Beyond 2011

Consultation on User Requirements for Population and Socio-demographic Information

An Analysis of Responses

ODS Consulting

National Records of Scotland
2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report provides an analysis of responses to the NRS Beyond 2011: Consultation The consultation on user requirements ran from March to June 2013. It focused on gathering users' views on their future requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics including:

on user requirements for population and socio-demographic information. The Beyond 2011 Programme in Scotland was established by NRS in September 2011 to explore future options for producing population and socio-demographic statistics that best meet user needs in Scotland. The programme is investigating a range of possible solutions, including the possibility of using administrative data sources or developing a more efficient census design.

- the frequency of data provided;
- the geographical level at which data is available;
- the accuracy of the data; and
- the level of disaggregation required.

NRS also carried out a series of stakeholder engagement events across Scotland between November 2012 and February 2013. Key findings from these events have been included in this report.

Overview of Respondents

NRS received a total of 125 responses to the consultation. Almost two thirds (64%) of responses were received from organisations and just over a third (36%) came from individuals. Most respondents (57%) had a local government, NHS Board or central government interest – whether responding on behalf of the whole organisation or as an individual. Most respondents indicated that they currently used census data, alongside a range of other data including government surveys and local authority and Health Board data.

User Requirements for Data

The data currently collected by the census was highlighted as an important source of information for a range of respondents. It was praised for its accuracy, reliability, and usefulness. Population and socio-demographic data gathered by the census is particularly important to inform policy and service planning, and monitor progress towards agreed targets and responsibilities. It is also an important source of data for wider research and to evidence need for services.

Many respondents felt that data requirements had increased in recent years, and were likely to continue to do so. Data needs will continue to be influenced by the need to plan services effectively at a time when public and voluntary sector finances are under pressure. Important policy and legislative developments – such as the Equality Act 2010, Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and UK Government Welfare Reform programme – will continue to influence information needs.

While other existing data sources may be used to supplement the information gathered by the census, respondents felt that the census provided the most reliable and accurate data in relation to most themes. Many suggested that other data sources would best be used to complement, rather than replace, the census. However, health and social care is the main area where respondents felt that alternatives to the census data had particular potential, and could be further developed.

Key Statistical Requirements

Frequency

There is strong support for the population and socio-demographic data currently gathered by the census to be collected and reported on more frequently, across all themes included in the consultation. There was a clear preference for information to be made available every one to two years, across most themes. Generally, respondents felt that more frequent data would provide more up-to-date information to inform service planning, monitoring of activities, and other areas of work.

However, there were variations between respondent categories. While local authorities and NHS Boards expressed a requirement for statistics on a one to two year basis, charities and voluntary organisations had a preference for a three to five year frequency. Central government and academic/research respondents were much more likely than others to require a minimum ten year frequency for availability of statistics.

Some respondents discussed the need to balance frequency of access to data, and accuracy of data. Accuracy was seen as a key strength of the census. While many wished to see data available more frequently, some recognised that it may not be possible to gather comprehensive data which was as accurate as the census on a more regular basis.

Geography

There is strong support for data being made available at the lowest geographical level possible. The greatest proportion of respondents required data to be available at data zone level and multiple levels, across most themes. Very few respondents indicated a need for data being available at a Health Board, electoral ward, intermediate geography or Scotland level.

While there were strong similarities across themes, there were significant differences in the minimum level of geography required between different categories of respondent. Local authorities and NHS Boards indicated a broad preference for data being available at data zone level and output area – and many suggested that data should be available at multiple different levels. Central government bodies were more likely to require information at local authority level, or suggest alternative or multiple levels at which information was required. Many academic/research respondents indicated a requirement for information to be available at an individual record level.

Most respondents who selected the lowest geographical areas – output area and data zone – felt that having information available at a very local level was important to allow tracking and analysis of trends among local communities, and to facilitate better service planning at these levels.

Disaggregation

Respondents providing a view on the level of disaggregation required for population and socio-demographic statistics generally called for information to contain ‘as much detail as possible’ but did not elaborate. Some suggested that the current level of disaggregation of census results should not be reduced. Many commented on disaggregation in relation to age. Some asked for age related information to be made available by specific year (rather than band). A range of respondents felt that disaggregation of age was particularly important in relation to people under 16 and over 65 (and smaller age groups within these).

A number of respondents from charities, voluntary organisations and local government organisations called for greater detail on equalities information.

Accuracy

Respondents were asked to choose the level of accuracy at which they required population and socio-demographic statistics to be made available. The options provided were very high (95% or higher); high (90% or higher); medium to high (80% or higher); and medium (less than 80%).

Most respondents (87%) required population information at a very high accuracy level. In contrast only a third of respondents required transport information at a very high accuracy level (33%). A significant number of respondents felt that the level of accuracy required depended on the geographic level of the data, and the frequency of availability.

Academic/research respondents, local authorities and NHS Boards were most likely to identify the need for very accurate information across all themes. Charities, voluntary organisations and others were the least likely to require very accurate information.

Flexible Question Set

The consultation gathered respondent views on the use of a flexible question set, which would possibly allow more targeted socio-demographic questions in specific areas. Some respondents could see the value of having a flexible question set, particularly if certain core data continued to be captured on a consistent basis for the entire population. However, others felt that this would affect the value of the census in enabling consistent analysis and comparisons.

Equalities Issues

There was strong agreement among respondents, particularly public bodies, that the census was critical in enabling them to meet their statutory requirements in relation to the public sector equality duties. Many felt that the census was the most accurate, reliable and robust source of information to provide an understanding of the needs of people with protected characteristics and people experiencing disadvantage. Many reported that the census was the only current source of equality statistics which met their requirements.

Many respondents noted that access to accurate and timely information on groups with protected characteristics was important to help inform service planning and outcome monitoring. In particular, respondents highlighted the important role of the census in providing baseline data to enable public bodies to monitor progress in relation to their equality outcomes.

A number of respondents, particularly those representing equality groups, felt that more information should be available for some protected characteristics. Some called for greater disaggregation and correlation of information on protected characteristics.

Respondents across categories felt that more frequent collection of data on population, household and family structure, housing, and ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation was required.

Final Comments

The consultation offered respondents the opportunity to make further comments in relation to their requirements, the consultation itself, or the Beyond 2011 Programme more widely. Approximately half of the respondents to these questions reinforced the importance of the census and the data it collected. Respondents also reiterated the increasing demand for data. Many felt that the census was the only source of information that could meet many data requirements at the level of detail and accuracy required.

A small number of respondents commented on future census options. Some were positive about the potential of developing an online version of the census, but others expressed concern that this might have a negative impact on return rates.

Some charities and voluntary organisations felt that the questions used in the census were not always appropriate or understood by individuals. Particular concerns were raised in relation to questions gathering information on protected characteristics.

A few respondents drew attention to potential consequences of a greater emphasis being placed on administrative data in place of census data – with concerns around whether administrative data was robust enough to be used for statistical purposes; and how stable administrative data would be over time.

1. INTRODUCTION

About this report

1.1 This report provides an analysis of responses to the National Records of Scotland (NRS) Beyond 2011: Consultation on user requirements for population and socio-demographic information.

1.2 The report provides a detailed analysis of written responses to the consultation and views contributed at stakeholder engagement events. It looks in detail at the submitted responses to the consultation and provides an analysis of the views of particular groups, highlighting trends and issues where appropriate.

Background to the consultation

1.3 The census collects information about the population every ten years. The statistics provide a rich picture of Scotland's people by providing information about the similarities and differences in the population's characteristics locally and nationally, at a high level of accuracy. This information underpins the allocation of public money, the planning of public services, and is also used in a range of secondary statistics such as Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

1.4 Fundamental changes in society have resulted in an increasingly mobile population and the development of more complex social structures. People regularly move between different areas and countries. This increase of mobility has made it more challenging to conduct the census. The concept of a snapshot every ten years is becoming less relevant. For example, the increase in membership of the European Union between 2001 and 2010 has increased migration to and from Scotland. There is also an increasing demand for frequent, detailed and comparable population and socio-demographic information at a range of geographical areas (from the national to the local level).

1.5 With the advance of technology, and the potential availability of data already collected by administrative systems, there may be opportunities to collect census type information in new and innovative ways.

1.6 The Beyond 2011 Programme in Scotland was established by NRS in September 2011 to explore future options for producing population and socio-demographic statistics that best meet user needs in Scotland. The programme is investigating a range of possible solutions, including the possibility of using administrative data sources or developing a more efficient census design.

1.7 The decision to review the traditional census was agreed across the United Kingdom. NRS is working closely with colleagues in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the future production of UK population statistics.

About the consultation

1.8 The consultation was launched on 18 March 2013 and closed on 10 June 2013. It asked 18 questions. Respondents could complete the response form online or submit a paper version of the survey electronically or by post.

1.9 The consultation focused on gathering user views on their future requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics including:

- the frequency of data provided;
- the geographical level at which data is available;
- the accuracy of the data; and
- the level of disaggregation used.

1.10 Section A of the consultation gathered information about the respondents. Sections B and C asked a range of questions which focused on user requirements for data, and key statistical requirements. Section D gave respondents the chance to provide any further comments on the Beyond 2011 Programme in Scotland, and the consultation itself. Many of the questions included a number of sub-categories or themes which respondents were asked to consider.

1.11 The consultation sought to build upon previous consultations conducted by NRS, as well as stakeholder engagement events. These included a series of stakeholder engagement events across Scotland between November 2012 and February 2013:

- Genealogist, registrars and ancestral history event – 8 November 2012
- Edinburgh events – 15 January and 19 and 21 February 2013
- Perth event – 24 January 2013
- Inverness event – 29 January 2013
- The Islands events – 29 January and 11 February 2013
- Aberdeen event – 30 January 2013
- Glasgow events – 7 and 8 February 2013
- Equalities focused events – 5, 8 and 11 March 2013

1.12 Each event included a presentation about the background to the Beyond 2011 Programme. Views were then sought from participants on how they currently use census information and their future requirements for population and socio-demographic statistics. The outcomes of these events helped to inform this consultation.

1.13 The events were informal and the write-ups were anonymous, to facilitate discussion. It is therefore not possible to include specific comments made at these events in this consultation report.

Approach to analysing the responses

1.14 An initial analysis of submitted responses was undertaken and respondents were categorised into groups. Several of the consultation questions asked respondents to comment on each of a number of sub-categories or themes. Comments provided under each theme were coded to identify the main point being made and to allow quantitative analysis.

1.15 Where a respondent chose not to answer using the respondent form provided, the response was read thoroughly and where the respondent directly answered any of the questions, the comments were fed into the relevant part of the analysis 'matrix'.

1.16 Respondents were asked if they wanted their response to be made public. Where respondents indicated that they did not want their response to be made public, their comments have not been quoted in this report. Their views were included as part of the qualitative analysis, where appropriate.

1.17 Key findings from the stakeholder engagement events have been included in the most relevant sections of this report. The focus of this report was on analysis of the written responses to the consultation. However, the notes which NRS produced summarising discussions at each event were analysed and incorporated into this report where key points supported or diverged from the issues raised in the written responses.

1.18 The analysis used both a quantitative and qualitative approach. A quantitative approach was used to identify the number of respondents from different respondent categories identifying a particular issue or information requirement. Qualitative analysis was undertaken across all respondent categories. However, for the purposes of quantitative analysis respondents were grouped into larger categories, as outlined in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Respondent categories used for analysis

Respondent Category	Categories for Quantitative Analysis
Central government department Government agency Non-departmental public body	Central government
Local government NHS Board/ organisation with a health interest	Sub-national government
Charities and voluntary organisations	Charities and voluntary organisations
Genealogy/ family historians Higher/ further education	Academic/ research
Private/ commercial organisation Individual/ member of the public Other Not specified	Other

1.19 The main focus of the analysis was qualitative based on what respondents said and any patterns in views. This qualitative approach has involved identifying key themes and issues emerging from the consultation.

1.20 Given the importance of understanding the implications of any changes to the production of data relating to equality issues, a secondary analysis of the matrix was carried out to identify comments and themes specifically related to these. The consultation did not include a question on equality issues in isolation. The analysis of equality issues raised via the other questions in the consultation, and at the stakeholder engagement events, is contained in Section 5 of this report.

1.21 A number of respondents repeatedly explored the same issues and made similar or identical comments across questions or across themes within the same question. Where this occurred, the comments have been reported in the most relevant section. Many respondents provided detailed responses to questions at the start of Section C but either did not answer, only provided very short answers, or repeated points made previously, in response to later questions. This resulted in the analysis being focused on the detailed responses provided. This is a common occurrence with questionnaires where respondents are asked to provide detailed information over a range of areas and their response is similar across these areas, and is not unique to this consultation.

1.22 This report is based on all responses received, whether framed in the context of statistics usually produced by a census, or in terms of data requirements more generally. Some respondents clearly had very specific interests and focus, and others were only able to frame their requirements by making reference to census data.

1.23 Based on the content of some consultation responses, it appeared that some respondents may not fully understand the data currently gathered by the census and how the census is used within wider government statistical products. This report does not comment on or seek to qualify these views as part of this analysis. NRS will follow up with respondents to the consultation where there is a need to understand their responses more and to gather more detailed information. This work is planned throughout 2013 and early 2014.

2. OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

Introduction

2.1 This section provides an overview of the responses received to this consultation. It considers who the responses came from; what their main uses of population and socio-demographic data are; and the main data sources they use. It also provides general comments on the responses.

Question 4: What area of interest do you represent?

2.2 NRS received a total of 125 responses to the consultation from organisations and individuals. Of these, 77 respondents completed the consultation online and 48 provided a Word document version of their response. Almost two thirds of responses (64%) were received from organisations and just over a third (36%) came from individuals. Many who responded as individuals were affiliated to an organisation or a broad area of interest. A minority (9%) indicated that they were responding solely as a member of the public.

2.3 Table 2.1 shows responses by respondent category and the groupings used for quantitative analysis (shown in bold). A full list of organisational respondents (that agreed to their response being published) is in Appendix One.

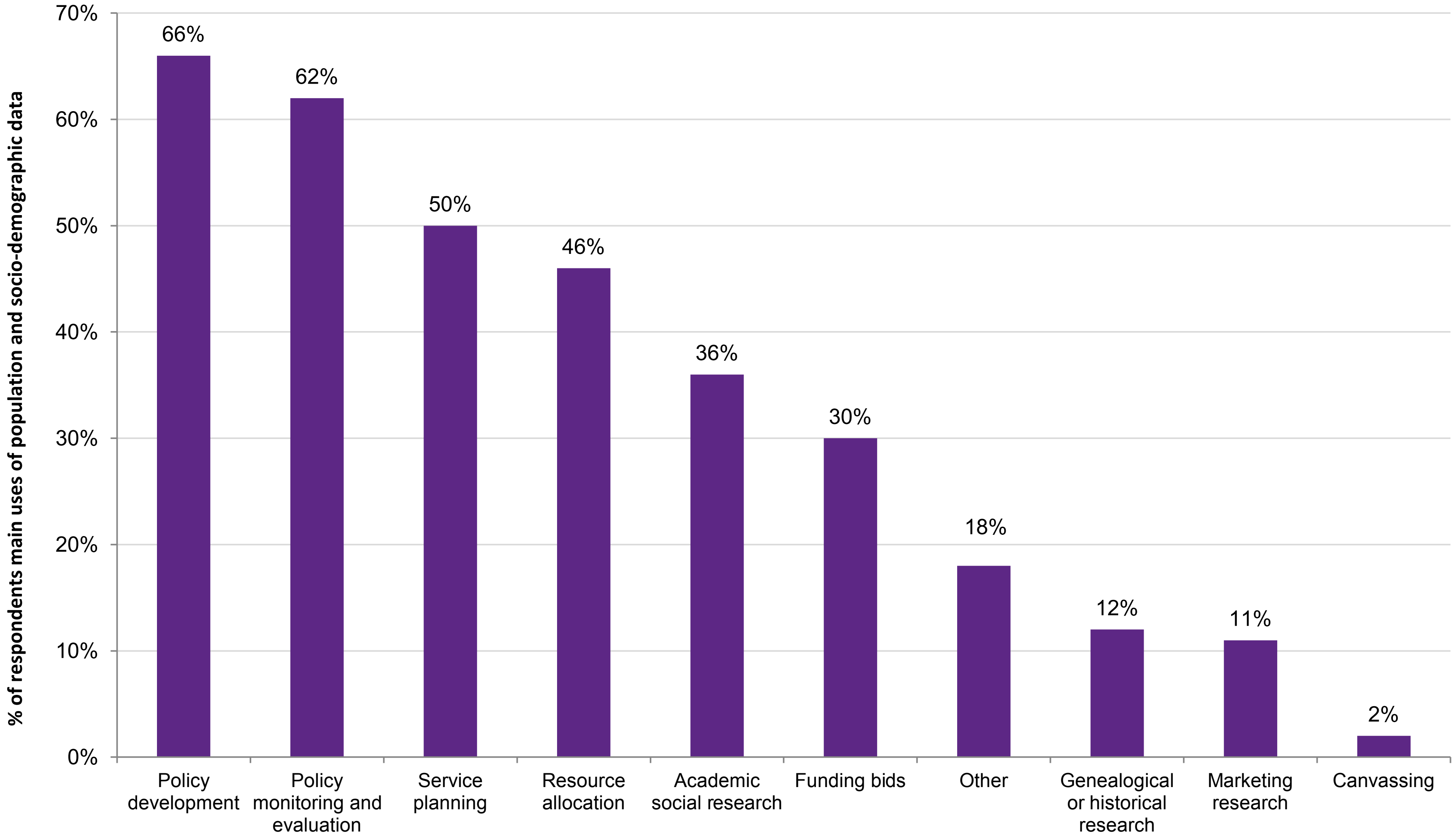
Table 2.1: Distribution of respondents by category

Respondent category	Total responses Number	%
Local government	37	30%
NHS Board/organisation with a health interest	7	6%
Total sub-national government	**44**	**35%**
Government agency	10	8%
Non-departmental public body	6	5%
Central government department	11	9%
Total central government	**27**	**22%**
Charity/voluntary organisation	**19**	**15%**
Genealogy/family historians	5	4%
Higher/further education	3	2%
Total academic/research	**8**	**6%**
Individual/member of the public	11	9%
Private/commercial organisation	8	6%
Other	4	3%
Not specified	4	3%
Total 'other'	**27**	**22%**
Total responses	**125**	

*Percentages have been rounded to nearest whole figure

Question 5: What are your or your organisation's main uses of population and socio-demographic data?

Figure 2.1: Main uses of population and socio-demographic data



2.4 Two thirds of respondents (66%) identified policy development as one of their main uses of population and socio-demographic data (which most interpreted as census data). This was particularly true of local government organisations, charities and voluntary organisations, government agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and central government departments.

2.5 Just under two thirds of respondents (62%) identified policy monitoring and evaluation as a main use of population and socio-demographic data. Key users in this respect included local government organisations, charities and voluntary organisations, NHS Boards or organisations with a health interest, NDPBs and central government departments.

2.6 Half of respondents (50%) reported service planning as one of their main uses of population and socio-demographic data. This was particularly important to local government organisations, NHS Boards or organisations with a health interest, NDPBs and central government departments.

2.7 Local government respondents identified the extensive use made of population and socio-demographic data to inform funding bids. Almost half (49%) used it for this purpose, compared with a fifth (22%) across all other respondent categories.

2.8 Some attendees at stakeholder engagement events highlighted the commercial value of the census, through tourists seeking to trace their family history and heritage.

Question 6: What data/information sources do you or your organisation currently use?

Figure 2.2: Data/information sources currently used

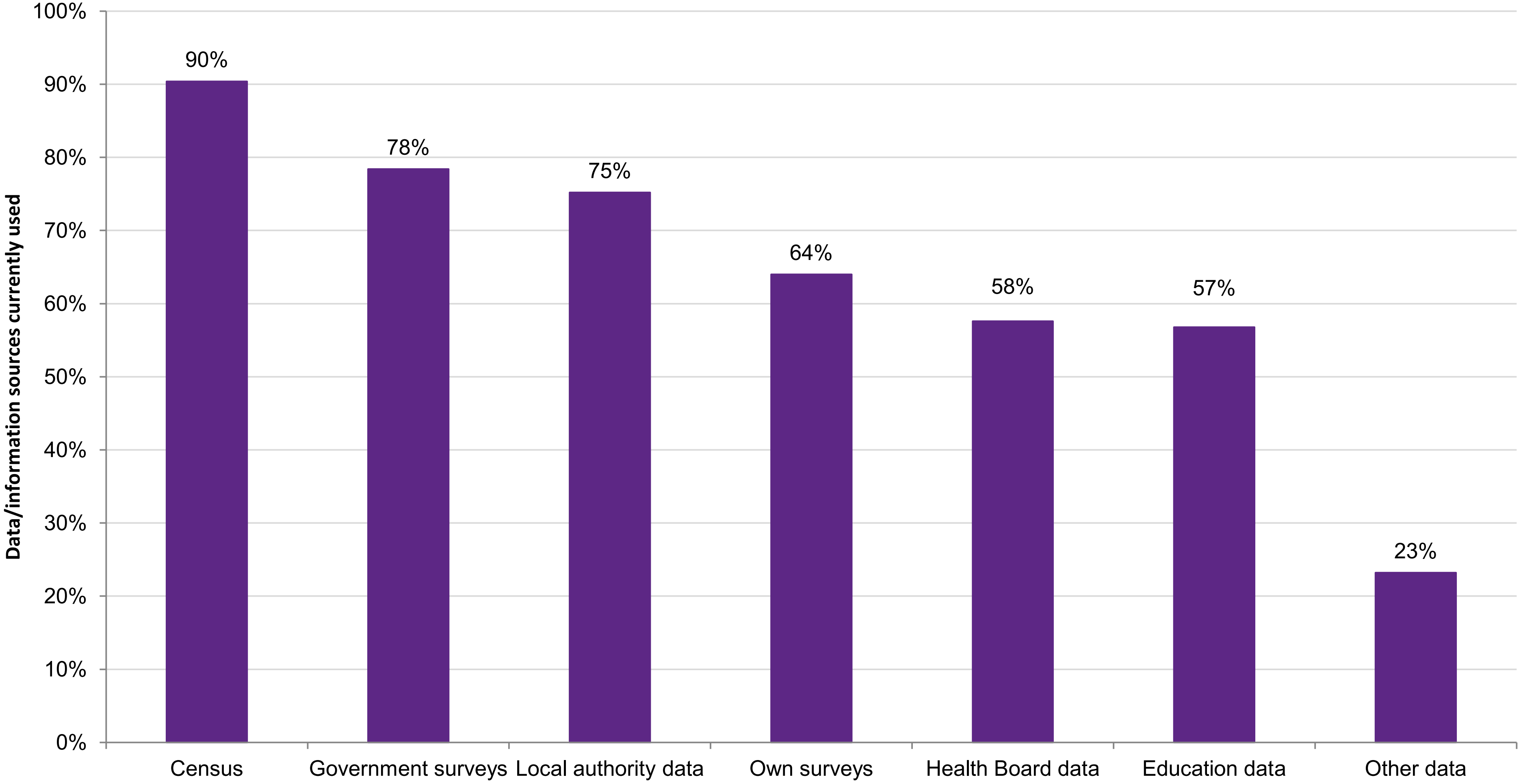
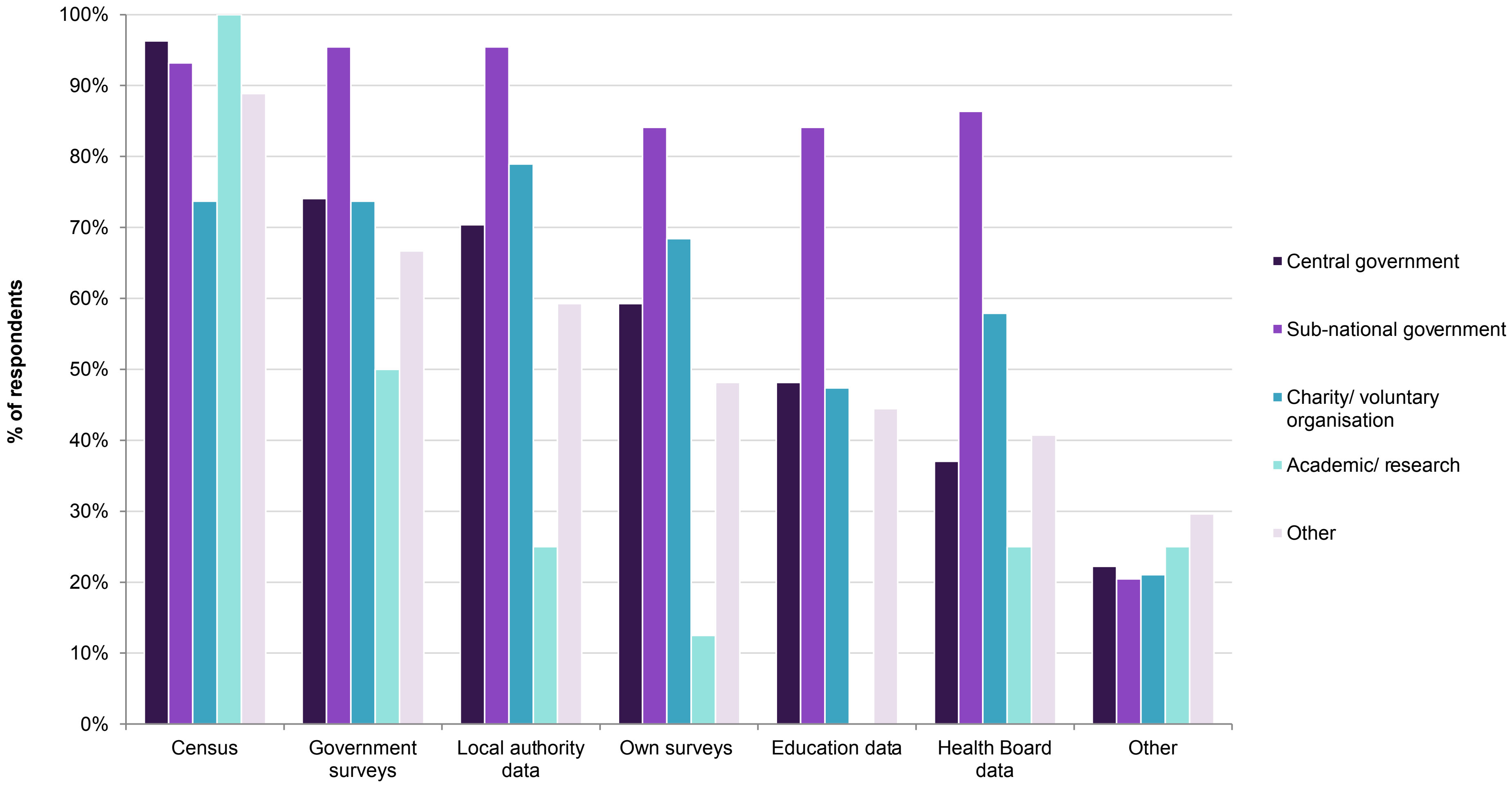


Figure 2.3: Data/information sources currently used, by respondent category



2.9 Overall, most respondents (90%) indicated that they currently used census data. This ranged from 100% of government agencies, NDPBs and central government departments to 74% of charities and voluntary organisations.

2.10 All academic/research organisations (100%) indicated that they currently used census data and information. These organisations were less likely to use other identified sources of data than other respondent categories.

2.11 While the vast majority of sub-national government organisations (93%) also currently made use of census data, these organisations were significantly more likely to draw on other identified sources of data than other respondent categories.

3. USER REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA

3.1 This section of the report provides an analysis of responses to Section B of the consultation and the relevant views expressed at stakeholder engagement events. Section B asked about respondents' current population and socio-demographic statistical and information requirements in relation to a number of broad themes.

Question 7: What information requirements have emerged or increased in importance to you or your organisation over the last five years? If possible please also give the reasons for the change in priority and the specific area that the change relates to.

Table 3.1: Emerging or increasing information requirements, by theme

Themes	Number of responses	Percentage of consultation respondents identifying theme*
Population	94	75%
Household and family structure	79	63%
Labour market and socio-economic activity	77	62%
Ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation	76	61%
Health and community care	75	60%
Housing	70	56%
Migration	69	55%
Education	60	48%
Transport	56	45%
Other	10	8%
Total number of consultation respondents	**125**	

*Percentages have been rounded to nearest whole figure

3.2 The consultation asked respondents to identify what information requirements had emerged or increased in importance over the last five years, across a range of themes. Table 3.1 shows the number and percentage of respondents that reported emerging or increasing information requirements within each theme.

3.3 Overall:

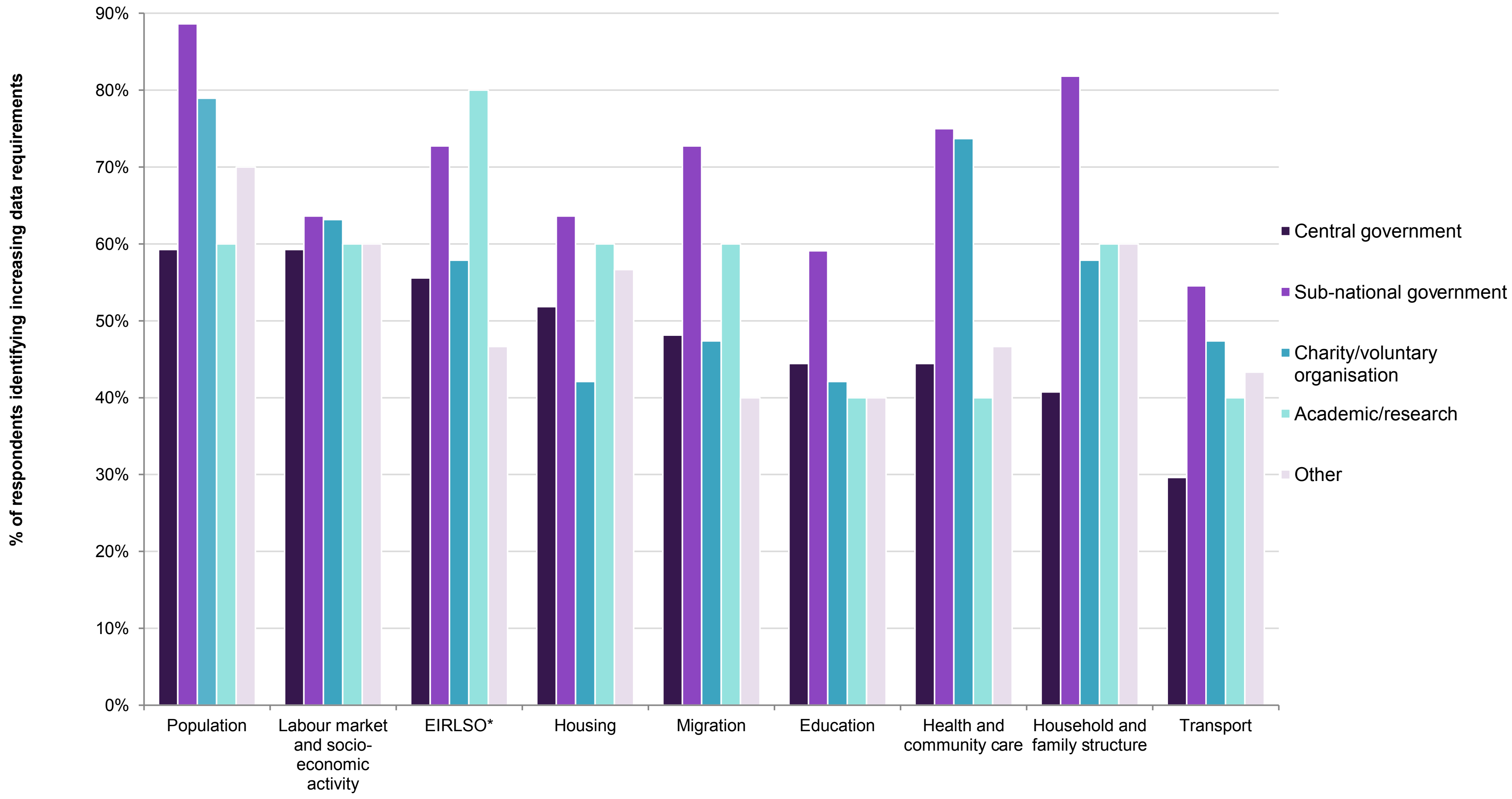
- There was a good response to this question, both across themes and respondent categories. Three quarters (75%) of all respondents reported emerging or increasing information requirements for at least one theme.
- Of the themes listed in the consultation document, information requirements around population were most often identified as emerging or increasingly important.
- Conversely, less than half of respondents (45%) identified emerging or increasing information requirements around transport.

- Some respondents simply stated the ongoing importance of information, across all themes, rather than identifying emerging or increasing requirements.

3.4 Analysis by respondent category is in Figure 3.1. Sub-national government organisations (local authorities and NHS Boards) were the most likely respondent category to identify emerging or increasing information requirements across almost all themes. However, academic/research respondents were more likely than all other respondent groups to identify increasing or emerging information needs within the theme covering ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation.

3.5 Charities and voluntary organisations were most likely to identify emerging needs within the population and health and care themes - while almost four fifths reported increasing information requirements in relation to population, this fell to less than half for housing and education.

Figure 3.1: Increasing information requirements, by respondent category



*EIRLSO – Ethnicity, Identity, Religion, Language and Sexual Orientation

Population

3.6 Three quarters of respondents (75%) stated that their requirement for population information was increasing or emerging. A number of reasons were cited. Many respondents mentioned issues relating to equality, which are briefly referred to here – but covered in detail in Section Five.

3.7 Acceleration in demographic change in Scotland had increased the importance some respondents placed on population information. Migration, fertility and an ageing population were all felt to have increased the pace of demographic change. For some, this increased the importance of up-to-date population information to understand needs and plan future services.

> "Population has risen up our policy agenda, both because of the demographic trends in our area and because of the need to deliver services with reducing resources."
>
> (Argyll and Bute Council)

3.8 Many respondents (mostly local government, charities and voluntary organisations) emphasised the importance of population information to inform service planning across a range of areas. These included health and social care services, local housing strategy and provision, waste services, education provision, infrastructure development, Single Outcome Agreements and services targeted at people with protected characteristics (in terms of the Equality Act 2010).

3.9 The need for an evidence based approach to service planning was felt to have increased in recent years by some respondents. Many mentioned that their local strategies and plans increasingly required a strong evidence base. Some (particularly local government organisations and NHS Boards) felt there was a greater requirement for robust population information at a local level.

> "Increasing demand for small area (data zone) population data by single year of age and sex for service planning and monitoring population health status. This information is particularly important to support policy ambitions to provide care in local settings."
>
> (NHS Highland)

> "We are increasingly required to provide evidence for our policies and more detailed information both geographically and in terms of age and gender groups."
>
> (Falkirk Council)

3.10 Some respondents, particularly local government organisations, highlighted an increasing need for population information at a small area level due to a shift to planning services at a community or neighbourhood level.

> "Small area information on population has become more readily requested as a result of the move to the Place approach to Community Planning."
>
> (Individual)

3.11 The current financial environment has also increased the need for population information to inform service and resource planning. Some, particularly local and central government respondents, felt that the need for population information, and evidence based policy and planning, was increasing due to greater pressure on resource planning as a result of financial constraints.

> "With shrinking budgets it is even more important that resources are allocated in the most effective way."
>
> (Aberdeen City Council)

> "With continuing public sector budget constraints interventions will be increasingly targeted at certain population groups and in certain areas, creating a greater need for population data at smaller area level and non standard geographies."
>
> (East Dunbartonshire Council)

3.12 Similarly, charities, voluntary organisations and private organisations mentioned the importance of population information to demonstrate the case for services to be directed to specific groups where they believed a need existed, or to demonstrate that planned services would be viable.

> "...possession of the type of local population information gathered by the census is becoming ever more important in terms of general service planning, marketing and social / market research."
>
> (Glasgow Life)

> "Tracking the population over the last few years has become more important given the decline in government grants and funding available to housing associations. As a result, population information is more important in order to assess whether future plans will be viable for certain areas."
>
> (Wheatley Housing Group)

3.13 Across respondent categories a number of respondents identified the growing importance of population information as a result of legislative and regulatory requirements, and policy initiatives. Many respondents cited the responsibilities placed on public bodies as a result of the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent statutory regulations. Reference was also made to other legislative and regulatory requirements, and policy initiatives such as:

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill
- The European Union Gender Directive (Council Directive 2004/113/EC)
- The Social Housing Charter
- The National Parenting Strategy

Household and family structure

3.14 Almost two thirds of respondents (63%) reported increasing or emerging information requirements in relation to household and family structure.

3.15 A number of the reasons highlighted were the same as for population information, particularly in relation to emerging policy areas, the planning of services in the context of declining resources, and a general increase in the demand for statistical information. In some cases the introduction of new planning frameworks and bodies (including Strategic Development Plan areas and National Parks) were driving the demand for information at new geographical levels.

3.16 Some respondents (including some genealogists and family historians, further and higher education organisations, and local government organisations) suggested that household types and structures had become more complex and there was a need for up-to-date information to understand these.

3.17 Information on family composition was increasingly important due to an interest in the UK Government's Welfare Reform programme. Some central government departments and local government organisations mentioned the work they were now undertaking to assess the impact of the Welfare Reform programme and the introduction of Universal Credit.

> "Potential impacts of government policy such as Welfare Reform can be managed if data on household structure is available."
>
> (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)

3.18 One central government department identified an increasing demand for household information to enhance understanding of poverty.

3.19 A few local government respondents suggested that the rate at which new households were forming may have been changing in recent years. With the economic downturn leading to a reduction in new house building and constraints on mortgage and labour markets, this was seen as likely to be having an effect on the formation of new households. Having up-to-date information available on households was viewed as crucial to identify any changes in trends.

> "There is a feeling that the credit crunch has led to constraint on new household formation with many would-be household heads forced to continue to share. Local development plans need to understand the requirement for different household types, sizes and tenures."
>
> (City of Edinburgh Council)

Labour market and socio-economic activity

3.20 Almost two thirds of respondents (62%) identified increasing or emerging information requirements in relation to the labour market and socio-economic activity. Many repeated comments previously made in relation to other themes. A number of respondents reiterated the need for policy and practice to be evidence based, and highlighted that information on labour market and socio-economic activity helped them to demonstrate the impact they were having.

3.21 In line with comments on other themes, many respondents stated that information on the labour market and socio-economic activity was increasingly important to support the development of policy, services and decision making in relation to housing, economic development and employability.

3.22 Labour market and socio-economic activity information was also highlighted as useful in reviewing the impacts of Welfare Reform on Scottish families, and measuring income deprivation at a local level. Some respondents (including local government organisations, central government, charities and voluntary organisations) drew attention to the current economic downturn and the work they were undertaking to understand and address its implications.

> "Economic and employment information has increased in importance with the economic recession. Employment information is useful, but also particularly industry breakdown and occupation to inform and plan service delivery and policy development."
>
> (East Dunbartonshire Council)

3.23 One central government department made specific reference to the importance of socio-economic data to quantify the number of vulnerable children in Scotland as part of the ongoing development of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill.

3.24 Information about labour activity among older age groups was also highlighted by a small number of local government respondents as increasing in importance – particularly due to the growing older population in their local authority area. These respondents highlighted the importance of up-to-date labour and socio-economic data to assess employment activity among older age groups.

> "The issues here are generally around issues of under-employment and around zero contracts and self-employment as well as around economic activity and inactivity – especially among the older age groups as retirement becomes a matter of choice or necessity."
>
> (South Lanarkshire Council)

Ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation

3.25 Almost two thirds of respondents (61%) reported increasing or emerging information requirements in relation to ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation.

3.26 For most local government organisations, the introduction of public sector duties arising from the Equality Act 2010 was the key driver in the increased importance they placed on this information. Some charities and voluntary organisations providing public services also highlighted the implications of the Equality Act 2010 on their activities.

> "With the Equality Act 2010 and associated specific duties for local authorities, good quality equality data is increasingly important."
>
> (Orkney Islands Council)

> "This requirement [around ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation] is linked to the equality duty and the need to assess impacts of decisions on different groups within society. This process requires robust, local level data to inform decision making and track progress over time."
>
> (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

3.27 Some local government organisations referred to increased migration to their area in recent years and the need to understand the demographic changes taking place as a result, to inform service planning.

> "Due to the level of increased migration in recent years this information is crucial to understand the change in the structure of the population. No alternate sources of data are available. Our understanding of communities is mainly anecdotal."
>
> (Dundee City Council)

> "In Aberdeenshire the large number of A8 migrants[1] in particular has made ethnicity and language data more needed than ever, in order to facilitate service planning e.g. language support in schools."
>
> (Aberdeenshire Council)

3.28 For some charities and voluntary organisations the increased importance of information relating to information on ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation was as a result of research they were currently undertaking or new services they were planning to introduce.

> "[Information on ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation is] becoming more important because of our

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[1] A8 refers to the eight countries that joined the European Union in 2004.

> involvement in inter-faith and inter-cultural activity and dialogue."
>
> (The Salvation Army)

3.29 The importance of information on languages spoken was highlighted by some respondents, particularly NHS Boards and local government organisations. In addition, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Bòrd na Gàidhlig pointed to the need to have information on the Gaelic language, including age profile of Gaelic users.

Health and community care

3.30 Over half of respondents (60%) noted that information on health and community care was increasing or emerging in importance. However, many did not give detailed reasons for their response.

3.31 Demographic changes and, in particular, the ageing population were reasons highlighted by a number of respondents as key factors in the increasing importance they placed on information about health and community care. Some respondents again pointed to the impact of the public sector duties arising from the Equality Act 2010, which also increased their need for information on health and community care.

> "Data on disability and long term health conditions is of increased and critical importance within the context of the 2010 Equality Act."
>
> (Glasgow Life)

3.32 Respondents also cited a number of other legislative and policy initiatives including:

- the introduction of Self-Directed Support;
- the Early Years Collaborative;
- changing models of service delivery, including shared services and joint working as part of the integration of health and social care services;
- increased interest in information on carers, informal carers and young carers;
- early intervention and prevention strategies; and
- work being undertaken on Healthy Life Expectancy.

Housing

3.33 Over half of respondents (56%) reported increasing or emerging importance of information on housing.

3.34 As with the previous themes, the emergence of new policy areas was cited as one of the main reasons for an increased interest in data on housing.

3.35 The UK Government's Welfare Reform programme has resulted in increased interest in information about housing circumstances for different groups and individuals – particularly among local and central government respondents.

> "Monitoring the effects of Welfare Reform requires detailed information of this sort."
>
> (Falkirk Council)

3.36 Some central government departments, charities and voluntary organisations highlighted a particular interest in the relationship between housing and children's poverty, wellbeing and vulnerability.

> "We have used this [housing] data to estimate the number of children living in different tenure situations – particularly interested in the number of children living in poor housing conditions (an assessment of 'vulnerable children')."
>
> (Scottish Government – Children and Families Analysis)

3.37 A number of local government respondents highlighted the impact of the economic downturn on the housing market and the consequential growth and importance of the private rented housing sector which they required to better understand.

Migration

3.38 Just over half of respondents (55%) noted that information on migration was increasing or emerging in importance.

3.39 Local government, NHS Boards, and charities and voluntary organisations all highlighted the growing importance of migration information to inform service planning. Some local government organisations drew attention to the large scale in-migration they had experienced in recent years, or the strategies they were pursuing to encourage in-migration to counter de-population and demographic change. These respondents felt that information on migration at a national and local authority level was essential to inform their strategies. This was particularly highlighted in relation to planning housing development and land allocation.

> "This [data on migration] is an emerging need; with much greater mobility it becomes increasingly important to understand how our communities are changing over time."
>
> (NHS Dumfries and Galloway)

> "Data about migration from Israel enables us to plan more effective support and service provision for this group."
>
> (Scottish Council of Jewish Communities)

Education

3.40 Just under half of respondents (48%) stated that information on education was increasing or emerging in importance.

3.41 Respondents were generally non-specific as to why information requirements on education were increasing apart from making general comments about the increased need for information to support policy development and implementation.

Transport

3.42 Just under half of respondents (45%) reported that information on transport was increasing or emerging in importance.

3.43 A small number of government agencies and local government organisations highlighted increasing or emerging information requirements in relation to transport as a result of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the consequential reporting requirements in terms of carbon emissions.

> "[...distance travelled and mode of travel...]is becoming increasingly important as a proxy measure for carbon reduction."
>
> (Argyll and Bute Council)

3.44 Local government and NHS or health related organisations identified 'active travel' as an emerging area of information need.

3.45 Information on transport was also increasingly important for some respondents in terms of planning public services. Some charities, voluntary organisations and NHS Boards increasingly used information about transport to assess barriers to accessing services. Housing organisations and local government organisations used information about transport to plan land use, housing development and parking allocations – which some felt were increasingly under pressure and required increasingly robust evidence to inform decisions. Some organisations, such as Transport Scotland, required information on transport to inform all aspects of service planning.

> "Transport is an emerging concern as the sustainability issues of planning services closer to people's homes...start to have an impact."
>
> (NHS Dumfries and Galloway)

3.46 Other respondents highlighted that changes in the population profile and behaviours meant that there was an increased emphasis on gaining a better understanding of the use and availability of different types of transport services, to inform service planning - for example around 'travel to work' areas.

Other

3.47 A small proportion of respondents (8%) identified other information requirements which are emerging or increasing in importance in response to question 7. The vast majority of those identifying other information requirements were local government organisations.

3.48 The most common other emerging information requirement, highlighted by three local authorities, related to digital exclusion and the need to gain a better understanding of who was being marginalised in this respect and where they lived.

3.49 Other emerging information requirements mentioned by respondents included:

- fuel poverty;
- digital inclusion;
- poverty indicators in rural areas;
- daytime population data for small geographical areas; and
- transgender and disability status.

Question 8: What information requirements have declined in importance to you or your organisation over the last five years? If possible please also give the reasons for the change in priority and the specific area that the change relates to.

3.50 Overall:

- The number of respondents identifying declining data requirements in relation to the key themes was very low, the highest being four per cent in relation to household and family structure, and housing.
- Of all the respondent groups, private individuals were the most likely to comment that information requirements were declining.
- Respondents offered very little commentary in terms of the rationale for specific data being less important to respondents or their organisation.

3.51 In a number of cases, respondents used this question to comment on the value they placed on data rather than a decreasing requirement for it.

3.52 A small minority of respondents (4%) reported a decline in the need for information on household and family structure data, specifically in relation to marital and civil partnership status.

3.53 The same proportion of respondents (4%) reported a decline in the need for information on housing. One charity suggested that data on whether accommodation was self-contained or otherwise was no longer necessary.

3.54 A very small number of respondents noted declining information requirements in relation to transport, education and labour market and socio-economic activity. Few provided reasons for this.

3.55 The response level to this question indicates that, in general, data requirements are increasing rather than decreasing.

Question 9: What would be the impact (including financial and legal) on you or your organisation if NRS data was not available to support your information requirements under the following themes?

Table 3.2: Responses on the impact of NRS data not being available, by theme

Themes	Number of responses	Percentage of consultation respondents*
Population	98	78%
Household and family structure	67	54%
Ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation	62	50%
Housing	60	48%
Health and community care	60	48%
Labour market and socio-economic activity	52	42%
Migration	53	42%
Education	50	40%
Transport	50	40%
Other	6	5%

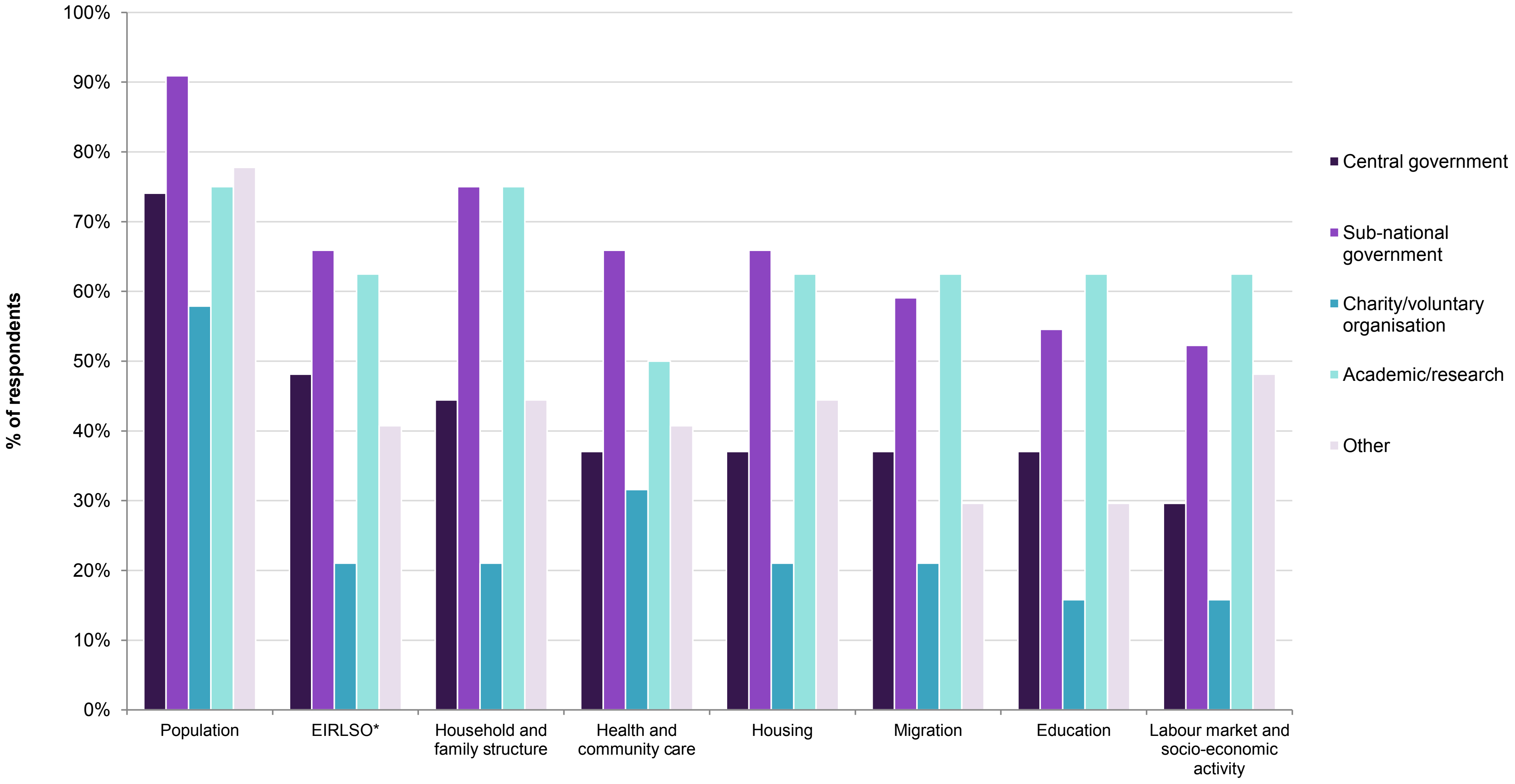
*Percentages have been rounded to nearest whole figure

3.56 Table 3.2 shows the number and percentage of respondents that gave their views on the implications of NRS data not being available to support information requirements, by theme. Many respondents interpreted ‘NRS data’ to mean census data.

3.57 Overall:

- The highest proportion of respondents (78%) gave their views on the impact of population data not being available. Fewest observations were made on the impact of data on transport and education not being available (40%).
- Many respondents emphasised the importance of the data currently gathered by the census, and expressed concern that it might not be available in the future.

Figure 3.2: Respondents who commented on NRS data not being available, by theme



*EIRLSO – Ethnicity, Identity, Religion, Language and Sexual Orientation

3.58 Across all categories, most respondents gave their views on the impact of population data not being available – with fewer responding in relation to other themes. A high proportion of academic/research respondents (75%) also commented on the impact of data on household and family structure not being available.

3.59 A greater proportion of sub-national government and academic/research respondents generally provided views on the impact of NRS data not being available across all themes. Charities and voluntary organisations were consistently less likely to give their views on NRS data not being available.

3.60 Many respondents made general comments under one theme; repeated the same views across a number of themes; or reinforced points made in relation to other questions. To avoid repetition this section explores the common issues – rather than dealing with each theme in turn.

3.61 Many respondents took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of the data gathered from the census. For some, this made it difficult to provide a detailed response to this question.

> “It is difficult to envisage a situation where no NRS data was available and almost impossible to assess the impact of not having that data.”
>
> (Aberdeen City Council)

> “Regularly produced and accurate population figures are critical for planning services and monitoring population health.”
>
> (NHS Highland)

Service planning

3.62 The biggest issue for respondents related to the impact on service planning if data collected from the census was not available. This was an issue for all respondent categories, but particularly central and local government, and charities and voluntary organisations.

3.63 Respondents reported that not having NRS data would make it more difficult to assess needs of local communities, plan appropriate services and allocate resources effectively. Some respondents felt that it may lead to inefficient use of resources.

3.64 Respondents identified a wide range of policy and service delivery areas which would suffer from the loss of NRS data. These included:

- employment services;
- charities and voluntary sector support work;
- health and social care services;
- services for older people;
- educational services;
- children’s services;

- inclusive service planning for specific equalities groups;
- land use and the planning of housing provision;
- transport planning; and
- infrastructure planning.

> “Household and housing data is very important for housing needs and demand assessments which feed into strategic and local development planning.”
>
> (City of Edinburgh Council - Development Planning)

> “Migration trends are the main element in population change and their volatility means up-to-date information is crucial in order to plan and tailor services effectively.”
>
> (West Dunbartonshire Council)

National policy and legislation

3.65 Respondents from all categories, particularly central and local government, charities and voluntary organisations, highlighted that the loss of all types of census data would negatively impact on their ability to respond to and monitor progress in relation to legislation and national policy approaches such as:

- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2003;
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009;
- Single Outcome Agreements;
- Local Development Plans;
- Local Housing Strategy; and
- Housing Need and Demand Assessments.

3.66 Many respondents highlighted that the loss of NRS data could result in a failure of public bodies to meet their public sector equality duties. A number of charities and voluntary organisations representing groups with protected characteristics felt that the loss of most types of NRS data would make it difficult to monitor equality issues and challenge government organisations and other public bodies, if and when the need arose.

> “If we could not support our diversity policies for the protected characteristics there could be legal implications.”
>
> (NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Directorate of Public Health)

> “This would make it difficult for public bodies that rely on national data to inform policy decision, and would make it extremely difficult for public bodies to meet the requirements of their public sector equality duties.”
>
> (Stonewall Scotland)

> “Failure to meet these obligations might result in legal action and reputational damage for the organisation.”
>
> (Argyll and Bute Council)

Other concerns

3.67 Several organisations (from across respondent categories) stated that without NRS data they would need to purchase information from other sources or commission topic-based, in-house research which could be less reliable, timely, cost-effective and independent.

> "Having to undertake survey work ourselves has significant resource and cost implications; to the extent that external funding is often sourced to assist in this process."
>
> (Aberdeen City Council)

3.68 Respondents felt that using information from sources other than the census might not allow for accurate comparative analysis (such as between local areas), data linkage, population profiling or monitoring of trends over time.

3.69 It was noted that key statistical products such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and the NRS Mid-Year Population Estimates which use census data would also be negatively impacted by a loss of NRS data.

> "NRS mid-year population estimates by age, sex and geography underpin a large percentage of NHS National Services Scotland's (NSS) analytical output...."
>
> (NHS National Service Scotland)

3.70 Respondents across the consultation felt that the loss of most types of NRS data would negatively impact on wider research.

> "Household and family structure data is very important as it enables researchers to look at the change over time and how this might impact on other outcomes."
>
> (Scottish Longitudinal Study)

3.71 Several respondents (mostly from local government organisations) highlighted that the loss of NRS data would negatively impact on their ability to secure funding from external sources in situations where they were required to prepare funding applications.

3.72 Attendees at the stakeholder engagement events reinforced many of the points made in written responses. There was concern about:

- failure to meet equality duties;
- a "domino effect" – impacting on the quality of data sets which rely on the census;
- ineffective service planning and resource allocation; and
- the need to commission or carry out in-house research – which was likely to be less accurate and very costly.

3.73 Attendees at the genealogists' stakeholder engagement event also raised the point that as the census is compulsory, it is the only source of information that provides an accurate representation of the current population living in Scotland at a specific point in time.

Question 10: What new work, policies or emerging priorities/interests are likely to affect your information requirements over the next five years?

3.74 Overall:

- Three quarters of respondents (74%) reported emerging priorities or interests, which were likely to affect their information requirements over the next five years.
- Many respondents took the opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of factors they had already described in response to previous questions.

The Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty

3.75 The Equality Act 2010 (and related public sector duties) was highlighted as being likely to have a major influence on data requirements. This was raised by respondents to the consultation, and attendees at stakeholder engagement events (generally central and local government, and charities and voluntary organisations). They stressed the importance of small area, accurate census data to support the planning and monitoring of activities in relation to equality.

> "We are planning on carrying out detailed analysis on each of the equality themes and the census is often the only source of information on small groups such as Gypsies / Travellers."
>
> (Scottish Government Equality Analysis Unit)

3.76 Some respondents identified the need for in-depth data in relation to sexual orientation; gender identity; looked after children; children on the Child Protection Register; child poverty; carers; vulnerable adults; and ethnicity[2]. They felt that having this information would allow their organisations to identify the size and location of particular communities and help understand their needs. Participants at stakeholder engagement events also identified similar issues which are explored further in the NRS stakeholder engagement Equalities Report.

Service planning

3.77 The need to plan effective and efficient services to meet the needs of increasingly complex and changing communities was identified as another major influence on data requirements in the next five years. This was a particular concern for local government, and charities and voluntary organisations.

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[2] It should be noted that some of this information is already available from the census, while some is not currently available.

3.78 Respondents to the consultation and attendees at a number of the stakeholder engagement events highlighted the importance of having accurate disaggregated data for small geographies, in order to plan services and allocate resources effectively – particularly when public and voluntary sector finances are under pressure. Benchmarking of services was raised as an important issue.

3.79 Central government departments, local government organisations, health related respondents, and charities and voluntary organisations highlighted the increasing demands for data to inform effective resource allocation as health and social care services continue to be integrated. Longitudinal and small area data were highlighted as particular priorities.

> "The main issue which we can foresee is the increasing integration of health and social services which will demand data for service planning."
>
> (Falkirk Council)

3.80 Scotland's ageing population was highlighted by local government organisations and NHS Boards as being a key policy focus over the next five years, and one which would require access to increased levels of data for service planning.

3.81 A continuing focus on sustainable economic growth was highlighted by several respondents (mainly local government organisations) as having important implications for data requirements in the next five years.

Changes to welfare and benefits

3.82 Welfare Reform and other changes to how support is funded were identified as important influences for data requirements. This was raised by local government respondents and others.

Other policy and legislative developments

3.83 Respondents identified other policy and legislative developments that may increase data requirements. These included:

- the impending Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill
- Reshaping Care for Older People
- The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill
- The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Single Outcome Agreements
- The Independence Referendum
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
- Economic development policy and Local Development Plans
- Local Housing Strategies
- Housing Need and Demand Assessments and related documents.

Other issues

3.84 Other emerging priorities identified by respondents included:

- Data linkage - Some respondents felt that data linkage in relation to census information would become increasingly important over the next five years (for example, as a result of the Scottish Government's Data Linkage Framework).
- Funding - A few local government organisations highlighted that applying for external funding would become more important over the next five years, as reliance on securing new forms of funding increased.
- The environment - A number of local government organisations and others including private/ commercial organisations highlighted the increasing focus on the environment and the impact this would have on information requirements over the next five years. The renewable industry, carbon emissions and domestic energy sources were all areas identified as requiring more detailed data.

Question 11: Are there any alternative data/information sources, which you think we should investigate for producing population and socio-demographic information? These could be national, regional or local information data sources.

3.85 Appendix Two provides a list of alternative data and information sources that respondents suggested could be investigated in relation to producing population and socio-demographic information. Some respondents identified a generic source for alternative data (e.g. local authority data). Others were specific about the data source (e.g. Council Tax records). As a result, we have not provided a detailed quantitative analysis of the number of suggestions made.

3.86 Overall:

- Over a third of respondents (37%) suggested alternative data sources in relation to one or more theme. Most simply stated what the alternative sources were, but provided few additional comments. Those who did comment mostly reinforced the importance of the census as a primary data source.
- The greatest number of alternative data sources suggested was in relation to the population theme.
- The fewest suggestions made were for transport and migration data.

3.87 In some cases, the alternative source of data suggested by respondents is actually dependent on data from the census, an issue identified by some respondents themselves.

> "....some of the SIMD [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation] indicators are lifted directly from the census, and census data is used to create denominators for other indicators. So the SIMD shouldn't really be seen as an alternative source."
>
> (Aberdeen City Council)

3.88 Many respondents across themes and respondent categories noted that, while alternative data sources were available and useful, there was no one source that could comprehensively replace the census for any one theme. They suggested any alternative sources should be used in conjunction with, rather than to replace, the census.

3.89 Similar views were expressed by those attending the stakeholder engagement events. Most argued that population sample surveys such as the Scottish Health Survey and Scottish Household Survey could be used to compliment the census, rather than directly replace it. Some suggested that, should either of these surveys be considered as direct replacements for the census in future, their sample sizes would have to be increased significantly to allow more robust statistical analysis.

3.90 A number of respondents drew attention to the challenges of using and linking other forms of administrative data on an ad-hoc basis to replace census information.

3.91 Some attendees at stakeholder engagement events noted the significant potential of data linkage projects. Others however felt that the legal and technical implications of trying to access this data were likely to make this an inefficient way of trying to compile and analyse data.

Population

3.92 Respondents from across all categories emphasised the importance of the census producing and maintaining accurate population statistics.

3.93 The Community Health Index (CHI) was the most frequently mentioned alternative source for population information, across respondent categories. However, a few health organisations also highlighted its limitations.

> "National Health Service Central Register and CHI data can be used to produce population data at small level area but census is always needed to calibrate and rebalance such estimates."
> (Glasgow Centre for Population Health)

3.94 Population information produced by local governments was generally perceived as very good – particularly by charities and voluntary organisations. However, respondents noted that such information was often based on data provided by the census.

> "The local authority produces excellent population projections for us. However, this information relies on census and other government information. As a result, changes could affect the frequency and quality of the work they produce."
> (Wheatley Housing Group)

Household and family structure

3.95 Respondents identified a variety of alternative sources of information to the census that could be investigated, in relation to the household and family structure theme. Most commonly mentioned were:
- HMRC child benefit records;
- HMRC tax records;
- the electoral register; and
- Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) survey.

3.96 Again, the Scottish Household Survey was mentioned – but respondents felt that samples would need to be boosted in order for information to be robust enough to replace census information.

Housing

3.97 Respondents identified a variety of potential alternative sources of information that could be investigated in relation to housing, including:
- data held by social landlords on their tenants and applicants;
- Council Tax records;
- Registers of Scotland property transaction data; and
- planning authority house completion and demolition records.

3.98 However, there was concern among a number of local government and health related organisations about the limitations of the data provided by such possible alternative sources.

> "The Scottish House Condition Survey is a rich source of data on housing tenure, dwelling conditions (overcrowding, cold and damp homes), with results available more frequently than the census. Results are available at local authority level every three years. However, it cannot currently produce basic data below local authority level and is also reliant on the census to produce accurately weighted results."
>
> (NHS Health Scotland)

Education

3.99 The potential alternative data sources suggested by respondents in relation to education included the Scottish Household Survey and the Scottish Government's Pupil Census.

3.100 However, a number of respondents cautioned that the latter only covers state funded education; some suggested that it could be extended to include private school education.

Labour market and socio-economic activity

3.101 Respondents highlighted potential alternative information sources for the labour market and socio-economic activity theme, such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, and information from the Office for National Statistics including the Labour Force Survey.

Transport

3.102 Most respondents who made suggestions for alternative data sources on transport suggested the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to be the main alternative to the census.

3.103 Two respondents suggested that the emergence of global positioning systems (GPS) offered opportunities to gather information on travel activities, alongside the information provided by the census.

> "Mining GPS/mobile phone data is perhaps a better way today to find out where people travel but still needs to be calibrated with surveys."
>
> (DHC – Derek Halden Consultancy)

Ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation

3.104 As with other themes, many respondents stressed the importance of the census for obtaining accurate data on equality related information - rather than identifying any alternative sources of information.

> "We do not believe that there is a viable alternative to the census at present for accurate monitoring of equalities information."
>
> (Glasgow City Council)

Health and community care

3.105 Respondents commenting on health and community care did not tend to reiterate the importance of the census. Instead, respondents highlighted the potential of the data currently held by the NHS as an alternative source; with most agreeing that this data should be used more effectively and efficiently.

> "There is masses of information available via the NHS which could be used to monitor the health of local and small area populations much more accurately than statistical models based on sample data either from surveys or census samples."
>
> (Individual)

> "[There is a] wide range of health and community care data held by Information Services (ISD) within NHS National

> Services Scotland (NSS) which could be used to explore potential of alternative coverage."
>
> (NHS National Service Scotland)

Migration

3.106 Most respondents who provided a view on this category felt that there was a lack of alternative sources of data on migration. Some felt that there was a need to improve data currently available on migration needs.

3.107 Many respondents including local government, NHS Boards and individuals felt that tracking NHS registrations was a viable way of measuring migration. However, they felt that there would need to be stricter approaches to NHS registrations to improve the reliability of this data.

User Requirements for Data: Section Summary

- The data currently collected by the census is an important source of information for a range of stakeholders. It was praised for its accuracy, comparability, reliability, and usefulness.
- Generally, data requirements have increased in recent years, and are likely to continue to do so.
- Data needs will continue to be influenced by the need to plan services effectively at a time when public and voluntary sector finances are under pressure and needs can change rapidly. Important policy and legislative developments – such as the Equality Act, Climate Change Act and Welfare Reform - will continue to influence information needs.
- Population and socio-demographic data gathered by the census is particularly important to inform policy and service planning, and monitor progress towards agreed targets and responsibilities. It is also an important source of data for wider research and to evidence need for services.
- While other existing data sources may be useful to supplement the information gathered by the census, respondents felt that the census provides the most reliable and accurate data in relation to most themes.
- Health and social care is the main area where respondents feel alternatives to the census data have particular potential, and could be further developed.

4. KEY STATISTICAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 This section of the report provides an analysis of responses to Section C of the consultation and the relevant views expressed at stakeholder engagement events. Section C asked about respondents' requirements in relation to accuracy, frequency, geographic detail and level of disaggregation for each of the main thematic areas explored in the consultation. The themes are outlined at the beginning of Section 3 of this report.

Question 12: Please indicate the minimum frequency at which you or your organisation require population and socio-demographic statistics to be made available and indicate the reasons why this level of frequency is needed, including any financial and legal implications if this was not possible.

4.2 Question 12 was an open question, but included a prompt for respondents to select a minimum frequency level for statistics to be made available, for each theme, from a list provided in the question introduction. The options provided were:

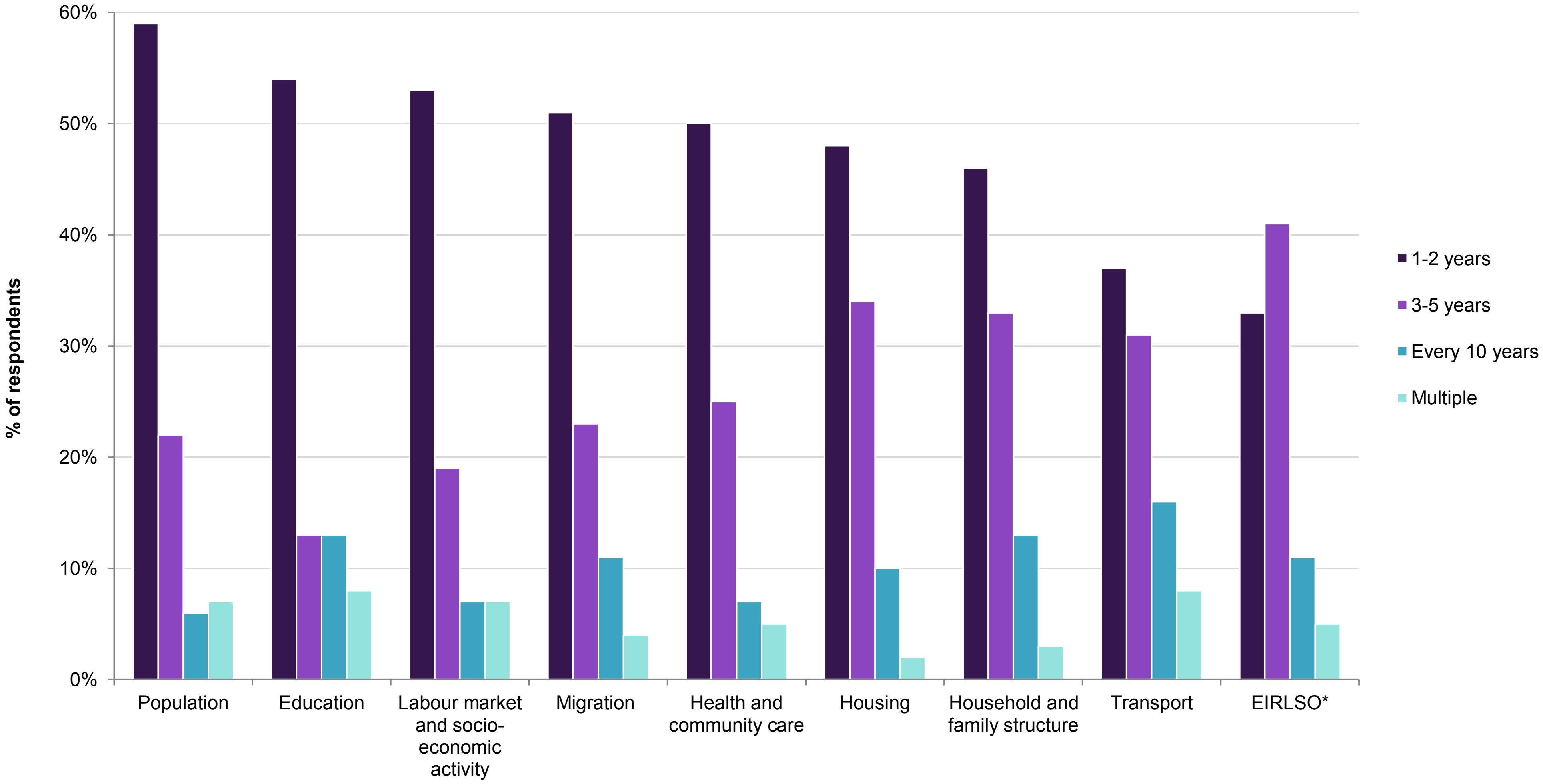
- more frequently than once a year;
- yearly;
- every two years;
- every five years;
- every ten years; and
- less frequently than every ten years.

4.3 Respondents often did not select one of the suggested frequencies, suggesting broader frequencies, such as 'every one to two years'. Responses to this question were sorted into categories for analysis. A 'multiple' category was added, to cover instances where respondents requested different minimum frequencies for different types of data within the one theme.

4.4 Overall:

- Three quarters of respondents (75%) responded to at least one theme. However, respondents often repeated the same response and commentary across all themes within this question, and rarely gave justification for their answers.
- Across almost all themes, the largest proportion of respondents suggested that ideally statistics should be made available on a one to two year basis.
- For the transport and ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation themes, respondents were content with slightly less frequent availability of statistics.

Figure 4.1: Minimum frequency for statistics, by theme



*EIRLSO – Ethnicity, Identity, Religion, Language and Sexual Orientation

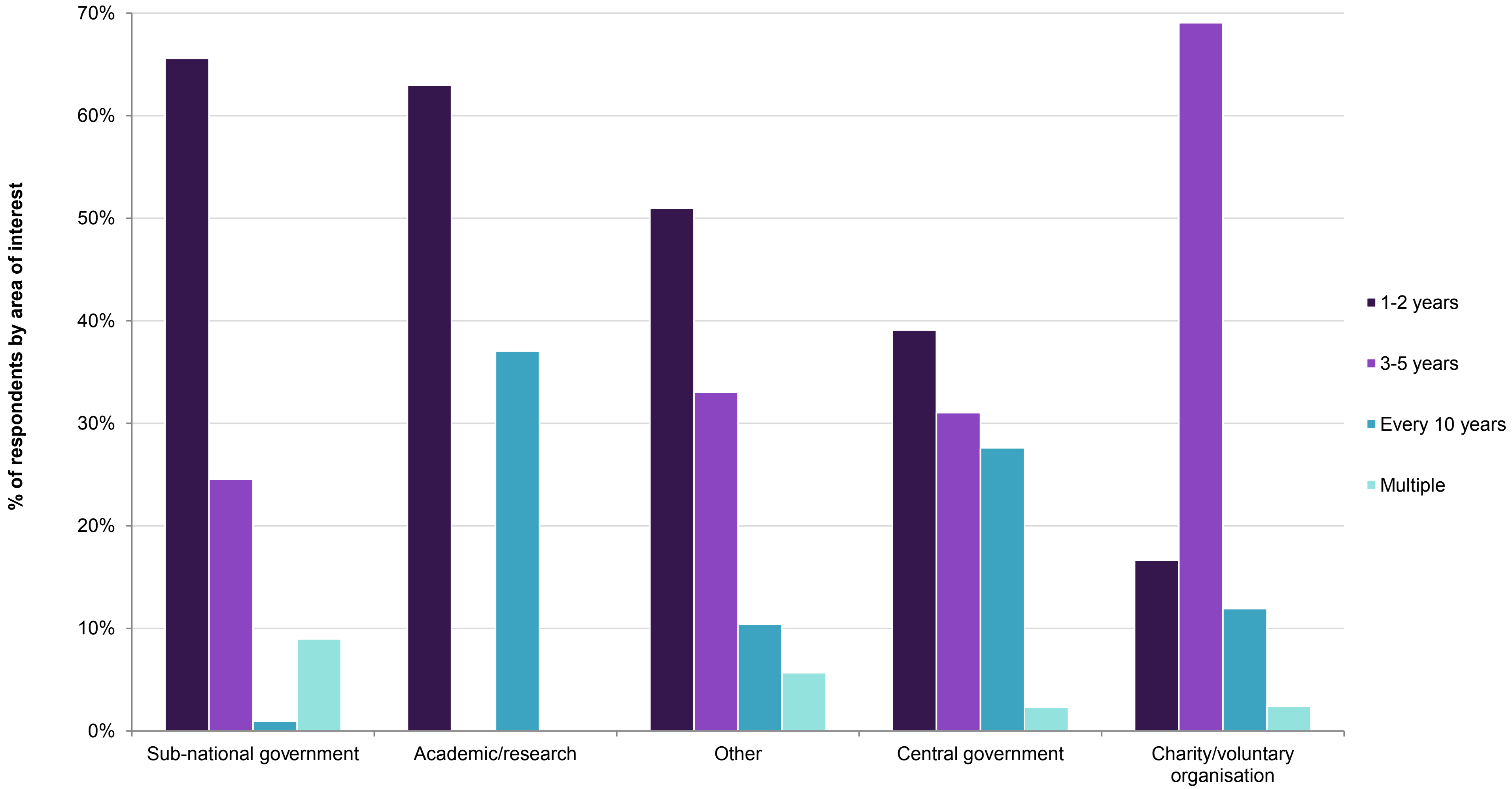
4.5 Figure 4.1 shows the proportion of responses falling into each frequency category, for each theme. Overall, the most popular frequency for almost all themes was one to two years. The second most popular was three to five years. While a number of respondents selected ‘every 10 years’, no responses indicated a preference for a six to nine year frequency. A minority of respondents suggested that statistics for different types of information should be made available at multiple frequencies within a single theme.

4.6 Respondents generally felt that information on population needed to be available most frequently. It was the only theme where no respondents indicated a preference for a ten yearly output cycle.

4.7 Different respondent categories indicated different preferences in terms of how frequently statistics were required. Figure 4.2 shows that sub-national government organisations (local authorities and NHS Boards) expressed a clear requirement for greater frequency of statistics, with almost two thirds requesting statistics on a minimum of a one to two year basis. Charities and voluntary organisations, however, were content with lesser frequency – with over two thirds stating a preference for a minimum frequency of three to five years.

4.8 Central government and academic/research respondents were much more likely than other respondents to require a minimum ten year frequency for availability of statistics. There was a clear split in different types of respondent within the academic/research category. Further and higher education respondents within this category generally required information on a one to two year basis, while genealogists and family historians broadly required information on a ten yearly basis. Neither category of respondents provided much commentary on their reasons for their responses.

Figure 4.2: Minimum frequency for statistics, by respondent category



4.9 Because the patterns in responses and reasons given were very similar across the consultation themes, the analysis below is structured around the main issues rather than taking each theme in turn.

Improving planning and monitoring

4.10 Respondents across categories reported that information should be most frequently available – particularly in relation to population, household and family structure, housing, and ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation data – in order to support service planning and monitoring. Most respondents suggested reporting on a one to two year, or three to five year basis. The most common reason for suggesting this level of frequency, across respondent groups, was that more frequent data would provide a more up-to-date and reliable picture, which would in turn facilitate more accurate service planning.

> "[Data on population is required] every 5 years to keep knowledge of local communities current and ensure that services/operations are suitable for purpose of populations."
>
> (Community Links, South Lanarkshire)

> "At present the census is viewed as being "out of date" after around 5 years, to have an accurate picture of the population in this time period would be useful for all levels of service planning."
>
> (Dundee City Council)

> "[Data on household and family structure is required] in relation to any data about children and their families, at least yearly. This year's cohort of three-year olds might differ significantly in their demography hence also their policy and service development needs."
>
> (Children in Scotland)

4.11 Respondents emphasised the importance of being able to access data on a frequent basis, across themes, to allow them to identify trends and changes at an early stage.

> "[Data on housing and households is required] every two years. The changes that occur over a single year are not so dramatic as to require immediate policy intervention but trends need to be identified early."
>
> (City of Edinburgh Council - Development Planning)

> "[Data across all themes is required] every 5 years to aid service planning. Given the change in ethnic profile of Glasgow City between 2001 and 2011, every 10 years seems a little too infrequent."
>
> (Glasgow Life)

4.12 A number of respondents, mostly local government organisations, charities and voluntary organisations, raised the importance of data being frequently available in order to regularly monitor progress towards outcomes and indicators, and meet their legal and regulatory obligations. Monitoring was particularly an issue in relation to equality and particular protected characteristics for some respondents. This is covered in more detail in Section 5.

4.13 A few respondents reported that they required data on a frequent basis to inform the preparation and review of local government Statutory Performance Indicators and the indicators used to monitor progress in relation to Single Outcome Agreements produced by community planning partnerships.

> "The community planning partnership will be undergoing a strategic assessment process every three years. As such yearly data will be needed in order to see trends."
>
> (Aberdeenshire Council, Community Planning Partnership)

4.14 A few respondents highlighted the need for more frequent collection of housing data to allow them to meet their duties in relation to developing Local Housing Strategies. Few explained what data was required, or how data was used to inform Local Housing Strategies. However, a few respondents mentioned a specific need for data on housing stock, housing tenure, and the relationships between housing and health.

> "[Statistics on housing, household and family structure are required] to enable preparation of Housing Strategic Local Programme and preparation of Housing Need and Demand Assessment."
>
> (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)

4.15 A few respondents from NHS Boards, NDPBs and local government organisations reported that they required ethnicity information more frequently since it was only available from the census every ten years.

> "[Ethnicity] is the dataset we are most frequently asked for and not able to provide. Being able to have this on a 5 yearly cycle would be ideal."
>
> (Dundee City Council)

4.16 In relation to transport data, there was a perception that because change may be gradual, data could be collected less frequently than in relation to other themes. Respondents did not provide further detail on this.

> "Changes in this area [transport] may be less dramatic and every 5 years may suffice."
>
> (City of Edinburgh Council - Development Planning)

Balancing frequency and accuracy

4.17 Some respondents discussed the need to balance frequency of access to data, and accuracy of data. While many wished to see data available more frequently, some recognised that it may not be possible to gather comprehensive data which was as accurate as the census on a more regular basis.

> "The census frequency of 10 years is an acceptable compromise on the data that it provides."
>
> (Individual)

> "The working practice is that we won't want the variables we use to be less frequent than 10 years, and it would be useful to have them more frequently to help monitor progress. However, there would also need to be balance between frequency and accuracy. Every five years and to the same accuracy would be of benefit."
>
> (Scottish Government - Health Analytical Services)

> "Every 2 years would be ideal but we are aware that it is not possible to carry out the census this regularly. Every 5 years would be so much more useful than every 10 in terms of drawing trends on modal split and car ownership. Maybe interim data would be a compromise, without full analysis?"
>
> (Aberdeen City Council - Corporate Governance)

4.18 Some respondents sought more frequent publication of estimates of population characteristics. Others suggested a more frequent full data collection through a more regular census, alongside regular publication of estimates.

> "More frequent estimates of population demographics are desirable, especially for small areas and population subgroups, but anything less than a 10-yearly census would make the mid-year estimates too unreliable for use as denominators."
>
> (NHS Health Scotland)

> "It is useful to have the mid-year population estimates produced annually, and it would be good to have a short census produced every 5 years to make sure the mid-year population estimates are aligned with the 'real picture'."
>
> (Individual)

Question 13: Please indicate the minimum geography at which you or your organisation require population and socio-demographic statistics to be made available and indicate the reasons why this level of geography is needed, including any financial and legal implications if this was not possible.

4.19 Question 13 asked respondents to identify the minimum level of geography at which statistics were required, by theme. This was an open question, but respondents were prompted to choose from different options:

- output area (contains an average of 100 people);
- data zone level (contains an average of 800 people);
- postcode level;
- Local Authority level;
- Health Board level;
- Community Health Partnership level;
- electoral ward;
- intermediate geographies (contains 2,500 - 6,000 people);
- Scotland level; and
- other (please specify).

4.20 Three quarters of consultation respondents (74%) provided a view on the minimum geography at which data was required for at least one theme. Everyone who responded to this question provided a view on their minimum geography requirement for the population theme. The two themes for which respondents were least likely to indicate a requirement were education and transport.

4.21 Many respondents reported that different minimum geographies were required within the one theme – for different types of data. For the purposes of analysis, where respondents selected a range of different minimum geographies within a single theme, this has been classed as requiring ‘multiple’ levels of geography.

4.22 Few respondents, across categories and themes, offered reasons for the data level of geography they proposed. A number of respondents highlighted that their needs varied depending on the specific data required, and what it was being used for.

Table 4.1: Minimum geography required, by theme

Theme	Data zone level	Output area level	Postcode level	Local authority level	Health board level	Electoral ward level	Intermediate geographies level	Scotland level	Other level	Multiple levels	Total respondents
Population	**25%**	18%	2%	9%	1%	2%	1%	3%	11%	**27%**	**92**
Household and family structure	**24%**	19%	3%	9%	0%	1%	4%	3%	12%	**25%**	**68**
Housing	**31%**	16%	7%	8%	0%	2%	2%	2%	13%	**20%**	**61**
Education	**19%**	**19%**	2%	11%	0%	2%	2%	2%	17%	**26%**	**53**
Labour market and socio-economic activity	**24%**	16%	3%	3%	0%	2%	6%	5%	17%	**24%**	**63**
Transport	17%	**21%**	6%	9%	0%	2%	6%	2%	15%	**23%**	**53**
Ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation	**22%**	14%	2%	14%	2%	2%	5%	3%	17%	**19%**	**63**
Health and community care	**28%**	16%	3%	7%	3%	2%	3%	2%	16%	**20%**	**61**
Migration	**22%**	9%	3%	17%	0%	2%	7%	5%	**21%**	14%	**58**

Note: The two most frequently chosen minimum geographies for each theme are highlighted in bold.

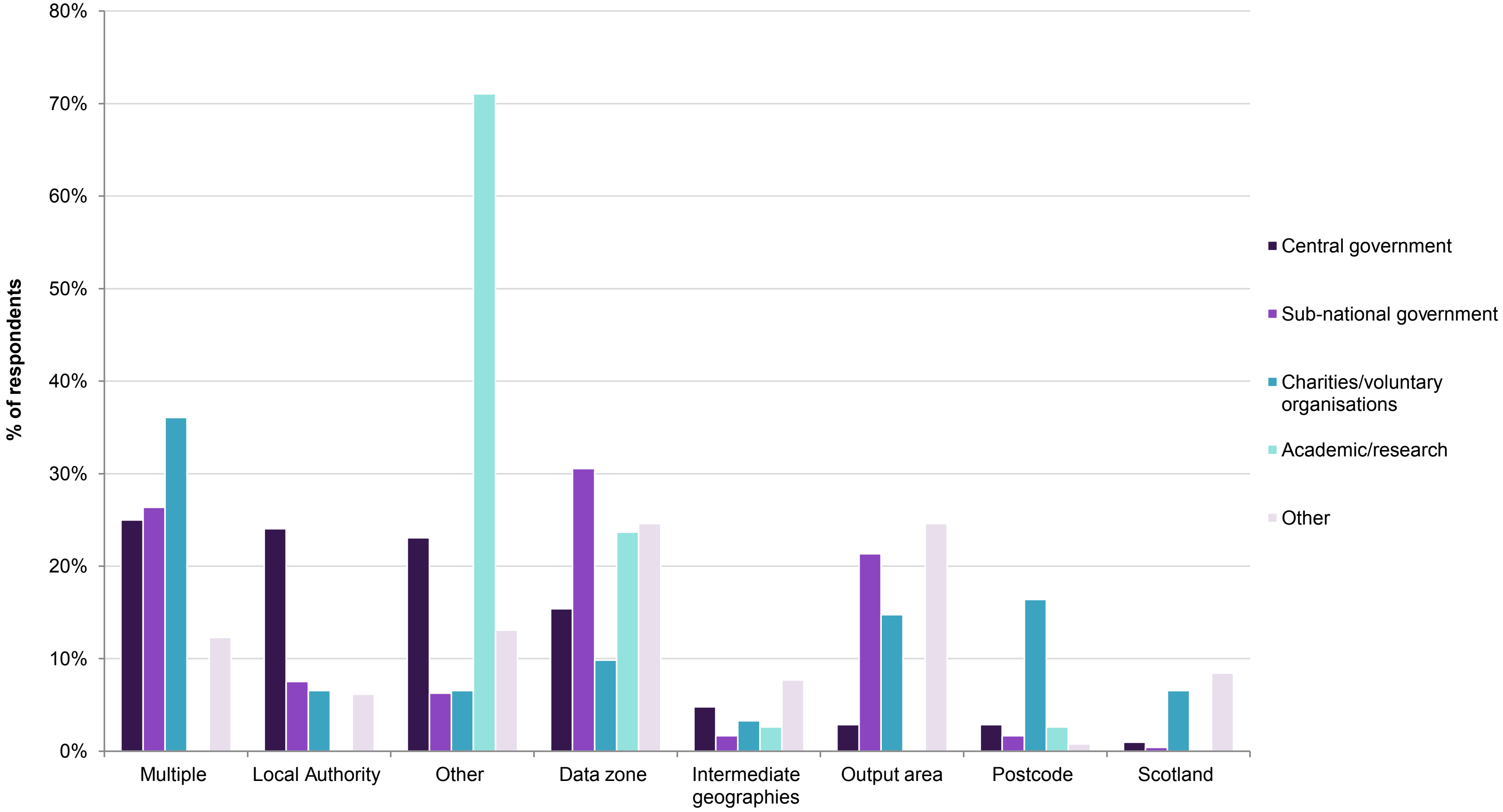
4.23 As can be seen in Table 4.1, the greatest proportion of respondents required data to be available at data zone level and multiple levels for most themes. The three exceptions were transport, migration and education. In the transport theme, a majority identified output area (and multiple levels) as being their preferred minimum geography. In the education theme, a high proportion of respondents required information at data zone, output and multiple levels. For the migration theme, a high level of respondents selected a minimum geography level of ‘other’.

4.24 Where respondents indicated need for data being available at a geographic level other than those identified in the consultation document, they generally called for information at the lowest level possible, rather than specifying alternative geographies themselves. A few suggested that information should be made available at civil parish level, but no detailed rationale was provided.

4.25 Very few organisations identified a requirement for information at a Health Board, electoral ward, intermediate geography or Scotland level. None identified a requirement for information only at Community Health Partnership level, within any of the themes.

4.26 While there were strong similarities across themes, there were significant differences in the minimum level of geography required when analysed by respondent category (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Minimum geography required, by respondent category



4.27 Sub-national government organisations indicated a broad preference for data being available at data zone level, output area and multiple levels. Central government bodies were more likely to require information at local authority, multiple or ‘other’ levels. A significant majority of academic/research respondents (73%) indicated a requirement for information to be available at ‘other’ levels – most often at an individual record level.

4.28 Most respondents who selected the lowest geographical areas – output area and data zone – felt that having information available at a very local level was important to allow tracking and analysis of trends among local communities and facilitate better service planning at these levels. Most highlighted a general preference for accurate data at as low a level of geography as possible. This point was reinforced across themes.

> “Our work is community based and as a result, it is important that we have this information at a data zone level. This will allows us to effectively plan services and link data with that found in the SIMD.”
>
> (Wheatley Housing Group)

4.29 Others highlighted that information produced at output area and data zone level could be built up into larger geographies, which were appropriate to individual organisation’s needs. Some described these levels as being the “building blocks” for the creation of larger geographical areas.

> “Availability of statistics at a data zone level is essential for building up custom geographies to meet bespoke research requirements and analyse changes in different parts of the country.”
>
> (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

4.30 A number of central government departments, charities and voluntary organisations, government agencies and NDPBs felt that a higher level geography would be acceptable for some themes.

> “The minimum geography we would require is at Local Authority level. Our internal model uses Local Authorities’ data on projected development and then applies statistical analysis from GRoS/NRS projections to generate a projected growth at Water Treatment Works for Water and Sewage Treatment Work for Waste Water.”
>
> (Scottish Water)

> “Stonewall Scotland would support population and socio-demographic statistics to be broken down to Local Authority level, in line with the responsibilities of the public bodies we support.”
>
> (Stonewall Scotland)

4.31 A few respondents called for some information to be provided at an individual level due to the nature of their research needs. These were largely genealogists and family historians, who were requesting information at an individual and household level (after 100 years). However, a small number of other respondents highlighted the need for individual level data to inform other research studies.

> "[The minimum level of geography required is] complete records at an individual household level (subject to the 100-year rule)."
>
> (Individual)

> "The SLS [Scottish Longitudinal Study] is a longitudinal study and so requires to trace members through time because of this, individual level data is required. If individual level data was not available the SLS would no longer have a source of socio-demographic statistics for these individuals and over time the dataset would lose its usefulness as it would become out of date."
>
> (Scottish Longitudinal Survey)

Question 14: Please indicate at what level of disaggregation of characteristics you or your organisation require population and socio-demographic statistics to be made available and indicate the reasons why this level of disaggregation is needed, including any financial and legal implications if this was not possible.

4.32 Nearly three quarters of respondents (70%) gave a view on the level of disaggregation they required for population and socio-demographic statistics. However, the vast majority did not elaborate on the level of disaggregation they required for each of the topic areas outlined in the consultation document. Respondents generally did not explain the reasons for their views nor the implications of the data not being available.

4.33 Many respondents reiterated points made elsewhere or identified characteristics, topics or specific questions they wished to be included in the census.

4.34 A number of respondents from a range of organisations and also attendees at the stakeholder engagement events called for "as much detail as possible" but did not elaborate. Others suggested that the current level of disaggregation of census results should not be reduced.

4.35 The consultation paper provided age as an example. Those respondents that did give a view on disaggregation primarily focused on age. Some felt that the current age bands worked well.

4.36 However, others from across all respondent categories asked for age related information to be made available by specific year (rather than band). A range of respondents from central government, local government, NHS Boards, charities and voluntary organisations felt disaggregation of age was especially important in relation to people under 16 and over 65 (and smaller age groups within these).

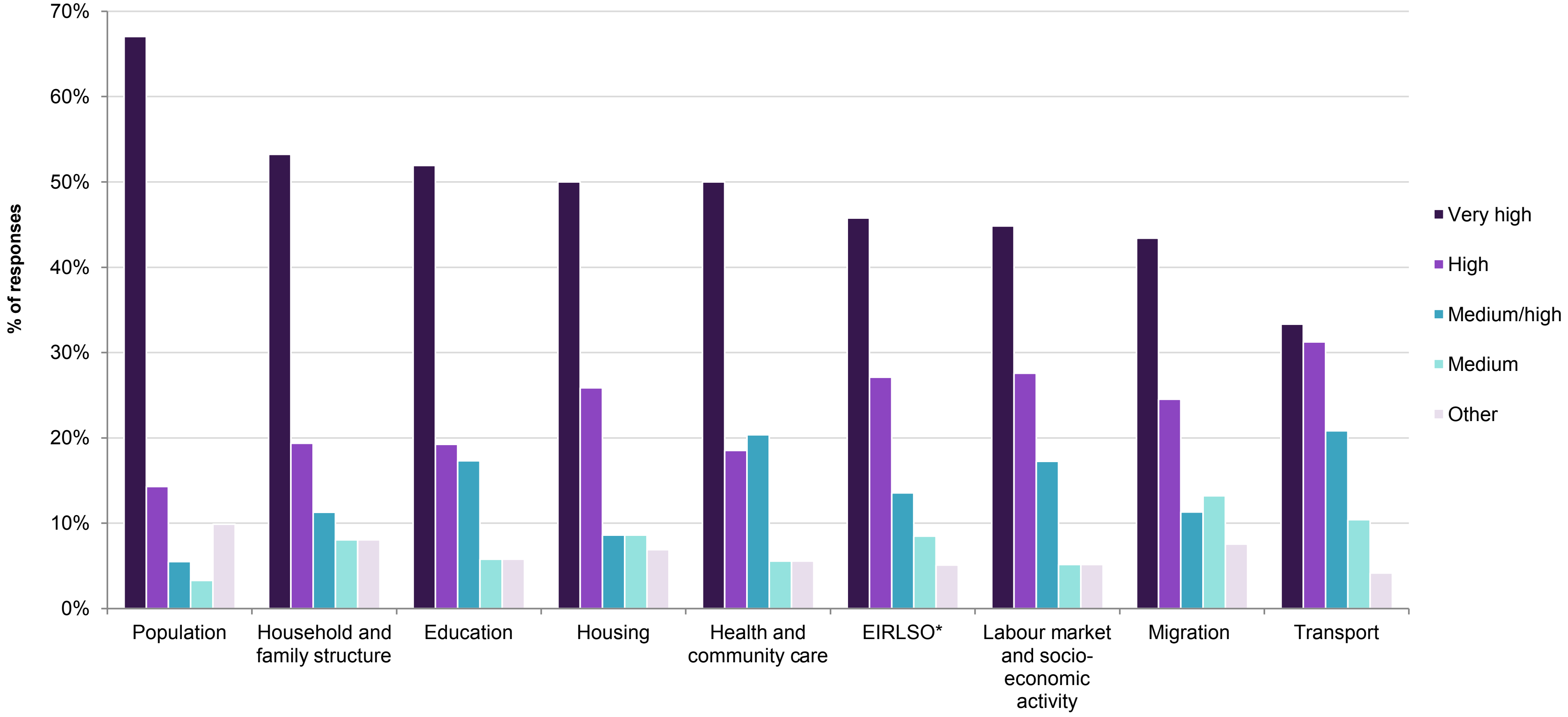
> "Within looked after and child protection data, the majority of children are now under 5. It is important to be able to have information on single year of age to measure trends in this relatively small group."
>
> (Scottish Government - Children and Families Analysis, Education Analytical Services)

4.37 A number of respondents from charities, voluntary organisations and local government organisations called for greater detail on protected characteristics to be made available.

> "...it would be beneficial for population data to be disaggregated to such a level so as to be able to inform policy decisions relating to individual protected characteristic."
>
> (Stonewall Scotland)

Question 15: Please indicate the minimum level of accuracy at which you or your organisation require population and socio-demographic statistics to be made available and indicate why this level of accuracy is needed, including any financial and legal implications if this was not possible.

Figure 4.4: Minimum level of accuracy, by theme



*EIRLSO – Ethnicity, Identity, Religion, Language and Sexual Orientation
**The ‘other’ category includes respondents who did not specify a single level of accuracy, but instead suggested multiple possibilities for the accuracy of data.

4.38 Respondents were asked to choose the level of accuracy at which they required population and socio-demographic statistics to be made available. The options provided were:

- very high (e.g. 95% or higher)
- high (e.g. 90% or higher)
- medium - high (e.g. 80% or higher)
- medium (less than 80%).

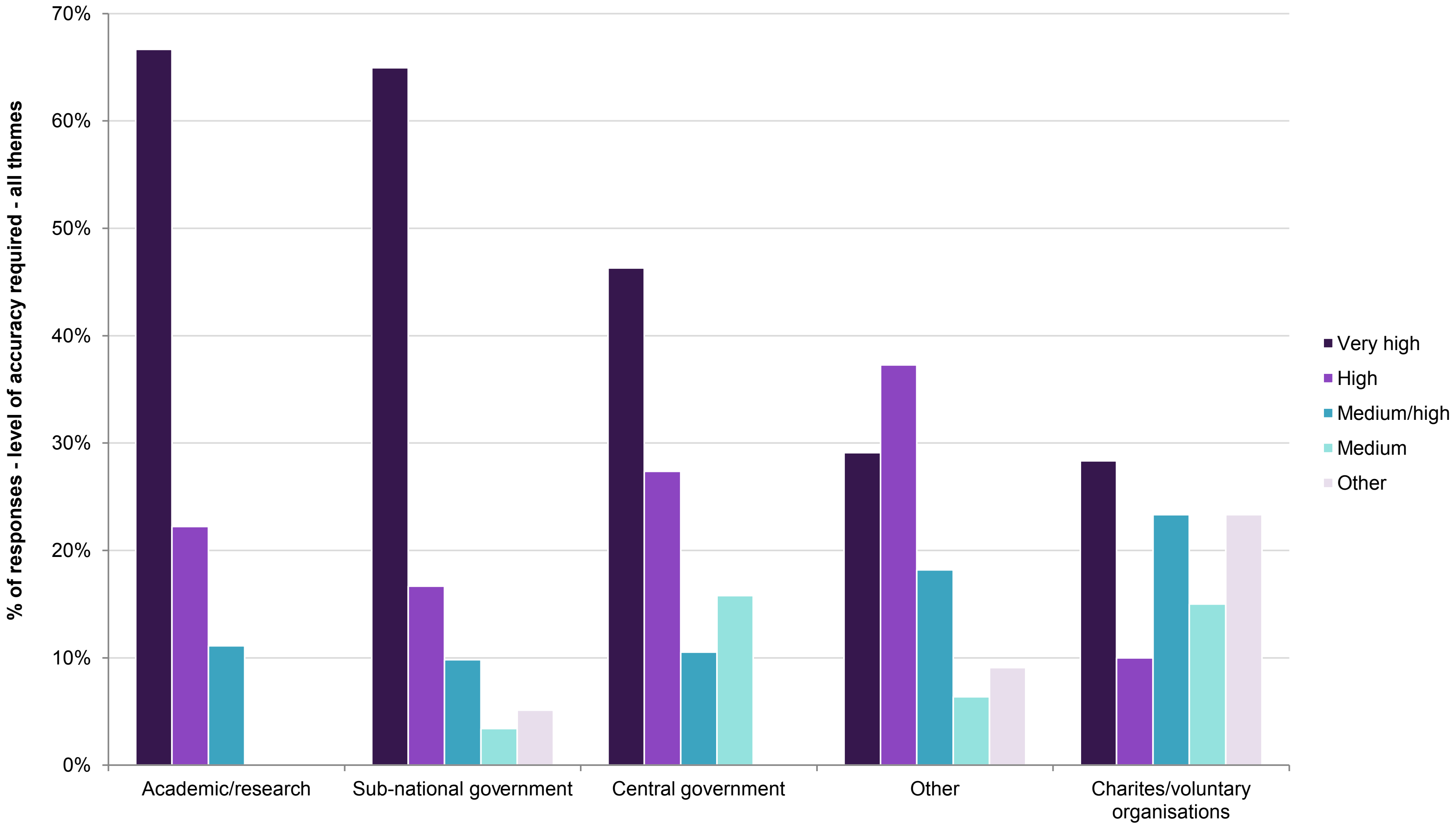
4.39 Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) indicated the minimum level of accuracy that they require for population and socio-demographic statistics. All respondents provided a view on the population theme. Only two fifths of respondents (38%) suggested a level of accuracy for the transport theme.

4.40 Many respondents made the same or similar comments in relation to several or all themes. Respondents did not comment on the financial or legal implications of the information not being available. A number of respondents who commented on specific themes made very general points, often reinforcing views expressed in relation to earlier questions.

4.41 Some did not suggest a particular accuracy level but suggested that they could see the benefits of different accuracy levels. Often this depended on the geographical level at which information would be made available. These respondents have been classed as ‘other’.

4.42 Overall the highest proportion of respondents (67%) identified the population theme as requiring a very high level of accuracy. Conversely, the lowest proportion of respondents (33%) identified transport as requiring a very high level of accuracy.

Figure 4.5: Level of accuracy required by respondent grouping



4.43 Academic/research organisations and sub-national government organisations were the most likely to identify the need for very accurate information across all themes (67% and 65% respectively). Charities, voluntary organisations and others were the least likely to require very accurate information.

4.44 A significant number of respondents felt that the level of accuracy required depended on the geographic level of the data, and the frequency of availability.

4.45 Where reasons were given for requiring very high or high levels of accuracy, respondents felt that it was important that data was as accurate as possible in order to generate reliable statistics. In several cases, respondents were interested in understanding small groups of people, so accuracy was a particularly important issue.

> "This level of accuracy (very high) would allow us to draw upon statistically robust data in service planning."
>
> (Glasgow Life)

> "Population estimates underpin a large percentage of the work undertaken within NSS, including annual trends to pick up health issues quickly and assess targets for NHS and Scottish Government etc. Population data is also used in the calculations to allocate financial resources to NHS Boards."
>
> (NHS National Service Scotland)

4.46 Some respondents also noted that for them, accuracy was more important than the frequency of production.

> "Our general position with regard to all socio-economic data is that we need high or very high accuracy throughout. If we had to choose we would rather have data consistently produced at high levels of accuracy but less frequently, rather than less adequate data produced more often. It's difficult for us to imagine a situation where it would be useful to have the same data produced at different levels of accuracy in different years."
>
> (Aberdeenshire Council Information and Research Team)

4.47 Some respondents felt that the main value of census data in general was that it was highly accurate. They felt that reducing the accuracy of the data would mean it was no more valuable than other sources of information.

Question 16: What is your or your organisation's opinion on the use of a flexible question set, which would possibly allow more targeted socio-demographic questions in specific areas?

4.48 Two thirds of respondents (65%) provided a view on the use of a flexible question set. This question divided opinion, with responses broadly split between those in favour and those against – even within respondent categories. Most respondents who provided detailed comments focused on the example provided on the respondent form (which related to different questions being asked in urban and rural areas).

4.49 A number of respondents (while not necessarily being opposed to the use of a flexible question set) felt that more information was required about its use before they could form a view on this approach being adopted.

> "...we would need to see more detail on the purpose of the flexible approach; the way it would be interpreted and used; the themes to be analysed using this approach; and sample questions."
>
> (Highland Council)

4.50 Others suggested that the introduction of a flexible question set to gain more targeted data would be acceptable, if certain core data continued to be captured on a consistent basis for the entire population. In some cases, the potential for some data to be available on a more frequent basis was a particular attraction, a view reinforced by many attending the consultative workshops.

> "Most of the interest is in repeatable, high quality data and as such variation of question between groups or locations is not a priority. However, if the methodology being developed would allow frequent gathering of data from bespoke groups without undermining the key variables then there would be a benefit."
>
> (Scottish Government - Health Analytical Services)

> "We would support the approach of a flexible question set that may vary over the years, for example collecting detailed socio-demographic data on a less frequent basis and some high-level socio-demographic data more frequently. This type of approach would allow the provision of more timely data to support the measurement of deprivation if captured by the more frequent data collection."
>
> (Scottish Government, Office of the Chief Statistician and Performance)

4.51 In supporting the case for core information to be captured on a consistent basis for the entire population, a number of respondents highlighted the need for core information to develop other data sets, such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

4.52 Almost all respondents who did not support the use of a flexible question set felt that the value of the census lies in its potential for consistent analysis and comparisons. Therefore, respondents felt that standardised questions were far more appropriate and of far greater value than a flexible question set.

> "A key value of the census is that it provides data about the whole population and the sort of segmentation implied above would appear to be more appropriate to detailed survey work."
>
> (NHS Highland)

4.53 A few of those who did not support the use of flexible data sets were also concerned about the robustness of this approach.

> "Although census is a legal requirement it can miss out hard to count individuals (i.e. mobile young males, migrants etc.). By targeting a questionnaire at different groups of people it may lead to an even greater loss of information from these individuals."
>
> (Scottish Longitudinal Study)

Key Statistical Requirements: Section Summary

- There was strong support for population and socio-demographic data currently gathered by the census to be collected and reported on more frequently, across themes. Generally, respondents felt that more frequent data would provide more up-to-date information to inform service planning, monitoring activities and other areas of work.

- However, there was also strong support for data to be as accurate as possible. Accuracy was seen as a key strength of the census. A number of respondents felt that frequency and accuracy needed to be carefully balanced.

- In terms of geography, there was support for being able to use data at the lowest level possible. However, many respondents felt that it was sufficient to be able to access some data at larger geographies – such as local authority area.

- Some respondents could see the value of having a flexible question set to gather more targeted data. However, others felt this would affect the value of the census in enabling consistent analysis and comparisons.

5. EQUALITIES ISSUES

5.1 This section of the report provides an analysis the main equalities issues identified from this consultation. The consultation document did not include a specific set of questions relating to equality. This analysis considers themes arising across all consultation questions, as well as views expressed at the stakeholder engagement events.

5.2 Overall:

- There was strong agreement among respondents, particularly public bodies, that the census was critical in enabling them to meet their statutory requirements in relation to the public sector equality duties.
- Many respondents also reported that access to accurate and timely information on people's characteristics (including age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender identity) was important to help inform service planning and outcome monitoring.
- A number of respondents, particularly those representing equality groups, believed that more data should be available for some characteristics.

The Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty

5.3 Many local government organisations and some central government departments and NHS Boards noted that the information available from the census was increasingly important to them as a result of the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. This Act introduced a single public sector equality duty to have due regard to the need to advance equality; eliminate harassment, discrimination and victimisation; and foster good relations between individuals. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 also placed specific duties on public bodies in relation to equality.

5.4 Public sector respondents reported an increasing need for information, to enable them to comply with the public sector equality duty. Many emphasised the importance of the census in helping them to meet their requirements in respect of these duties.

> "The public sector equality duties arising from the Equality Act 2010 have increased the requirement for accurate data across equality strands at local authority and small area level."
>
> (East Dunbartonshire Council)

5.5 A number of respondents, particularly from local government organisations and central government departments, highlighted that they felt that the census was the most accurate, reliable and robust source of information to provide an understanding of the needs of people with protected characteristics and people experiencing disadvantage.

> "We do not believe that there is a viable alternative to the census at present for accurate monitoring of equalities information."
>
> (Glasgow City Council)

> "The census is the only data set with coverage of very hard to reach (and often very small populations) of families and children (such as ethnic minority families, families on very low incomes, young parent families etc)."
>
> (Scottish Government – Children and Families Analysis, Education Analytical Services)

> "Ethnicity is an area that there are lots of request for information on, but only the census provides a clear and reliable source for the data and it can very quickly get out of date."
>
> (Perth and Kinross Council)

5.6 When asked what the impact would be if NRS data was not available, a number of respondents across categories reported that without the census they would be unable to plan services, allocate resources and monitor progress in relation to their equality duties in an effective or efficient way.

> "It would be more difficult for public bodies, including the Scottish Government, to evidence their equalities outcomes to meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. It would impact on the planning of services and funding for minority groups, nationally and locally."
>
> (Scottish Government – Equality Analysis Unit)

> "Our policy and support work would become unfocused and inefficient."
>
> (The Pagan Federation (Scotland))

Monitoring outcomes

5.7 In particular, respondents highlighted the important role of the census in providing baseline data to enable public bodies to monitor progress in relation to their equality outcomes.

> "We are planning on carrying out detailed analysis on each of the equality themes and the census is often the only source of information on small groups such as Gypsies / Travellers."
>
> (Scottish Government Equality Analysis Unit)

5.8 A few central government departments reported that census data was used to inform the development of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)[3] for different policy areas, for example, for the Children and Young People's Bill. Data on families in Scotland; the number and composition of ethnic minority families; and the number of children who do not have English as their first language were used to inform this Bill.

5.9 A number of charities and voluntary organisations, and some other respondents, highlighted the important role of the census in enabling them to monitor the participation of people from protected groups in a range of services and activities.

> "[In relation to migration] We would have no way of knowing anything about this area without NRS data. We would consequently be unable to uphold the human rights of migrants and applicants or measure and take action against any levels of discrimination against our communities without these baseline figures as a starting point."
>
> (African and Caribbean Network)

> "We are increasingly required to promote and ensure the fair treatment of all of the population. Currently the census provides the only convincing source of population evidence to support the principles of equality and diversity in the delivery of services in support of patient care."
>
> (NHS Highland)

Service planning

5.10 As already detailed in Section 3 of the report, there was strong agreement among many respondents that the census played an important role in helping to inform service planning. Many local government organisations and some charities and voluntary organisations emphasised the vital role of the census in helping them build a profile of protected characteristic groups in their areas, and also in identifying the particular needs of people who share protected characteristics, both nationally and locally.

5.11 Some respondents highlighted that it was useful that equality statistics currently derived from the census were available at a range of different geographies, from data zone to a national level. Respondents felt that the availability of data at different geographical levels helped to inform effective planning and targeting of resources.

> "The census results on limiting long term illness and disability are the only general measures available for a number of geographies and are a primary statistic for equalities monitoring."
>
> (Highland Council)

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[3] Equality Impact Assessments are a tool to support the evidence based development of policy and practice, to ensure that equalities issues are taken into account.

> "The published regional and local data are a guide to the relative size of the Jewish population in each area."
>
> (Scottish Council of Jewish Communities)

5.12 For example, a range of respondents highlighted the critical role of the census in helping to effectively plan for an ageing population. In addition, a few organisations highlighted the emerging importance of data on housing, population and protected characteristics.

> "Knowing the number and composition of households within a local area is important to us in planning service provision within local areas. Having such information is of continuing importance for planning future services and facilities."
>
> (Glasgow Life)

5.13 Some central government departments and charities and voluntary organisations also highlighted the need to be able to access reliable data to help inform approaches to supporting at risk groups for example, children living in poverty.

> "There is an increasing demand for further understanding about households in low income and material deprivation, and all the socio-economic characteristics of these groups to enable understanding of how to target resource to achieve the greatest impact."
>
> (Scottish Government Income and Poverty Statistics)

5.14 Similarly, a number of local government organisations also underlined the important role of the census in building a profile of migration and ethnicity in their local areas. This in turn helped them to plan, design and target local service delivery - for example, in relation to schools, housing and social and health care. This was particularly the case for local authorities that had either experienced significant in-migration in recent years, or who wished to attract more migrants to their areas.

> "Aberdeenshire's migration pattern is believed to have changed significantly in the last 10 to 15 years. We need to be able to quantify it as much as possible to facilitate community and service planning."
>
> (Aberdeenshire Council – Information and Research Team)

5.15 Some respondents mentioned the importance of the census in helping to assess the impact of Welfare Reform on protected characteristic groups, and how this had been used to plan services.

> "In response to Welfare Reform and the move to Universal Credit we have used census data to assess the scale of impact on families in Scotland."
>
> (Scottish Government – Children and Families Analysis, Education Analytical Services)

Policy development

5.16 A number of respondents, particularly central and local government organisations, charities and voluntary organisations, noted that the census was an important source of equalities information and that this was used to inform policy development.

5.17 At the equalities stakeholder engagement events, a number of attendees highlighted that it was the perceived authority and trust in the accuracy of the census that made it important in relation to justifying planning and policy decisions. In addition, a number of attendees representing equality groups also noted that the census provided a vital source of evidence about people with protected characteristics that they could use to influence and lobby organisations and policy makers.

Frequency

5.18 As detailed in Section 3 of this report, respondents across respondent categories felt that more frequent collection of data on population, household, housing, and ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation was required. In the context of specific information on protected characteristics, many respondents supported the collection of data on a one to two, or three to five year basis. Linked to this, a number of respondents also highlighted the importance of this information being up-to-date, in order to fulfil their equalities monitoring requirements.

> "It is essential that information is frequent enough to be relevant."
>
> (Capability Scotland)

> "More regularly updated information on the demographics of local areas would assist in carrying out Equality Impact Assessment work."
>
> (Transport Scotland)

5.19 Similarly, attendees at the equality stakeholder engagement events suggested that ideally population and socio-demographic information should be available at around five years intervals, with some calling for more frequent collection. However, other attendees cautioned that the accuracy of the data should not be compromised over frequency.

Geography

5.20 Many respondents, particularly those involved in service planning, highlighted that being able to access information at different geographic levels was useful in building profiles of people who share protected characteristics (such as age, sex, race, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy and maternity).

5.21 Others proposed that data needed to be accessible at a level that allowed policy makers to understand the differences between groups with protected characteristics living in different areas, for example, in urban and rural areas.

Disaggregation

5.22 A number of respondents across respondent categories called for greater detail on protected characteristics to be made available, for example, in relation to age, disability, race and gender.

> "[Information on ethnicity, identity, religion and sexual orientation would be] useful at output area level/data zone to allow aggregation into own community areas, electoral wards are too large to provide an accurate representation of community areas."
>
> (Dundee City Council)

> "We would like to see a standardisation of age-categories, and the inclusion in all published tables on Gaelic of the 0–2 age group to facilitate statistical comparison with the general population."
>
> (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

Lack of data on some protected characteristics and sub groups

5.23 A few respondents representing equality groups expressed concern that some information on people who share protected characteristics was not collected or available in census outputs.

> "There are no accurate statistics on the number of deaf people in Scotland – Deaf BSL users, Deaf blind people, Deafened (have an Acquired Profound Hearing Loss) people and Hard of Hearing people. We have to use approximations based on the population at any one time."
>
> (The Scottish Council on Deafness)

> "We are increasingly in need of quantitative data relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. There is a lack of comprehensive information on the proportion of the population which identifies as lesbian, gay or bisexual and even less regarding people who are transgender."
>
> (Scottish Transgender Alliance)

> "Public bodies look to Stonewall Scotland to provide them with the research needed to inform policy decisions, and it is important that we can show how LGB&T people's experiences compare with the rest of the population."
>
> (Stonewall Scotland)

5.24 In addition, a few respondents felt that in some instances a lack of information could reinforce feelings of disadvantage and reinforce exclusion from the rest of society.

Accessibility and survey methods

5.25 A number of attendees at the equalities stakeholder engagement events emphasised the need to carefully consider the methodologies being used to gather statistics, to ensure that the methods used did not exclude or discourage participation from particular groups.

5.26 Some event attendees also reported that they conducted their own research and that this additional research was particularly important in the collection of information on sexual orientation and on groups that were felt to be hard to reach in the census and other surveys.

5.27 Other attendees reported that they were particularly interested in the potential of developing surveys (linked to the census) that contained a 'spot light' feature that could be adapted to target a particular group with protected characteristics.

Equalities: Section Summary

- There was strong agreement among respondents, particularly public bodies, that the census was critical in enabling them to meet their statutory requirements in relation to the public sector equality duties.

- Many felt that the census was the most accurate, reliable and robust source of information to provide an understanding of the needs of people with protected characteristics and people experiencing disadvantage. Many reported that the census was the only current source of equality statistics which met their requirements.

- Many respondents noted that access to accurate and timely information on groups with protected characteristics was important to help inform service planning and outcome monitoring. In particular, respondents highlighted the important role of the census in providing baseline data to enable public bodies to monitor progress in relation to their equality outcomes.

- A number of respondents, particularly those representing equality groups, believed that more data should be available for some protected characteristic groups and sub-groups. Some called for greater disaggregation and correlation of information on protected characteristics.

- Respondents across categories felt that more frequent collection of data on population, household, housing, and ethnicity, identity, religion, language and sexual orientation was required.

6. FINAL COMMENTS

6.1 This section of the report provides an analysis of Section D of the consultation document and the relevant views expressed at stakeholder engagement events. Section D of the consultation offered respondents the opportunity to make any further or additional comments in relation to their requirements, the consultation or the Beyond 2011 Programme in general.

Question 17: If you have any further comments regarding your or your organisation's population and socio-demographic statistical/information requirements, please provide details below.

Question 18: If you have any other general comments about this consultation, or the Beyond 2011 Programme more widely, please provide details below.

6.2 A third of respondents (34%) provided further comments on their statistical or information requirements in response to Question 17. Over a quarter of respondents (29%) provided general comments on the consultation or the Beyond 2011 Programme in response to Question 18.

Importance of the census

6.3 Approximately half of the respondents to Question 17 and 18 reinforced the importance of the census, and the data it currently collected. This included some central government agencies; local government organisations; NHS Boards and organisations with a health interest; genealogists and family historians; and private or commercial organisations.

6.4 Respondents also reiterated the increasing demand for data. Many felt that the census was the only source of information that could meet many data requirements at the level of detail and accuracy required while allowing effective comparisons to be made.

6.5 Local government organisations emphasised the role of the census in informing policy development and service planning.

> "The census is a key data source for policy development and monitoring across the various council services. We have serious concerns that if the decennial census is abandoned at this stage, without a suitable combination of other data sources in place, then policy development will have to be done in the context of a lack of information. This can be costly in terms of the effects on citizens of wrong policy choices and less effective policies."
>
> (Glasgow City Council)

> "Census data is highly regarded as reliable, accurate and accessible. The origins of the data are readily understood and its results accepted by both specialists and non-

> specialists. Its importance in providing baseline data and allowing comparisons to be made over time is paramount. It makes important contributions to the objective of providing accessible, open data."
>
> (Aberdeenshire Council - Information and Research Team)

6.6 Some NHS Boards and organisations with an interest in health stressed the limitations of using large population surveys to inform service planning and policy.

> "The census is absolutely vital to our work and its importance should not be undermined. We are very experienced in using large population surveys and, while very useful, we are well aware of their limitations and so always exercise caution in our interpretations of their data. Response bias and selection bias are particular concerns, posing major threats to the surveys' representativeness. If the census is to be replaced with surveys, which in Scotland typically have response rates lower than 60%, or with administrative data, which often misses key groups not in contact with services, the quality of public health research in Scotland could be severely weakened."
>
> (NHS Health Scotland)

> "The census has been a key data source for over a century for monitoring, research and policy development. Stopping the decennial census would be a mistake as key time series and good quality population level data would be lost. Survey data have many limitations, such as limited sample size, consistency of questions, representativeness of sample and sub-populations in sample."
>
> (Glasgow Centre for Population Health)

6.7 Some genealogists emphasised the importance of the census in providing information about Scotland's population and history over the long term, through the publication of personal and individual information after 100 years.

> "The censuses are not just used during the five years after the census. In fact, as they are not made available until 100 years after, they are a long-term investment for the future. When you look back at the heavy usage of those of the censuses which have been made available - particularly the 1911 census, for which usage figures are more likely to be available than for the others - you can see just how heavily this information is required."
>
> (Individual)

Future census options

6.8 A few respondents and a number of attendees at the stakeholder engagement events were positive about the potential of developing an online version of the census, especially as it might be more cost effective.

> "The technology is here now to make the census easier and cheaper to collect and to analyse and distribute than ever before. It seems short sighted to talk about cutting data when evidence and data are becoming more important every day."
>
> (Scottish Borders Council)

6.9 Other attendees at the stakeholder engagement events expressed concern that this might have a negative impact on return rates. A few attendees also expressed interest in the short form/ long form census method, but requested more detailed information.

6.10 One respondent suggested that a limited trial be undertaken of any proposed system by a small cross section of users prior to being adopted nationally.

Question design and definitions

6.11 Some charities and voluntary organisations felt that the questions used in the census were not always appropriate or understood by individuals. Particular concerns were raised in relation to questions gathering information on protected characteristics[4]. Some felt that this potentially presented a problem for people completing the census.

6.12 Some attendees at the equalities stakeholder events expressed frustration that additional questions or response options for particular questions could not be included in the census.

Potential issues with re-use of administrative data

6.13 A few respondents drew attention to potential consequences of greater emphasis being placed on administrative data in place of current census data. Two concerns were raised. Firstly, some were concerned about whether data collected for one purpose was robust enough to be used for statistical purposes. Secondly, some were concerned about the stability of administrative data over time, given that an organisation collecting it might decide that it would no longer collect the data.

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[4] In its report – *Beyond 2011 – Stakeholder Engagement – Equalities Findings 2013* (August 2013) – NRS noted that although extensive research, consultation and question testing is carried out on the ethnicity question in intra-census years to ensure it reflects changes in society, it was not possible to reach agreement with all equality groups about categories included and the structure of the question.

Appendix One: List of Organisational Respondents

The consultation received 125 responses. Eighty organisations submitted a response. Nine did not give permission for their response to be made public.

Aberdeen City Council - Corporate Governance
Aberdeenshire Council – Community Planning Partnership
Aberdeenshire Council - Information and Research Team
African & Caribbean Network
Angus Council
Argyll and Bute Council
BEMIS Scotland
Bòrd na Gàidhlig
British Sikh Federation
Call Credit Limited
Capability Scotland
Carers Scotland
Children in Scotland
City of Edinburgh Council - Development Planning
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Community Links (South Lanarkshire)
David Simmonds Consultancy
Derek Halden Consultancy Limited (DHC)
Dumfries and Galloway Council - Education Service
Dundee City Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Falkirk Council
Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority
Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow Life
Highland Council
Highland Council - Housing & Property Services
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Institute and Faculty of Actuaries
Inverclyde Council - Corporate Policy
Langstane Housing Association Ltd
Marie Curie Cancer Care
MVA Consultancy
NHS Dumfries & Galloway - Directorate of Public Health
NHS Health Scotland (NHS HS)
NHS Highland
NHS National Services Scotland
NHS National Services Scotland – Information Services Division (ISD)

NHS Orkney
North Ayrshire Council
National Records of Scotland (NRS) - Population and Migration Statistics Branch
Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Population Estimates Unit
Orkney Islands Council
Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland
Scottish Association of Family History Societies
Scottish Borders Council
Scottish Boundary Commissions
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Scottish Council on Deafness
Scottish Government – Community Analytical Services: Built Environment - People, Performance and Supply Statistics
Scottish Government - Children and Families Analysis, Education Analytical Services
Scottish Government - Health Analytical Services
Scottish Government Equality Analysis Unit
Scottish Government, Office of the Chief Statistician and Performance
Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS)
Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
Scottish Transgender Alliance
Scottish Water
Shetland Islands Council
South Lanarkshire Council – Corporate Management Team
Stonewall Scotland
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
The Market Research Society (Census and Geodemographics Group on behalf of)
The Pagan Federation (Scotland)
The Salvation Army
Transport Scotland
Transport Scotland – Analytical Services
West Dunbartonshire Council - Corporate and Community Planning
Wheatley Housing Group

Forty-five responses were received from individuals.

Appendix Two: List of Suggested Alternative Data Sources

Population
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including Family Resources Survey (FRS), Universal Credit records,
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data
Electoral Registration records
Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) data
Local Authority data – including Council Tax data, Social Work department data
National Address Gazetteer
National Records of Scotland (NRS) data – including Voluntary Population Estimates
NHS – including Information Services Division (ISD) data, Central Register, Community Health Index (CHI) Scotland data, GP Practice Registrations
Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey (APS)
Postcode/Postal Zones
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Pupil Census, ScotXed data
Social landlords – including customer information and housing registers
Store and customer card information
The Care Inspectorate data
UK Border Agency (UKBA) data – including asylum seeker applications and approvals
University Scotland data – including information on applications and admissions
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Household and family structure
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including Universal Credit records
Electoral Registration records
Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC)
Local Authority data – including Council Tax data
National Address Gazetteer
NHS – including Central Register
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Growing Up in Scotland data, Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) data
Store and customer card information
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Housing
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including Family Resources Survey (FRS)
Electoral Registration records
Local Authority data – including Council Tax data, housing completion and demolition records
National Address Gazetteer
NHS – including Information Services Division (ISD) data, Central Register
Registers of Scotland (RoS) – including property ownership and transactions
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish

Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Growing Up in Scotland data, Register of Private Landlords data, The Scottish House Condition Survey
Social landlords – including customer information and housing registers
Valuation Office Council Tax banding and market valuation data
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Education
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including Family Resources Survey (FRS)
Further and Higher Education Institutions data
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data
Local Authority data
Scottish Funding Council (SFC) data
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Pupil Census, ScotXed data, Child Looked After and Child Protection Surveys, Growing Up in Scotland Survey
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) data
SEEMiS data
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Labour market and socio-economic activity
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Growing Up in Scotland Survey
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including Family Resources Survey (FRS), Universal Credit
Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey (APS), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)
Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) – including income and VAT registration data, Real Time Information (RTI) data,
CACI & Paycheck data
Skills Development Scotland (SDS) data
NHS – including Central Register
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Transport
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)
Settlement-based household travel and lifestyle surveys
NHS – including Central Register
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Ethnicity, identity, religion, language, and sexual orientation
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including Family Resources Survey (FRS)
Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) – including income and VAT registration data, Real Time Information (RTI) data

Local Authority data – including Council Tax data
NHS – including Central Register
Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey (APS), Labour Force Survey (LFS)
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Growing Up in Scotland Survey, Pupil Census
UK Border Agency (UKBA) data – including asylum seeker applications and approvals
Universities Scotland applications
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data

Health and community care
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data – including pregnancy and maternity data
Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) data
Local Authority data – including Social Work department data
NHS – including Information Services Division (ISD) data, Central Register, Community Health Index (CHI) Scotland data, GP Practice Registrations
Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey (APS), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Scottish Health Survey (SHeS)
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) data

Migration
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data
Local Authority data
NHS – including Central Register, Community Health Index (CHI) Scotland data, GP Practice Registrations
Registers of Scotland (RoS) - including property ownership and transactions
Scottish Government data – including Scottish Household Survey (SHS), Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Pupil Census
UK Border Agency (UKBA) data
Voluntary sector organisations – including surveys and client data