
John Pullinger CB CStat | National Statistician

Preet Kaur Gill MP
Chair, APPG for British Sikhs
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

14 December 2018

Dear Ms Gill,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and the other members of the APPG for British Sikhs for your contributions in response to the consultation and the research undertaken for the 2021 Census topics.

The recommendations on the content and conduct of the 2021 Census have been published today in the White Paper *'Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales'*¹.

The recommendations fully recognise the need for good data on the Sikh community, both in terms of the need for high quality data from the Census and also more widely across all public services. I want to assure you that everyone who wishes to identify as Sikh will be able to do so under our proposals for the Census.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has made a number of recommendations in the White Paper to ensure we fully meet the need for high quality data for those who identify as Sikh. These are:

- continue to include a religion question, with a specific Sikh response option.
- develop “search-as-you-type” functionality, which will make it easier to specify as one wishes in the “other” box within the ethnicity topic.
- flexible data outputs will allow analysis of those who define their religious affiliation as Sikh (through the religion response option) and those who define their ethnic group as Sikh through the user of the “search-as-you-type” capability on the online ethnic group question.
- increase the analytical offering and outputs for those who identify as Sikh.
- estimate the Sikh population from all sources to assess the numbers who may declare themselves of Sikh background.
- utilise the Digital Economy Act 2017 to undertake data-linking for research purposes that will ensure that data on the Sikh population is available across public services, not just Census-collected data. We will work with Departments across Government to ensure this happens not just for the Census but on an ongoing basis.
- update our guidance on harmonisation to ensure that public bodies are fully aware of their duties to record information on the Sikh community.
- work with members of the Sikh population to encourage wider participation in the Census and raise awareness of the options of writing in their identity in the ethnic group question.
- We are also developing an on-line flexible dissemination system where users can specify the data they need and define their own queries to build tables.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-2021-census-of-population-and-housing-in-england-and-wales>

We have also offered to:

- work with local authorities and provide analysis to help them better serve the different communities in their areas.
- work with communities to ensure the data are easily made available to decision-makers and used.

These recommendations have been made after looking at all the evidence provided up to the publication of the White Paper. Alongside the White Paper we have published an updated topic report on ethnicity² which sets out in more detail the research behind these recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Pullinger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

John Pullinger

²<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/2021censustopicresearchupdatedecember2018>