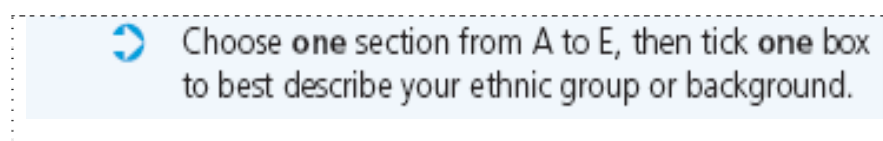


Like 'ethnic group', respondents found the term 'cultural background' quite difficult to define. Cognitive testing indicated that respondents understood 'cultural background' differently from 'ethnic group' and in some cases respondents said they did not associate cultural background with ethnic group. Cultural background was more narrowly construed than ethnicity, with an emphasis on culture and family upbringing and less on race, skin colour and geography. For example:

*'... the way in which you've been brought up and what you're used to in your everyday life.'* (Wave 5)

While the term 'ethnic group' included various factors, respondents understood 'cultural background' to relate to just one part of that concept. In the latter half of Wave 5 of cognitive testing, the term 'cultural' was therefore removed from the question to avoid confusion between the two terms (Figure 6.6). This change also harmonises the instructions in England and Wales with those in Scotland.

**Figure 6.6:** Extract of ethnic group question using the term ‘background’



Respondents still had trouble defining exactly what this meant and found it difficult to put into words. Definitions given took into account where a person was from, where they were raised, their culture, history and family. For example:

*'Where have you been brought up, sort of thing, your family, the country you've been brought up in, like background to your life, sort of thing.'* (Wave 5)

There was also an acknowledgement that skin colour was part of your ‘background’.

*'I guess just colour really.'* (Wave 5)

The term ‘background’ seemed to be more aligned with respondents’ understanding of ethnic group, as it allowed for a variety of factors to be included, reflecting the varied interpretations of ethnic group. However, the answer respondents gave to the ‘ethnic group’ question did not appear to be influenced by whether the term ‘cultural background’ or ‘background’ was given in the instruction.

#### **Question phrasing recommendation**

It is recommended that the question asks ‘What is your ethnic group? Choose one section from A to E, then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background’.

### **6.3 Question layout**

The ethnic group question is unusually long for a survey question (it is the longest question on the census questionnaire) and has more sections than most standard survey questions. Without an instruction and a series of visual cues there is a risk that respondents may think the response options end at section A or that they may tick multiple-responses or respond incorrectly.

#### **6.3.1 Order of headings**

Ordinarily it may be most equitable to place response categories in alphabetical order. However, the ethnic group question is not categorised in alphabetical order for two main reasons.

Firstly the census is designed to be as easy to complete as possible. Testing across the UK has shown that respondents have a tendency to only read down the classification as far as the first tick-box they find suitable. As more than 90 per cent of respondents will tick a box under the ‘White’ category, placing it first will minimise

respondent burden. Within categories, tick-boxes are also ordered in descending population size.

The 'Mixed' heading was positioned after the 'White' heading in 2001 because question testing showed that these respondents were likely to miss this category if it was placed at the bottom of the classification (since they could respond using one or more of the tick-boxes higher up in the classification). For example, a respondent of mixed 'White' and 'Asian or Asian British' background might tick both a 'White' and 'Asian' tick-box if the 'Mixed' heading was not one of the first categories.

The remaining categories ('Asian /Asian British' and 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British') were placed in alphabetical order.

During cognitive testing the majority of respondents found the order of the categories in the ethnic group question acceptable. Respondents in one focus group conducted in Wales questioned why 'White' appeared first but did acknowledge that they were listed by population size.

### **6.3.2 A–E heading labels**

Headings were introduced in the ethnic group question in the 2001 Census to help respondents find an appropriate tick-box as the number of response options rose from nine to 16. The five headings, labelled A-E, were: 'White', 'Mixed', 'Asian or Asian British', 'Black or Black British' and 'Chinese or other ethnic group'.

However there were some concerns that the labels A-E may appear hierarchical and offensive. ONS therefore tested the labelling to establish whether the letters A–E were an effective and acceptable visual cue for respondents to see that the question comprises five separate categories, and to prevent those who would not otherwise identify as 'White' from giving their responses too early in the 'White: Other' write-in box. ONS tested the question with and without the A–E category labels (Figures 6.7 and 6.8).

**Figure 6.7:** Question with A–E instruction (2007 Census Test)

**Figure 6.8:** Question without A–E instruction (Wave 4)

**13** What is your ethnic group?  
 ♦ choose one section from A to E, then tick the box to show your ethnic group.

**A White**

English

Other British

Irish

Any other white background, write in

**B Mixed**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, write in

**C Asian or Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

**D Black or Black British**

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background, write in

**E Other ethnic group**

Arab

Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller

Any other, write in

**15** What is your ethnic group?

**White**

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

**Mixed/multiple ethnic groups**

White and Caribbean

White and African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background, write in

**Asian/Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

**African/Caribbean/Black/Black British**

Caribbean

African

Black British

Any other African, Caribbean or Black background, write in

**Other ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group, write in

Cognitive testing showed that the layout of the question influenced how people responded. When tested without the A–E category labels some respondents perceived the ethnicity and national identity questions to be a single question (or group of questions) because of their similar appearance. This was not the case when the labels were included.

Some respondents to the question without category labels who did not self-identify as White wrote their answer in the ‘White Other’ section, before realising there were other categories. These included respondents who then ticked the ‘Black African’ box because they perceived the ethnicity question to be a series of questions and thought the ‘White’ write-in boxes marked the end of a question. On reading the rest of the question the respondents realised their mistake and corrected it, selecting another box. Some respondents crossed out the original tick, but others left it in. This would present difficulties for data capture and processing.

### 6.3.3 Indentation of write-in space

ONS also tested whether indenting the row of write-in text boxes would encourage respondents to view the multiple sections as answer categories for one question. The question was presented with and without the indentation (Figures 6.9 and 6.10).

**Figure 6.9:** Extract of ethnic group question without A–E category labels, without indented write-in space

Asian/Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background, write in

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

**Figure 6.10:** Extract of ethnic group question without A–E category labels, with indented write-in space

Asian/Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background, write in

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Results indicated that indenting the row of write-in boxes helped to improve data collection as many respondents recognised it as a single question with multiple sections. However, some respondents still read only the ‘White’ category options and then self-defined in this section.

Testing showed that respondents were more likely to answer the ethnic group question appropriately when the A–E category labels were included, as well as the indented write-in space (Figure 6.11).

**Figure 6.11:** Extract of ethnic group question with A–E category labels, with indented write-in space

**B** Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

When answering this question, respondents mainly chose only one box from one section as required. Initially a few respondents hesitated before answering, apparently not seeing the question as a whole at first glance. They then realised that it was one question and that they had to choose between the sections. Some of these explained their initial confusion was because they had not read the instructions.

In later testing the indent of the category headings was reduced so that the A–E heading labels were moved nearer the left edge of the question layout to provide a more prominent visual cue. This allowed the indentation of the write-in boxes to be reduced and meant they could be realigned with the tick-boxes to achieve



consistency with the layout of the rest of the questionnaire. It also provided more space for the respondent to write in (Figure 6.12).

**Figure 6.12:** Extract of ethnic group question with A–E category labels, without indented write-in space

Testing showed these changes to the question layout worked well. The majority of respondents realised that only one section and one box from that section should be selected. Even when respondents did not read the instructions, they were able to answer the question correctly.

### 6.3.4 Instructions providing guidance about question completion

The question was also tested with and without instructions about how to complete it (Figures 6.13 and 6.14)

**Figure 6.13:** Extract of ethnic group question without ticking instructions (England)

**Figure 6.14:** Extract of ethnic group question with ticking instructions (England)

Even with an instruction, some cognitive testing respondents seemed to hesitate initially when answering this question. One respondent who took some time before answering explained:

*'... it's a very big question, it's a very big box, so it was kind of a brief, just to get what's like the procedure for the question here, understand what's going on. But then I just realised it was sub-divided into categories and just found the box that I needed to tick.'* (Wave 5)

Many respondents did not appear to read the instructions for this question, and when individuals were probed, this was confirmed. People said that they were familiar with being asked an ethnic group question on forms. This prior experience influenced



how respondents interacted with the question and gave an awareness of how such a question should be answered.

However, cognitive testing found that those respondents who read the instructions found them useful in deciding how to complete the question. For this reason ONS recommend that an instruction is included in the question.

#### **Question layout recommendation**

It is recommended that five headings are included in the order of 'White', 'Mixed/multiple ethnic groups', 'Asian/Asian British', 'Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British' and 'Other ethnic group'.

It is recommended that the headings are labelled using the letters A-E, which will be positioned closer to the left hand margin than the other text and tick-boxes in the question.

It is recommended that an instruction is included on how to complete the question.

#### **6.4 Category headings**

The terms people use to describe ethnic identities can change over time. Sometimes terms that were once perceived as acceptable become unacceptable because, for example, they are seen as out-of-date or derogatory. ONS aims to use terminology that is clear, understandable and acceptable to respondents. The 2007 consultation sought feedback on whether the ethnic group terminology used in the 2007 Census Test fulfilled these criteria.

The majority of data users (over 70 per cent) thought that each of the headings used in the 2007 Census Test (i.e 'White' 'Mixed' 'Asian or Asian British' 'Black or Black British' and 'Other ethnic group') were acceptable. However, some respondents identified problems with the terminology, including:

- The terminology confuses different concepts of ethnicity, for example by using nationalities such as Indian alongside geographical areas such as Black African. The concepts covered by the ethnic group question include colour, ethnic origins and national origins and reflect the different histories and preferred day-to-day terms used by these groups
- Use of colour (White and Black) to define ethnicity. Data users held two opposing views on this. For some it was unacceptable to use colour to describe ethnic groups because its use is potentially offensive. Others were in favour of using colour terms, partly due to their use in eliminating racial discrimination and upholding responsibilities under the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act*, and partly as an expression of personal identity
- Some respondents questioned the use and acceptability of the term 'Mixed' as it can be perceived as derogatory. Alternative suggestions were 'Dual heritage' or 'Multiple heritage'

#### **6.4.1 Colour terminology vs geographic terminology**

Many of the concerns expressed in the 2007 consultation focused around the confusion of race, ethnicity and geography. For example, several groups were unhappy that Africans were placed under the 'Black' colour heading, while Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese people were placed under the 'Asian' ethnogeographic heading.

The ethnic group question was considered for the 1981 Census although it was not included until 1991. Prior to 1981 a version was tested that deliberately avoided using colour terminology, as it was felt to be unacceptable to place too much emphasis on colour or race distinctions in a compulsory census. The term 'European' was used instead of 'White' and the terms 'West Indian' and 'African' were used without any addition of the word 'Black'. It was felt to be conceptually consistent to use geographic terms throughout. In practice this approach was unsuccessful, because many white people had difficulty identifying themselves as Europeans, and many West Indian parents strongly objected to their children being classified according to a geographic origin outside the UK when they had been born in the UK (Owen, 1996; Sillitoe and White, 1992).

Consultation by the Scottish Government held in Scotland identified opposing views within the African, Caribbean and Black communities in Scotland. As a result Scotland's 2006 Census Test excluded colour terminology from the ethnic group question. 'White' was replaced with 'European', and 'Black' was replaced with 'African'. The test found that excluding colour from the ethnic group question did not work as expected. The terminology 'European' and 'African' often seemed to confuse respondents, with some who were not from 'White' ethnic groups (particularly 'Asian' respondents) identifying as 'Scottish' under the 'European' category, in effect making their ethnic heritage disappear from the statistics. Scotland subsequently reintroduced colour terminology in the ethnic group question (Homes and Murray 2008).

Another problem with the consistent use of geographic terminology was revealed by the 2007 consultation where many data users expressed requirements for information on visible minority populations. Visible minority data was the most requested concept by experts, community and special interest group respondents (54 per cent) and local and regional government respondents (48 per cent). If the ethnic group question used purely geographic terms, visible minorities such as 'Black African' would be conflated with non-visible minorities such as 'White African'. Removing colour terminology from the ethnic group question would therefore reduce the suitability of the data for users interested in, for example, monitoring discrimination against visible minorities.

#### **6.4.2 Acceptability of colour terminology**

The 2007 consultation identified opposing views between people of Black/African/Caribbean background regarding the acceptability of colour terminology. Subsequent focus groups with African, Caribbean and Black members of the public in April and May 2007, a stakeholder meeting with various community organisations in May 2007 and cognitive testing in 2007-08 confirmed that there were different views between stakeholders representing these communities and members of the public about the preferred term to use.

To find out quantitatively how members of the public felt about colour terminology, ONS used the Opinions (Omnibus) Survey to obtain an estimate by asking the following question<sup>4</sup> after the ethnic group question:

The ethnic group question asked previously used the terms Black and White. How comfortable are you with the use of these terms?

1. Very comfortable
2. Somewhat comfortable
3. Somewhat uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable
5. No opinion.

Across all ethnic groups the majority of respondents felt comfortable with the use of the terms 'Black' and 'White'. Among the 'African', 'Caribbean' and 'Other Black/Black British groups' more than three-quarters were very comfortable or somewhat comfortable with the terms (88 per cent, 79 per cent and 92 per cent respectively).

Some respondents to cognitive testing spontaneously used colour as a self-description when talking about their ethnicity:

*'I'm European and White European... and that's my ethnic group.'* (Wave 3)

In answer to the question one respondent described themselves as 'Black African' even before they knew what response options were available. Some respondents referred to the use of colour terms in the question without prompting, but these tended to be relatively small in number. Others commented only after being asked their opinion on the matter.

Respondents who found the terms acceptable came from both majority and minority ethnic groups. A White respondent stated:

*'I don't feel offended... Black and White to me is not a problem.'* (Wave 2)

Some respondents of African or Caribbean descent felt the same way, for example:

*'... that's how we describe each other ... I don't find anything offensive with the use of 'Black.'* (Wave 2)

Others talked about being familiar with such terms, stating that they were '*fine*' and '*normal*' labels they were used to seeing and what they looked for when completing an ethnic group question.

Some respondents from a Black/African/Caribbean background did not want colour labels to be used, but of those who took part in cognitive testing no-one strongly objected to them and it did not stop them from providing an answer to the ethnic group question. One UK-born respondent said that it was '*better that you don't*' use colour labels but was not offended by them being there. Another respondent also said that they did not find the colour labels offensive but thought some might. This respondent preferred to be referred to as African rather than Black because:

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<sup>4</sup> This question was included in three months: September 2007, November 2007, December 2007.

*'... the previous colonial and this kind of thing, and I think it looks a bit, carries some weight of racism, something like that ... It's a bit discriminatory.'* (Wave 5)

Another respondent felt colour labels were inappropriate because they were stereotypical and outdated:

*'I would do something just to get away from the old stereotype of White, Black, Black British... it's too old now and too many people don't like it.'* (Wave 1)

It was felt by some that colour labels did not provide an adequate description of people's ethnic groups. Respondents from a 'White' background who stated an objection felt that ethnicity was not about the colour of a person's skin, but rather about culture and a way of grouping cultural values. Colour labels were deemed to be purely nominal. For example:

*'I'm White – well, I'm not I'm a brown colour.'* (Wave 5)

However, this did not stop these respondents from answering the question.

### 6.4.3 Improving acceptability and meeting user needs

ONS aims to design census questions that are acceptable to the greatest possible proportion of the population. Opposing views within communities make this task more difficult. In these circumstances, ONS chooses the option that minimises the risk of non-response to census questions as the census is the only opportunity in a decade to get the population count right. Decisions that may jeopardise the number of people filling in the census questionnaire are avoided wherever possible.

ONS acknowledges that for some people and some organisations the use of colour terminology is not acceptable. However, testing has indicated that the majority of members of the public feel comfortable describing themselves in terms of 'Black' and 'White'.

To make the question as acceptable as possible, ONS modified the 'Black and Black British' heading for Wave 4 of cognitive testing. The change in the main heading aimed to satisfy those who found the term 'Black' unacceptable by introducing separate terms of 'African' and 'Caribbean', while at the same time respecting the preferences of those who identify as 'Black' or 'Black British' (Figure 6.15).

**Figure 6.15:** Extract of ethnic group question with 'Black' embedded in category name – 'African / Caribbean / Black /Black British'

African/Caribbean/Black/Black British

Caribbean

African

Black British

Any other African, Caribbean or Black background, write in

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Cognitive testing found that, for some respondents with a Black/ African/Caribbean background, embedding the term 'Black' inside the category name appeared to make it more difficult for them to locate their appropriate ethnic description. These respondents often defined their ethnicity as 'African'. Some of the respondents initially ticked 'White' and 'Black African' or 'White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British', before realising they had made a mistake when they looked further down the list and found the 'African' tick-box.

This led to respondents giving multiple responses to the question. While individuals may have been aware of their error some did not go back and delete the first response, leaving the two boxes with ticks in and causing problems for data processing.

The lack of a noticeable 'Black' colour label at the beginning of categories and response options appeared to be the main reason for this, rather than the question being interpreted as allowing more than one response. For example:

*'... because you usually see 'Black African' and not just 'African'.'* (Wave 5)

*'It's a very easy question to answer but then it's easy because you've been conditioned to think about it in a particular way, because every equal opportunity form that you fill in has those categories. You see them all the time so you tend to think of ethnicity in relation to race .... I was actually looking for 'Black' so when I ticked here [White and Black African], I should have looked at all of them first 'cos when I went down I realised that's not right because of the heading, then I came to 'African'.'* (Wave 5)

The renaming of this category and lack of familiarity with the new label clearly caused difficulties for some respondents and led to inconsistent data and incorrect responses.

Finding an appropriate response to the ethnic group question was also a problem for White Africans. Embedding the term 'Black' led to confusion for some White Africans, who ended up ticking 'Other African, Caribbean, Black or Black British', rather than 'White – Other'. White African respondents felt several categories were to some extent relevant to them, but none actually fitted them exactly:

One respondent wrote in 'South African' under 'Any other White background' but did not tick this box, then went on to tick the 'White and Black African' box under the section entitled 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups'. He said:

*'Well, really I'm an African, but a White African.'* (Wave 5)

Testing found that the lack of a prominent colour term made it more difficult for White African respondents to find the appropriate section of the question.

As a result of the problems identified with embedding the term 'Black' ONS repositioned the term at the beginning of the description (Figure 6.16).

**Figure 6.16:** Extract of ethnic group question with ‘Black’ positioned at front of category name – ‘Black/African/Caribbean/Black British’

**D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Once ONS made this change, respondents to cognitive testing who identified as ‘Black/African/Caribbean’ were able to find the appropriate tick-box with greater ease. White South African respondents also seemed to find it easier to select ‘White – Any other background’.

#### 6.4.4 Terminology for ‘Mixed’ category

A ‘Mixed’ category was considered for the 1991 Census, but was not included until the 2001 Census. There was some doubt before 1991 as to whether the term ‘Mixed’ would be acceptable, as *field trials [in 1975–79] had shown that people of mixed descent often preferred not to be distinguished as a separate group* (Sillitoe and White, 1992: 149). Before the 2001 Census, fieldwork to determine a revised ethnic group question showed that a ‘Mixed’ category would be acceptable, provided that an opportunity was given to record the relevant details as a written description. A similar evolution of concepts in national surveys also occurred in other countries.

The three specific groups identified in the 2001 Census – ‘Mixed White and Black Caribbean’, ‘Mixed White and Black African’ and ‘Mixed White and Asian’ – were included to allow the greatest number of people possible to identify themselves easily. Those who did not identify with one of these ‘Mixed’ ethnicities could use the write-in space to provide their own description of their ethnicity (Figure 6.17).

**Figure 6.17:** Extract of 2001 ethnic group question showing ‘Mixed’ heading and tick-boxes

**B Mixed**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, please write in

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

ONS tested the 'Mixed' category and in general, respondents were able to select a category that described their ethnicity adequately (Figure 6.18).

**Figure 6.18:** Extract of ethnic group question showing 'Mixed' heading and tick-boxes used in cognitive testing

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, write in

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In the 2007 consultation 80 per cent of data users found the term 'Mixed' acceptable. However some respondents questioned the use and acceptability of the term, arguing that it could be perceived as derogatory. Alternative terms suggested were 'Dual heritage', 'Multiple heritage' or 'Dual or multiple ethnic origin'.

In 2006 the University of Kent ran a pilot study to find out how people with a 'Mixed' ethnic identity describe and classify their ethnicity. The preferred general term among respondents was 'Mixed race'. Other terms that were acceptable were 'Mixed heritage' and 'Mixed parentage'. Very few preferred 'Dual heritage' and respondents identified 11 terms as offensive, most commonly 'Dual heritage', 'Half-caste' and 'Mixed origins' (Aspinall *et al* 2006). ONS was concerned that introducing the term heritage may impact on the overall understanding of the question.

In light of these considerations, ONS renamed the 'Mixed' category 'Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups' (Figures 6.19 and 6.20).

**Figure 6.19:** Extract of ethnic group question using 'Mixed/multiple ethnic groups' heading

B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

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**Figure 6.20:** Extract of ethnic group question using 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups' heading

B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

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In the subsequent testing some differences became apparent on the appropriateness of answers between British and non-British respondents. British-born respondents felt the tick-boxes were more accurate than their non-British counterparts.

[The description] *is spot on, it covers everything.* (Wave 3)



Among non-British respondents the problem appeared to lie in having a multiple heritage/ mixed ethnicity and the conflict this caused in choosing between 'White', 'Mixed/Multiple ethnic' and 'Other ethnic group'. For example:

*'I always have a problem with this question because I don't belong to any of the groups... I would say Latin or Hispanic.'* [Chose 'Other ethnic group'] (Wave 3)

*'I always tick 'Mixed' and when I have enough space to write I can put White and Latin American.'* (Wave 3)

The issue often was that their identities were not mutually exclusive between the categories.

*'In most application forms I struggle with my ethnic group. Maybe not many people would, but I do... My ethnicity is mixed.'* (Wave 4). [Ticked 'White and Asian' under 'Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups']

In Wave 2 of Welsh language testing, one respondent born outside Wales ticked 'Any other White background' and wrote in 'Cymysg' ['Mixed']. They hesitated at this question, and considered ticking 'Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background' in section B. They said that their mother was Irish and that their father was half English and half Austrian. They decided to tick 'Any other White background' in section A, as they thought that section B was for mixed White and Black. They commented that they did not have enough space to write in their ethnicity, but that they were happy to just write 'Cymysg'.

Although some respondents with complex identities continued to find the ethnic group question difficult to answer, the terminology 'Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups' was generally considered to be clear and acceptable.

### **Category headings recommendation**

It is recommended that the following category headings are used; 'White', 'Mixed/multiple ethnic groups', 'Asian/ Asian British', 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British', and 'Other ethnic group'.

### **6.5 'Slash' vs 'Or'**

Category names have been tested with both 'slashes' and with the word 'or' to see if one is more effective than the other (Figures 6.21 and 6.22).



**Figure 6.21:** Extract of ethnic group question with 'or' included in the heading

C Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

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**Figure 6.22:** Extract of ethnic group question with slashes included in the heading

C Asian / Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

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One of the recommendations of the meeting between ONS and African/Caribbean/Black/Black British stakeholders in May 2007 was to avoid using 'either/or'. This term is exclusive and not appropriate, for example, for respondents to decide between identities such as 'African' and 'Black'. It should be clear that the question is asking 'and/or'.

Cognitive testing showed that people read the slashes to mean 'and/or', whereas they read the sentences with 'or' in different ways and their interpretation was not always correct. Using slashes also helps to shorten the question and enables the Welsh language translations to fit in the same space.

The one exception was for the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box. ONS decided to keep 'or' in this case because stakeholders were already keen to see separate Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller tick-boxes and ONS did not wish to appear to conflate the groups further. Using a 'slash' could potentially cause offence to either of these groups and consequently affect response by implying that they are interchangeable groups.

**Slashes vs 'or' recommendation**  
 It is recommended that slashes are used instead of or, with the exception of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller'.

## 6.6 Response categories

A number of respondents to ONS consultations requested additional tick-boxes to be included in the question. These fell broadly in two categories:

- a) Those groups which had nowhere obvious to tick in 2001 and so selected 'other' and wrote in (for example Arab, eastern European, Gypsy and Irish Traveller, Iranian, Kurdish, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese)
- b) Those who had a relevant tick-box in 2001 but were aggregated with other groups (for example Cornish, east African Asian, Kashmiri, Sikh, specific African groups)

There is some overlap between the two types as some in group b) still wrote in and some in group a) still ticked a pre-designated box.

Around two-thirds (62 per cent) of respondents to the 2007 consultation found the terms used for the tick-boxes acceptable. However, nearly one-half (48 per cent) of the experts, community and special interest group respondents had problems with the terminology used. ONS therefore reviewed whether new tick-boxes should be included, whether terminology should be changed, as well as whether tick-boxes should be relocated.

### 6.6.1 Tick-boxes from 2001

The 2007 consultation identified a strong user need for comparisons of ethnic group data over time. It also identified that data users were happy with the ethnic populations measured in 2001 and therefore ONS decided to include the 2001 categories in the 2011 Census. Where possible the existing categories were cognitively tested to make sure that they were still clear and acceptable. For example ONS found that use was made of the 'White – Irish' tick-box. One respondent who selected it commented:

*'White and Irish, perfect.'* (Wave 6)

Respondents from an Asian/Asian British ethnic group generally found that the tick-box options were an accurate description of their ethnicity. Throughout testing respondents made use of the 'African' and the 'Caribbean' tick-boxes.

Cognitive testing specifically with Somali respondents in Wales showed that this group answered inconsistently. Some just ticked 'African' whilst others wrote in Somali. One respondent ticked both the 'African' and 'Arab' tick-boxes. Some of the respondents felt that there was a need for a specific Somali tick-box:

*'...if you have a separate box for the Somalis it will give a clear picture...their needs are different, they've been here for a long time'*

Some Somali respondents in testing in England also suggested that a Somali tick-box should be included. However, they did not pursue this strongly and other respondents from a Somali background felt identifying their ethnic group as 'African' was sufficient. ONS explored the requirements for collecting more detailed data on the African group as part of its prioritisation exercise for new tick-boxes.

#### **Tick-boxes from 2001 recommendation**

It is recommended that all the tick-boxes from the 2001 Census ethnic group question are included in the 2011 Census.

### 6.6.2 New tick-boxes

User consultations in England and Wales, and in Scotland, identified many more requests for additional ethnic group response categories than could fit on the census questionnaire. In England and Wales, there was only room for an additional two tick-boxes.

ONS agreed a UK-wide approach to ensure that decisions on inclusion and exclusion of tick-boxes were made on a broadly consistent basis. They recognised that this will lead to differences in practice, as the situation in each country is different. ONS and other UK census offices evaluated requests for new tick-boxes against a number of prioritisation principles.

A detailed set of prioritisation principles were developed to fairly and transparently decide which groups should be covered by a tick-box and which would be expected to use the write-in space. As the ethnic group response categories included in the 2001 Census were going to be included in 2011, these were not evaluated in England and Wales. This was in line with Scotland's approach.

The following four prioritisation principles (in no particular order) were used to identify the ethnic groups that had the highest priority for inclusion in the 2011 Census:

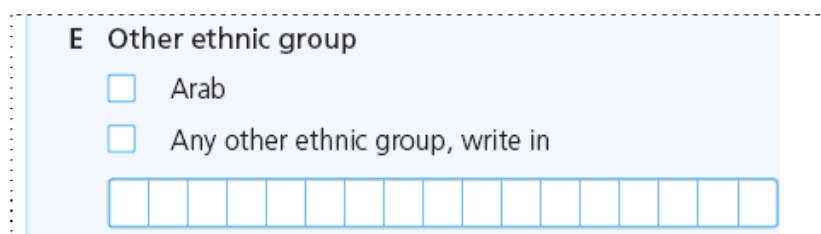
- strength of need for information on that ethnic group
- lack of alternative sources of information on that ethnic group
- clarity and quality of the information collected and acceptability to respondents
- comparability with 2001 data.

In England and Wales qualitative assessments were accompanied by scoring for each principle to create a transparent decision-making process. As a result of the evaluation the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Arab' groups were found to be the two groups with highest priority for tick-boxes to be included in the question in 2011.

There was user need for both groups in relation to policy development and service delivery. Information could not easily be collected about these groups from write-in options or other questions on the census questionnaire and ONS believes they will be clear and acceptable to respondents and have little impact on comparability with data from the 2001 Census.

An 'Arab' tick-box was tested in Waves 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 under the final section for 'Other ethnic group' (Figure 6.23).

**Figure 6.23** Extract of ethnic group question including 'Arab' tick-box



The image shows a form section titled 'E Other ethnic group'. It contains two tick boxes: one for 'Arab' and one for 'Any other ethnic group, write in'. Below the 'Any other ethnic group, write in' option is a horizontal grid of 12 empty boxes for writing.

A deliberate and sustained effort was made when recruiting people to take part in cognitive testing to target those for whom an 'Arab' box tick would be appropriate. This was a particularly hard to reach group, and very few respondents who did participate actually chose to tick 'Arab'. One respondent self-defined as 'Arabic' was pleasantly surprised to notice 'Arab' offered as an option, so went on to select this box. Several respondents stated that it was the first time they had seen this option on a form.

None of the Kurdish, Iranian, Berber, Somali or Egyptian respondents chose to identify as Arab. Some respondents stated that being Arab was determined by your genealogy. Some respondents spoke Arabic and/or lived or had been born in an Arabic country, but this did not draw them to the 'Arab' tick-box. For example:

*'I don't feel Arabic because I lived in an Arabic country...we are not Arabic.'*  
(Wave 4)

This suggests that the Arab tick-box is being used appropriately and will capture the population it is aimed at.

A 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box was tested in Wave 2 onwards (Figure 6.24).

**Figure 6.24:** Extract of ethnic group question including 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box (England)

**A White**

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background, write in

\_\_\_\_\_

Respondents were pleased with the inclusion of the tick-box, happy with the accuracy of the description, and made use of it once they saw it was there. Example comments from respondents include:

*'It was nice to have it there to tick.'* (Wave 2)

*'Good, it might make people stop and listen.'* (Wave 3)

However, a couple of respondents said that some people may not self-identify using this category because of (historical) persecution. ONS will address this issue through its stakeholder engagement strategy.

For more details of the prioritisation process see ONS (2008) *Deciding which tick-boxes to add to the ethnic group question in the 2011 England and Wales Census*.

The paper is available on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/question-and-content-recommendations-for-2011/ethnic-group-prioritisation-tool.pdf>

#### **New tick-boxes recommendation**

It is recommended that a 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box is added under the 'White' heading, and an 'Arab' tick-box under the 'Other ethnic groups' heading.

### 6.6.3 Additional research on response categories

Following the publication of the prioritisation exercise, in which a Kashmiri tick-box scored as the fourth highest priority new tick-box under examination, there remained considerable interest in the possibility of a Kashmiri tick-box in the 2011 Census ethnic group question. Since the publication of the White Paper in December 2008, the level of interest in this issue has increased as a result of parliamentary scrutiny, public debate, and stakeholder engagement.

In response, ONS conducted a programme of research with the aim of contributing to the evidence base for the decision on whether to recommend a Kashmiri tick-box for the 2011 Census ethnic group question. The research included the July 2009 Postal Test and a series of focus groups and interviews. In addition, Kashmiri community groups and other interested parties were invited to make additional submissions to ONS of any information they believed to strengthen the case for the inclusion of a Kashmiri tick-box. The primary research objectives were to assess:

- The effect that the addition of a specific Kashmiri tick-box would have on the proportion of individuals identifying as Kashmiri, as opposed to when it must be written in as an 'other' response.
- The socio-economic conditions of Kashmiris, and how these compare to Pakistanis and other ethnic groups.
- The feelings and opinions of Kashmiri, Pakistani, and Indian respondents when presented with a census questionnaire with or without a Kashmiri tick-box, through a series of focus groups and interviews

After careful consideration of all the available evidence, ONS recommended against the addition of a specific Kashmiri tick-box in the ethnic group question for the 2011 Census.

A full report on the research programme into the requirement for a Kashmiri tick-box is available separately on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/question-and-content-recommendations-for-2011/index.html>

### 6.6.4 Groups without tick-boxes

Over the various waves of testing respondents who were not represented by a tick-box option made use of the write-in boxes to report their ethnic group. These included Polish, South African, Australian, Italian and Spanish (these individuals were not necessarily interviewed primarily for the ethnic group question). For those who wrote in their ethnic group, this did not appear to be a problem and they were happy to do so.

Much use was made of the write-in boxes, particularly under the 'White' category:

*'The same as 15 [national identity question], there was the English, British, Irish, I saw 'Any other White' and just wrote my country.'* (Wave 6)

One respondent who had a Mixed background wrote in 'White/Hispanic' and when probed about their feelings on this replied:

*'...that's fine, there's too many to write down, so having that option to write it in ... I think it's good to have the extra bit to write it in.'* (Wave 5)

When ONS tested the 'Black British' tick-box on the questionnaire it was not used by the respondents who took part. However without it this identity was written in. One respondent noticed this identity included in the category name but pointed out that there was no box to tick. They chose to write this in and commented:

*'They do put Black British in a lot of things now... you're usually able to tick it.'*  
(Wave 5)

In Wave 3, the question was tested with Cornish respondents all of whom ticked the 'English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British' box.

Space constraints on the census questionnaire prohibit the inclusion of further tick-boxes for those groups without a specific response option. Overall, testing found that the write-in spaces were used effectively by respondents who felt the tick-boxes did not accurately reflect their ethnic group.

### 6.6.5 Renaming the 'British' tick-box

In the 2001 Census in England and Wales, respondents who identified as 'White' in the ethnic group question could choose between 'British', 'Irish' and 'Any other White background' (Figure 6.25). However, in Scotland respondents could choose between 'Scottish', 'Other British', 'Irish' and 'Any other White background' under the 'White' category (Figure 6.26).

**Figure 6.25:** Extract of 2001 ethnic group question showing 'British' tick-box (England and Wales)

**A White**

British       Irish

Any other White background,  
*please write in*

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

**Figure 6.26:** Extract from Scotland 2001 ethnic group question showing 'Scottish' and 'Other British' tick-boxes

**A White**

Scottish

Other British

Irish

Any other White background,  
*please write in*

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

This resulted in significant negative publicity for the census in Wales, where there were calls for a 'Welsh' tick-box.

The 2007 consultation identified that there was a need to know the number of Welsh people, both in and outside of Wales amongst all ethnic groups. One user said:

*'We would not wish to foster the impression that those who consider their background to be Black or Asian cannot also record themselves as primarily Welsh rather than British.'*

This was not just a Welsh issue however as surveys have also revealed that there is a growing number of people who wanted to identify as English (Heath *et al* 2008).

The proposed solution is to include a national identity question in the 2011 Census in England and Wales with individual tick-boxes for the UK national identities (for example, a 'Welsh' tick-box), followed by an ethnic group question.

ONS also explored whether these user needs required a change to the ethnic group questions.

First ONS considered a version of the ethnic group question with a tick-box for each UK nation as well as a national identity question (Figure 6.27).

**Figure 6.27:** Extract of ethnic group question showing tick-boxes for all UK nations (England)

A White

- British
- English
- Welsh
- Scottish
- Northern Irish
- Irish
- Any Other White Background, please write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

This version was rejected for a number of reasons.

Combining national identity and ethnicity would not work in the census questionnaire for England and Wales because there was not enough room for such a range of tick-boxes in both the national identity question and the ethnic group question, even if the two new 'Arab' and 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-boxes were not added.

While ONS has decided that the national identity question lends itself to a multiple-response option it was also decided that the ethnic group question should be a single-response one. It would be problematic to break the British tick-box down into separate categories in the ethnic group question as there is the risk that respondents might tick more than one option if for example they could not choose between identifying as English or British. Cognitive question testing carried out in Scotland showed that several UK-born respondents sometimes found it difficult to choose between 'Scottish', 'English' or 'British' response options.

ONS then tested a separate tick-box for 'English' in England and 'Welsh' in Wales followed by an 'Other British' tick-box (Figures 6.28 and 6.29).



**Figure 6.28:** Extract of ethnic group question showing 'English' and 'Other British' tick-boxes (England)

A White

English

Other British

Irish

Any other White background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Figure 6.29:** Extract of ethnic group question showing 'Welsh' and 'Other British' tick-boxes (Wales)

A White

Welsh

Other British

Irish

Any other white background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

In the White British/Welsh focus groups participants were shown the ethnic group question that was included in the 2007 Census Test, which included 'Welsh', 'Other British', 'Irish' and 'Any other White background' tick-boxes under the 'White' category. A common concern raised by respondents across all the focus groups was the inability of individuals who would tick boxes under other categories and describe their ethnicity as 'Black' or 'Asian', for example, to also describe themselves as having 'Welsh' ethnicity. However, it would be possible to record their Welsh national identity in the previous question.

This version of the question was also explored in cognitive testing. One Somali respondent commented that they were unable to tick a box for both 'Black' and 'Welsh' in the ethnicity question:

*'Who's to say that I can't be Black and Welsh?'*

Some respondents who ticked 'British' and not 'English' in the national identity question went on to tick 'English' in the ethnic group question. They explained that 'Other British' in the presence of English meant Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish, and they were clear that they did not belong to these groups:

*'I just think you might have some problems with these two here: 'English' or 'Other British' ... It's this business of saying you're English rather than British... You haven't got Scottish down there have you?' (Whole Questionnaire Testing)*

With this version the 'English' and 'Welsh' groups would only be captured in England and Wales respectively so no data would be available about 'Welsh' in England and 'English' in Wales. Little additional data would be provided by having an 'English' or 'Welsh' ethnic group tick-box in addition to an 'English' and 'Welsh' national identity tick-box. ONS concluded that including separate tick boxes for any of the UK nations is not justifiable in the ethnic group question.

### Single tick-box with expanded description

Finally ONS tested a single question but with an expanded description that named the UK nations as well as 'British' (Figures 6.30 and 6.31).



**Figure 6.30:** Extract of ethnic group question showing ‘English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British’ tick-box (England)

13 What is your ethnic group?

White

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

**Figure 6.31:** Extract of ethnic group question showing ‘English/Welsh/ Scottish/Northern Irish/British’ tick–box (England)

A White

English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

Initial cognitive testing of the question found that all respondents said the combination of the national identity question and this version of the ethnic group question together allowed them the opportunity to express their identity fully. Listing all of the nationalities together was not generally a problem for respondents. Most respondents were happy for the nationalities to be listed in one tick-box as they were able to choose a specific UK identity in the national identity question.

For respondents who identified as ‘English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British’ the majority found the appropriate box to tick quickly and easily, and were satisfied that this described them accurately.

There did not appear to be an issue with sharing a tick-box with White – English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish people. As one respondent commented:

*‘Ethnically I’m the same as a Scottish or Irish or Welsh person.’ (Wave 5)*

Most of the Welsh speaking respondents in both waves of testing were happy to tick ‘English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British’, as they were able to show their national identity in the previous question:

*‘oherwydd dw i’n ystyried fy hun yn Gymraes, ac wedi gallu ticio hynny yn rhif 12, felly mae rhoi nhw mewn grŵp fel ‘na [pointing at the ‘Welsh, English etc’ option] yn iawn.’*

*[because I consider myself to be a Welsh woman, and have been able to tick that in number 12 [national identity question], so putting them in a group like that [pointing at the ‘Welsh, English etc’ option is fine.]*  
(Welsh language testing, Wave 2)

*‘Heb 15, baswn i wedi ticio hwanna...’Unrhyw gefndir gwyn arall’ a ‘sgrifennu Cymreig yna.’*

*[Without 15 [national identity question],, I would have ticked that...’Any other white background and written ‘Welsh’ there.]*  
(Welsh language testing, Wave 2)

Respondents were clear that this was an improvement on the 2001 questionnaire:

*‘Iawn. Lot yn well na tro diwethaf...gryn dipyn yn well. Mae hyn yn disgrifio fy ethnigrwydd yn iawn. Dw i’n cofio rhoi lot o sticeri*

*[Fine. Much better than last time...much much better. This describes my ethnicity. I remember having to put lots of stickers over*

*dros y cwestiwn hwn yn 2001...'*

*this question in 2001...]*

(Welsh language testing Wave 1)

One respondent gave the 'thumbs up' sign before completing this question, and added:

*'Mae'r opsiwn yna!'*

*[The option's there!]*

(Welsh language testing Wave 1)

One respondent (in Welsh language testing, Wave 2) who had said that they were happy with their response, said that they would probably cross out the other 'British' options following 'Cymreig' ['Welsh'] on census night. Another respondent (Welsh language testing, Wave 1) mentioned that they would prefer to see all the British ethnic groups on a separate line:

*'Pam maen nhw wedi rhestru rhain i gyd efo'i gilydd?..Mae'n disgrifio'n dda, ond gallai hynny fod yn rhwystr i rai. Byddai'n well petaen nhw ar wahân, yn hytrach na i gyd efo'i gilydd...llinell ar ben ei hunan mi ddysten nhw gael'*

*[Why have they listed all these together? It describes well, but it could be a hindrance for some. It would be better if they were separate, rather than all together...one line for each they should have.]*

Some respondents in the Welsh Assembly Government's focus groups (Welsh speakers in particular) did comment on the lack of a separate 'Welsh' tick-box in this version. Most notably, respondents observed that it would not be possible for those analysing the census to determine whether an individual who had ticked the 'Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' tick-box was actually Welsh. Other respondents, however, said that the adequacy of the response option for 'Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' depends on whether there is a need for separate information on people who are 'White Welsh' as opposed to one of the other categories. In general, respondents stated that this response option did not present them with any major problems.

However some respondents commented that individual countries should not be listed as ethnic groups at all, particularly as they felt that they had already specified their national identity. One respondent commented:

*'Similar really aren't they? You could really just tick the box 'White', you don't need to say again that you consider yourself 'Welsh' or 'British'.'*

(Welsh language testing, Wave 2)

Some respondents wondered how people from other ethnic groups in Wales, who might also consider themselves as being of 'Welsh' origin would be able to answer this question:

*'Wrth gwrs, bydd 'na rai sy'n ystyried ei hun yn Gymro/Gymraes sy'n groen-ddu. Dw i'n nabod dau berson sy'n groen ddu ac yn ystyried eu hun yn Gymry...ond byddai hefyd yn bosib iddynt ateb y cwestiwn yna [pointing at 'Any other African, Caribbean or Black background, write in']*

*[Of course, there are those who consider themselves as Welsh who are Black...I know two Black people who would consider themselves as Welsh...but it's possible for them to answer this question here [pointing at 'Any other African, Caribbean or Black background, write in'].]*

(Welsh language testing Wave 1)

*'Gallwn i fod yn Sipsi Cymreig....gallwn i fod yn Gymro ac yn Sipsi...Beth am rywun sy'n Sipsi ac yn Sipsi Cymraeg..ble maen nhw'n mynd i ateb? Ro'n i'n nabod Sipsiwn Cymraeg yn [name of place]...bydden nhw'n iawn yn ticio'r blwch cynta' [pointing at 'Welsh, English etc..']...ond wedyn bydden nhw moy'n ticio hwnna [pointing at 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller']...ydyn nhw'n gallu ticio mwy nag un?'*

*[I could be a Welsh Gypsy. I could be a Welsh man and a Gypsy...where will they tick?I knew Welsh speaking Gypsies in [name of place]...they'd be fine ticking the first box [pointing at 'Welsh, English etc']...but then they'd want to tick that too [pointing at 'Gypsy and Irish Traveller']...can they tick more than one?]*

(Welsh language testing Wave 1)

The question also reduces ambiguity about the term 'British'. 'Britain is the name of part of a state, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It most often refers to the countries England, Scotland and Wales, but 'British' is the name of the national identity associated with being a subject of the United Kingdom' (Hickman, 2005). It would be unacceptable to list the nations of Great Britain and exclude Northern Ireland given that many respondents will have interpreted it in the more inclusive way in 2001.

It may be that some respondents will alter their responses as a result of this change in phrasing but ONS felt that this would be acceptable in order to enable consistency of interpretation of the first tick-box and ensure it is acceptable to UK respondents. However the new national identity question will allow for the first time a fuller understanding of the intersection of British, Northern Irish and Irish identities.

#### **Renaming the 'British' tick-box recommendation**

It is recommended that the 'British' tick-box is renamed 'English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British' in England and 'Welsh/ English/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British' in Wales.

#### **6.6.6 Repositioning the Chinese tick-box**

'Chinese' was included in the census as a specific tick-box category when the ethnic group question was first asked in the 1991 Census. In 2001, when headings were included in the question, Chinese was located under the 'Chinese or other ethnic group' heading in England and Wales while the 'Asian or Asian British' heading included South Asian categories (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi). In Scotland 'Chinese' was located under the 'Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British' heading.

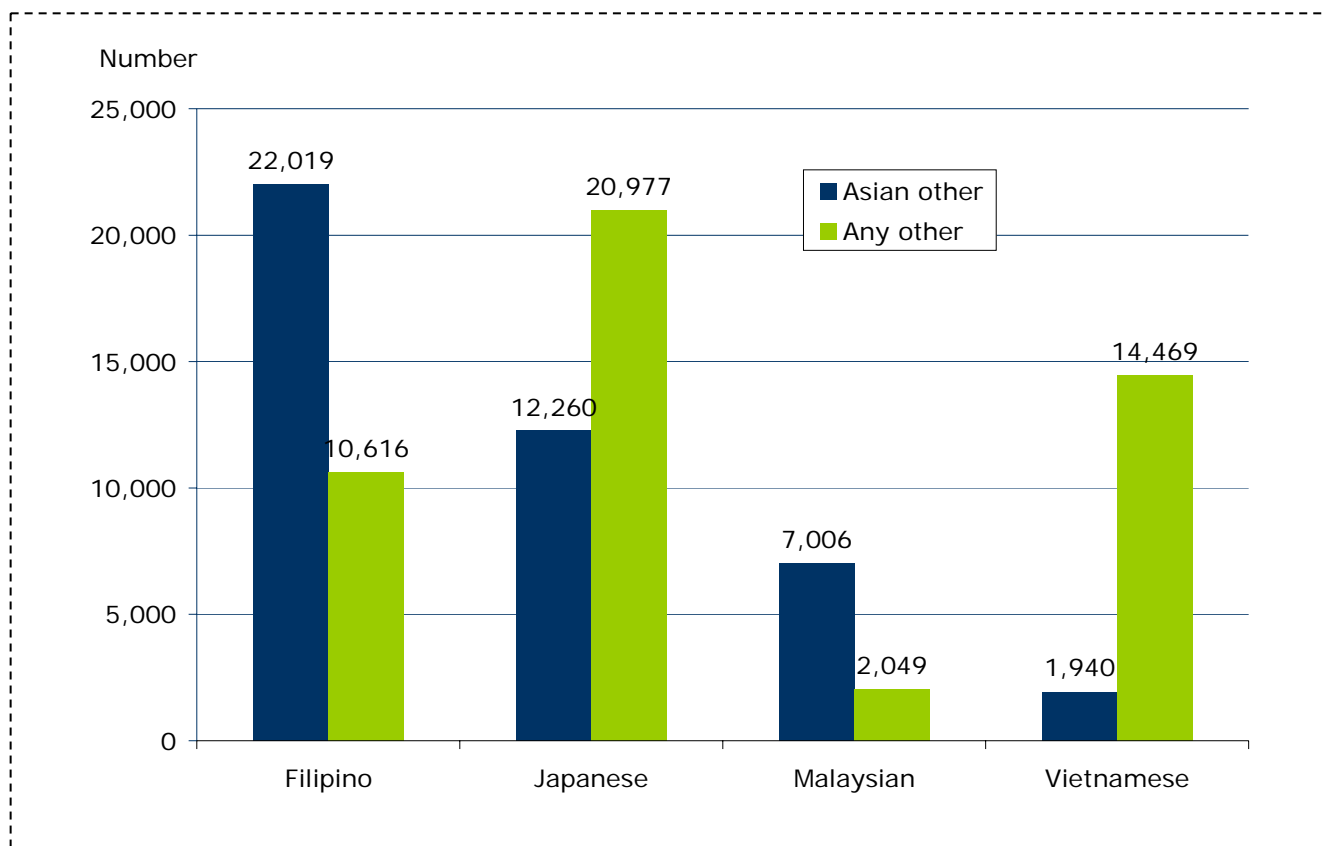
Between 2001 and 2006 the 'Chinese' population in England and Wales was the fastest growing group, with more than 10 per cent annual growth adding 147,000 to the 2001 estimate of 227,000 by 2006. More than 90 per cent of this growth is contributed by net migration. The 'Any other Asian background group' showed the second fastest growth rate of more than 9 per cent a year, driven by net migration, particularly in-migration from the Philippines (ONS 2007).

Analysis of 2001 Census data showed that people of East and South East Asian origin (for example Japanese, Malaysian and Vietnamese) were inconsistently

recorded, because some classified themselves as 'Other Asian', while others classified themselves as 'Other ethnic group' (Figure 6.32).

This hindered the production of statistics for these groups with some people from South East Asia coded to 'Other ethnic group'. ONS needs consistent responses to minimise confusion for respondents and to maximise data quality – although the 'other' populations are generally too diverse to be considered as coherent groups for analytical purposes, it means that if surveys or ethnic monitoring decide to include additional categories data can be combined more easily when comparing with census data. Consistently located write-ins are also easier to analyse and cross-tabulate.

**Figure 6.32: Write-in<sup>1</sup> locations for selected East and South East Asian ethnic groups: 2001 Census England and Wales**



<sup>1</sup> Write-ins were also recorded in smaller numbers under other headings.

Source: 2001 Census

In the early stages of testing ONS moved 'Chinese' from the final response section entitled 'Chinese or other ethnic group' and into the 'Asian or Asian British' section.

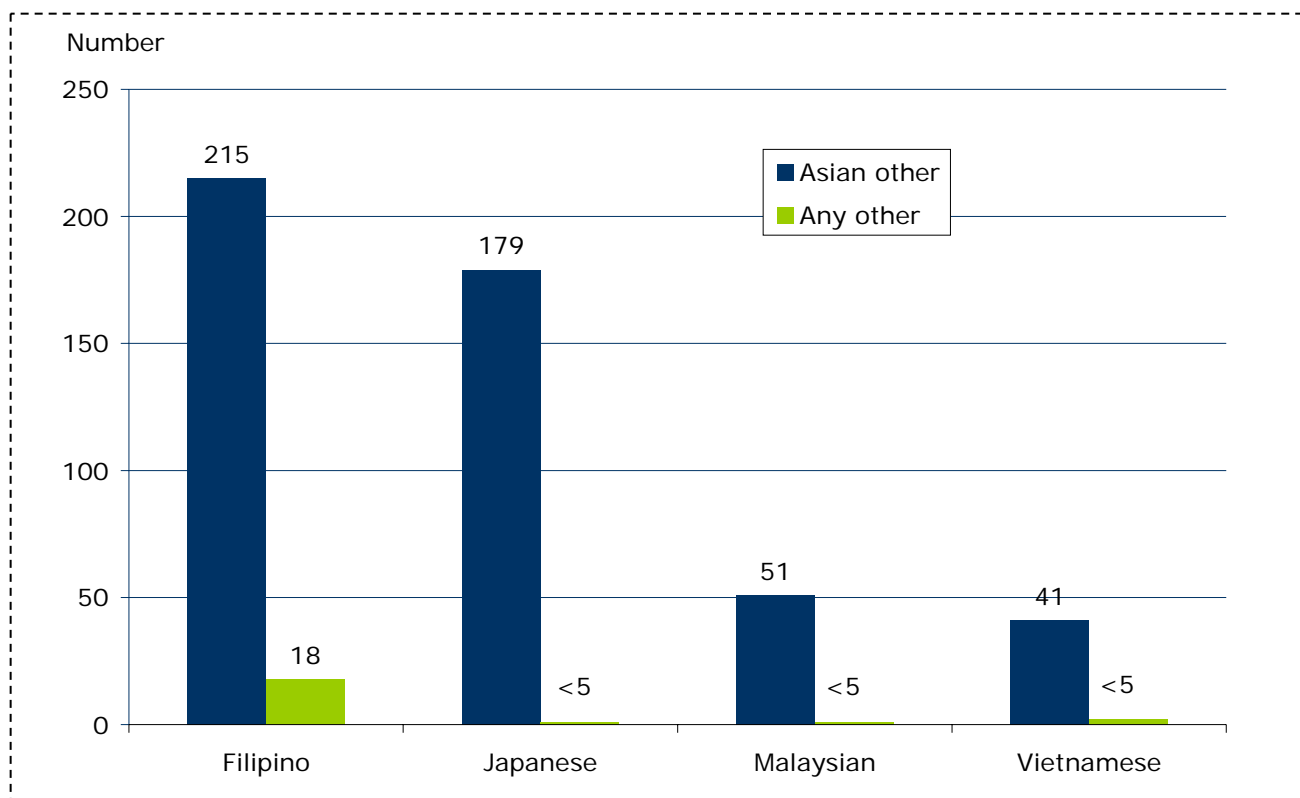
Some respondents to the 2007 consultation were concerned that the term 'Asian' is generally understood to refer to 'South Asian', and that including Chinese would hinder comparison with 2001 and make the 'Asian' category so broad that it would become meaningless. However other users supported the move.

There is no evidence that moving 'Chinese' to the 'Asian or Asian British' category will have an adverse impact on any of the other Asian sub-groups. In cognitive testing one Chinese respondent was pleased to see that 'Chinese' had been included under the 'Asian or Asian British' heading as they said that questionnaires often

assume that Asian means Indian or Pakistani. They said the box they had ticked was a 'perfect' description of their ethnic group.

The 2007 Census Test found that the relocation produced far more consistent responses from East and South East Asian respondents (Figure 6.33).

**Figure 6.33: Write-in<sup>1</sup> locations for selected East and South East Asian ethnic groups: 2007 Census Test<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Write-ins were also recorded in smaller numbers in other headings

<sup>2</sup> Held at Bath and North-East Somerset, Camden, Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent, Carmarthenshire.

Source: 2007 Census Test

With this change the 'Asian other' and the 'Asian' populations will not be comparable between 2001 and 2011. However, ONS already advises against presenting data in a combined Asian category and 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' and 'Chinese' categories will still be comparable with 2001 data.

There may be some impact on the mixed/multiple ethnic group 'White and Asian' category, although there are indications that in 2001 this group already included white and South East Asian and white and East Asian individuals, as well as white and South Asian people. Among the mixed white and Asian group 7 per cent were born in South Asia, 5 per cent in East Asian and 4 per cent in the Middle East (that is West Asian) (Bradford 2006). However, the ethnic background of people born in these areas could still be South Asian.

#### **Chinese tick-box recommendation**

It is recommended that the Chinese tick-box is relocated under the Asian heading and the heading is renamed 'Other ethnic groups'

### 6.6.7 Changes to 'African' and 'Caribbean' tick-box order

As in 2001, within each heading tick-boxes are placed in descending order of expected size. According to data from the 2007 Labour Force Survey, the Black 'African' population in England and Wales has become larger than the Black 'Caribbean' population and so ONS decided the order of the tick-boxes should be changed to reflect this (Figure 6.35).

**Figure 6.34:** Extract of ethnic group question showing 'Caribbean' tick-box before 'African' tick-box

D African, Caribbean, Black or Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other African, Caribbean or Black background, write in

**Figure 6.35:** Extract of ethnic group question showing 'African' tick-box before 'Caribbean' tick-box

D Black /African / Caribbean / Black British

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

This also affects the order in the heading 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British', which in turn reflects the terms African and Caribbean, which respondents will be familiar with. This change is also being made in the Scottish census questionnaire.

**Recommendation on changes to the 'African' and 'Caribbean' tick-box order:**

It is recommended that the 'African' tick-box is moved to come before the 'Caribbean' tick-box.

### 6.7 Use of nouns or adjectives in the Welsh language version

The ethnic group question tested in Welsh language testing, Wave 1 adopted the use of nouns for the response categories (see annex B for an explanation of the decision to use nouns rather than adjectives in the Welsh language questionnaire) (Figure 6.36).

**Figure 6.36:** Extract of ethnic group question using nouns

**13** Beth yw'ch grŵp ethnig?

Gwyn

Cymro/Cymraes, Sais/Saesnes, Albanwr/Albanes, Gwyddel/Gwyddeles o Ogledd Iwerddon, neu Brydeiniwr/Brydeinwraig

Gwyddel/Gwyddeles

Sipsi neu Deithiwr Gwyddelig

Unrhyw gefndir Gwyn arall, ysgrifennwch isod

[Welsh man/Welsh woman, English man/English woman, Scottish man/ Scottish woman, Northern Irish man/ Northern Irish woman, British man/ British woman']

All respondents felt that this question gave them an opportunity to describe their ethnic group accurately.

The question tested in Wave 2 of the Welsh language testing replaced the nouns ('Cymro/Cymraes etc' [Welsh man/Welsh woman]) with adjectives ('Cymreig' [Welsh –adjective] as ethnic group descriptors, as the use of nouns in the ethnic group question had caused the question to overlap the bottom margin in the Welsh language questionnaire, and there was less visible white space in the question. (Figure 6.33).

**Figure 6.37:** Extract of ethnic group question using adjectives

The image shows a screenshot of a questionnaire question in Welsh. The question is numbered 16 and asks 'Beth yw'ch grŵp ethnig?' (What is your ethnic group?). Below the question, there is a sub-question 'A Gwyn' (A White) with four radio button options: 'Cymreig / Seisnig / Albanaidd / Gwyddelig Gogledd Iwerddon / Prydeinig', 'Gwyddelig', 'Sipsi neu Deithiwr Gwyddelig', and 'Unrhyw gefndir Gwyn arall, nodwch'. At the bottom of the question box, there is a text input field with a placeholder label '[Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British]'.

As was the case in Wave 1, all respondents felt that this question gave them an opportunity to describe their ethnic group accurately, and there were no spontaneous comments about the use of adjectives rather than the use of nouns. However, a few respondents naturally used the nouns when discussing this question. Interestingly, a respondent born outside the UK, who had written the noun for their national identity, and had used nouns while discussing both their identity and their ethnicity, wrote the adjective to describe their ethnicity.

As the use of adjectives did not appear to cause any problems for respondents, a decision was made to recommend the use of adjectives for the 2009 Rehearsal Questionnaire, based on the fact that there was a shortage of space in the ethnic group question to include the male and female forms of the nouns.

Recent Welsh language Whole Questionnaire Testing tested the use of nouns in the national identity question and the use of adjectives in the ethnic group question. This combination proved to work well, and is recommended for the 2011 Census.

It was then necessary to decide on the order of adjectives, when more than one adjective are used together, e.g. Asian British. ONS decided to emphasise the 'colour' adjective – and so 'Du Prydeinig' was recommended as the equivalent of 'Black British' to be included in the Welsh language ethnic group question. (see Annex A for further information on the order of adjectives in Welsh).

Further details of the consideration given to the use of nouns or adjectives in the national identity and ethnic group questions can be found in Annex B.

**Recommendations on the use of nouns or adjectives in Welsh language**

It is recommended that the Welsh language version of the ethnic group question uses adjectives for response options.



## 7. Recommended location of the question

The questions on national identity, ethnic group, language and religious affiliation are all linked and therefore should be presented together as a suite of questions. To maintain respondent familiarity with the questionnaire, it is recommended that the question order used for the topics of ethnicity, identity language and religion in the 2001 Census is retained unless this conflicts with any recommendation:

1. Ethnic group
2. Knowledge of Welsh language (Wales only)
3. Religious affiliation

One of the primary factors driving the development of the national identity question has been to complement the ethnic group question by improving the public acceptability of the questionnaire as well as enhancing the quantity and quality of data collected on ethnicity. It is forecast that allowing respondents to state the national identity component of their identity first will increase the number of accurate answers to the ethnic group question. Therefore, it is recommended that the ethnic group question is asked immediately after the national identity question.

The recommended question order for the ethnicity, identity, language and religion suite of questions is:

1. National identity
2. Ethnic group
3. Knowledge of Welsh language (Wales only)
4. Main language
5. Spoken English proficiency
6. Religious affiliation

## 8. Final recommendations

The ethnic group question development process has produced questions that are recommended for the 2011 Census subject to approval by Parliament. The images below present the recommended questions for England, Wales (in English) and Wales (in Welsh).

**Figure 8.1:** Final recommended ethnic group question for England

**16** What is your ethnic group?

➔ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

**A White**

English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

**B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

**C Asian / Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

**D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

**E Other ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group, write in

**Figure 8.2:** Final recommended English language version of the ethnic group question for Wales

**16** What is your ethnic group?

➔ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

**A White**

- Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background, write in

**B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups**

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

**C Asian / Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background, write in

**D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British**

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

**E Other ethnic group**

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group, write in

**Figure 8.3:** Final recommended Welsh language version of the ethnic group question for Wales

**16** Beth yw'ch grŵp ethnig?

➔ Dewiswch **un** o'r adrannau o A i E, yna ticiwch **un** blwch sy'n disgrifio'ch grŵp neu'ch cefndir ethnig

**A Gwyn**

Cymreig/Seisnig/Albanaidd/Gwyddelig Gogledd Iwerddon/Prydeinig

Gwyddelig

Sipsi neu Deithiwr Gwyddelig

Unrhyw gefndir Gwyn arall, nodwch

**B Cymysg / grwpiau aml-ethnig**

Gwyn a Du Caribïaidd

Gwyn a Du Affricanaidd

Gwyn ac Asiaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Cymysg/aml-ethnig arall, nodwch

**C Asiaidd / Asiaidd Prydeinig**

Indiaidd

Pacistanaidd

Bangladeshaidd

Tsieineaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Asiaidd arall, nodwch

**D Du / Affricanaidd / Caribïaidd / Du Prydeinig**

Affricanaidd

Caribïaidd

Unrhyw gefndir Du/Affricanaidd/Caribïaidd arall, nodwch

**E Grŵp ethnig arall**

Arabaidd

Unrhyw grŵp ethnig arall, nodwch

## 9. Impact of changes since 2001 on comparability

Any changes to the ethnic group categories in the 2011 Census may reduce the comparability with information collected in the 2001 Census. In the 2007 consultation, over 50 per cent of data users expressed a need to compare information on combined ethnic group categories (section level) between censuses and almost 70 per cent had the same requirement for information on single ethnic group categories (tick-box level).

The relevant changes to the 2001 Census ethnic group question are:

- 'British' tick-box relabelled to 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British'
- 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box added under 'White' heading
- 'Chinese' tick-box moved from 'Chinese or other ethnic group' section to 'Asian/Asian British' section
- 'Black or Black British' heading relabelled 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British'
- Order of 'African' and 'Caribbean' tick-boxes reversed to list 'African' first
- 'Arab' tick-box added under 'Other ethnic group' section.

### 9.1 'British' tick-box relabelled to 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British'

There may be some very small loss of comparability between the new 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' tick-box and the 'British' tick-box used in 2001. One million respondents wrote in that they were English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish in 2001 and many of these may be happy to tick a 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' box. For most outputs, however, those respondents who wrote in that they were English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish were included as 'British', along with those that selected the 'British' tick-box

Output will be comparable for the combined 'White' population.

### 9.2 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box added

The introduction of the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' box may have some effect on comparability of the tick-boxes in the 'White' category. Some respondents who would have identified as 'British', 'Irish' or 'Any other White background' in 2001 will instead use the new tick-box to identify as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller'. Further analysis would be needed to assess the suitability of combining the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' category and for example the 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' category for the purpose of longitudinal studies.

It is expected that there will be no effect on comparability of the combined 'White' population. The Gypsy and Irish Traveller groups are predominately white and would therefore have mostly identified within the 'White' section in the 2001 Census. There is a possibility, however, of a slight effect on section comparability if some respondents wrote in 'Gypsy' or 'Irish Traveller' in the 'Chinese or other ethnic group' section in 2001.

### 9.3 'Chinese' tick-box repositioned from 'Chinese or other ethnic group' section to 'Asian/Asian British' section

It is not expected that repositioning 'Chinese' into the 'Asian/Asian British' section will have an impact on comparability with 2001 Census 'Chinese' data. Analysis using subjects in the ONS Longitudinal Study compared how individuals responded to both the 2001 Census and the 2007 Census Test. The eight subjects who identified as 'Chinese' in the 2001 Census did so again in the 2007 Census Test when the tick-box had been relocated.

However with this change the 'Asian other' and the 'Asian' populations will not be comparable between 2001 and 2011. User need for comparability at the heading level was lower than for the individual category level and ONS already advises against presenting data in a combined Asian category and 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' and 'Chinese' categories will still be comparable with 2001 data.

Repositioning the 'Chinese' tick-box may also affect comparability of the 'White and Asian' and the 'Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background' categories. Some respondents that would have recorded themselves as 'Any other Mixed background' in 2001 might choose to record themselves as 'White and Asian' in 2011, after seeing that the Chinese category is under the 'Asian/Asian British' heading rather than the 'Other ethnic group' heading.

#### **9.4 'Black or Black British' heading relabelled 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British'**

No effect on comparability is anticipated from the relabelled section D heading.

#### **9.5 Order of 'African' and 'Caribbean' tick-boxes reversed to list 'African' first**

No effect on comparability is anticipated from the reversal of 'African' and 'Caribbean' tick-boxes

#### **9.6 'Arab' tick-box added under 'Other ethnic group' section**

Introducing an 'Arab' tick-box may have a small impact on comparability with the 2001 ethnic group question although this is difficult to estimate accurately. Analysis using subjects in the ONS Longitudinal Study compared how individuals responded to both the 2001 Census and the 2007 Census Test. The four subjects who ticked the 'Arab' tick-box in the 2007 Census test all wrote 'Arab' in 2001.

Data from the 2001 Census suggests that many British Arabs ticked one of the 'Other' categories. For example, in 2001, 82 per cent of people born in Iraq ticked one of the 'Other' options. Some parts of the Arab population will also have ticked specific tick-boxes such as 'African'. However, data from the 2007 Census Test suggests that the introduction of the 'Arab' tick-box appears to have had little impact on response distribution.

Additional work will be carried out to further explore the impact on comparability with the 2001 Census.

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## Annex A: The order of adjectives in Welsh

The grammatical rule for order of adjectives following a **noun** in Welsh is that 'colour' adjectives precede 'place of origin' adjectives, e.g.

Grwp ethnig Du Prydeinig [British Black ethnic group]

It could be argued that 'grwp ethnig' ('ethnic group') is the understood main element of the phrase, and therefore the correct order of the adjectives would be:

Du Prydeinig

But using words which are 'understood' and 'hidden' as the main element of a phrase could be problematic. And so, the decision was based on which of the two adjectives were to be chosen as the main element of the phrase, i.e. which of the two adjectives did we want to emphasise, the 'colour' or the 'place of origin'. In Welsh the first element of the phrase has more emphasis, whereas in English the last element of a phrase has more emphasis:

- i) Emphasising 'colour': Du Prydeinig (in English 'British Black')
- ii) Emphasising 'origin': Prydeinig Du (in English 'Black British')

## Annex B: Welsh language tick-box descriptors – adjectives or nouns?

In the 2001 Census, as there was no tick-box for ‘Welsh’ in the ethnic group question, many respondents wrote ‘Cymro/Cymraes ydw i’ [‘I’m a Welsh man/ Welsh woman’] using the noun rather than the adjective ‘Cymreig’ [‘Welsh’], which is for describing things rather than people. Nouns were used in the tick-boxes in the first wave of Welsh language testing to test respondents’ interpretation of the questions on national identity and ethnic group (Figure 7.13).

**Figure 7.13:** Welsh language version of national identity question with nouns

**12** Beth, yn eich barn chi, yw'ch hunaniaeth genedlaethol?  
 ♦ Ticiwch bob blwch sy'n berthnasol.  
 Cymro/Cymraes  
 Sais/Saesnes  
 Albanwr/Albanes  
 Gwyddel/Gwyddeles o Ogledd Iwerddon  
 Prydeiniwr/Prydeinwraig  
 Arall, ysgrifennwch isod

[‘What do you consider your national identity to be? Tick every box/all boxes that is/are relevant’ ‘Welsh man/Welsh woman’, ‘English man/English woman’, ‘Scottish man/ Scottish woman’, ‘Northern Irish man /Northern Irish woman’, ‘British man/ British woman’, ‘Other, write-in below’]

Respondents also frequently used the nouns ‘Cymro/Cymraes’ when explaining their understanding of ‘hunaniaeth genedlaethol’:

*‘Pwy dw i’n teimlo ydw i fel person...a Cymro ydw i...os oedd yr opsiwn ddim yna baswn i wedi ticio arall ac ysgrifennu ‘Cymro’. Rhywbeth sydd yn naturiol, rhywbeth ych chi’n teimlo. Cymro dw i.’*

*[Who I feel as though I am as a person...and I’m a Welsh man. If the option wasn’t there I would tick other and write in ‘Welsh man’. Something which is natural, something which you feel. I’m a Welsh man.]*

(Welsh language Testing, Wave 1)

The use of nouns also seemed to instil strong feelings of ‘nationality’ – e.g. ‘Cymro dw i’ [‘I’m a Welsh man’]. Furthermore, one respondent commented that the adjective, ‘Cymreig’ is used to describe something, such as a Welsh song, Welsh poetry, but ‘Cymro’ [the noun] ‘yn mynd wrth wraidd y peth’ [‘gets to the heart of it’].

Despite the positive response to the use of the nouns in the first wave of Welsh language testing, one problem arose. The use of the male and female forms in the

ethnic group question had caused the question to overlap the bottom margin of the page, and there was less visible white space in the question wording. Therefore in the second wave of testing adjectives were used, for example 'Cymreig' ['Welsh'], 'Seisnig' ['English'], and so on (Figure 7.14).

**Figure 7.14:** Welsh language version of national identity question with adjectives

[How would you describe your national identity?  
 'Tick every box/all boxes that is/are relevant', 'Tick all that apply'; Welsh', 'English', 'Scottish', 'Northern Irish', 'British', 'Other note/enter, write-in']

Adjectives are often used in formal forms in Wales to describe national identity and ethnic group. It could be argued that the adjectives are 'describing' the nouns 'national identity' and 'ethnic group' rather than the 'person'. The use of adjectives avoids having to use male and female forms of the nouns and therefore takes up less space on the page.

The use of adjectives did not appear to cause any problems for respondents in the second wave of Welsh language testing and there were no spontaneous comments about the use of 'Cymreig' [describing 'Welsh' identity] rather than the use of 'Cymro/Cymraes' ['Welsh man/Welsh woman']. However, a few respondents naturally used the nouns when describing their identity and the use of the adjectives did not appear to instil the same strong feelings of 'nationality' that were evident in the first wave of testing.

ONS decided to recommend the use of the adjectives rather than nouns in the rehearsal questionnaires for the national identity and ethnic group questions. This recommendation was based on the fact that there was a shortage of space in the ethnic group question to include the male and female forms of the nouns, the use of adjectives did not appear to be an issue for respondents in the second wave of testing, and there was not an opportunity to further test using the nouns and adjectives together (that is nouns for the national identity and adjectives for the ethnic group question), before finalising the rehearsal questionnaires.

However, it was decided that the use of nouns and adjectives together (that is, nouns for the national identity question, and adjectives for the ethnic group question) would be tested for the Welsh language Whole Questionnaire Testing. This was based on the findings that:

- respondents tended to spontaneously use the nouns when describing their identity in the first and second wave of testing, and interestingly one respondent in the second wave of testing (which was testing the use of adjectives) wrote in his national identity as a noun, and wrote in his ethnic group as an adjective;
- it could be argued that as the colour labels are emphasised as describing 'ethnic group', that the use of adjectives to describe the noun 'ethnic group' is more acceptable in the ethnic group question, whereas as the national identity question instils more subjective feelings of a person's national 'identity' that the nouns are more appropriate;
- lack of space was not an issue for the use of nouns in the national identity question.

Welsh language Whole Questionnaire Testing found (as in the first wave of testing) that respondents spontaneously used the nouns when describing their national identity (none of the respondents used the adjectives while describing their national identity). Although there were no spontaneous comments on the use of nouns in the national identity and the use of adjective in the ethnic group question, a couple of respondents said that they were glad to see a 'national identity' question with 'Welsh man/woman' as an option. And a couple of respondents were asked about the use of nouns and adjectives in the national identity and ethnic group questions. Both of these respondents were happy with the response options. All of the respondents could answer the question without any difficulty.

#### **Welsh adjective/noun recommendation**

It is recommended that the Welsh language version of the national identity question uses nouns for response options.

It is recommended that the Welsh language version of the ethnic group question uses adjectives for response options.