

Responding to the consultation

David Martin

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on behalf of the Independent Working Group

Why an independent working group?

- Small area data are so deeply embedded and cross-cutting that few users consider this to be their primary concern
- Initially slow response to ONS regarding evidence of need for small areas
- Independent action needed!
 - Piers Elias – Tees Valley Unlimited
 - David Martin – University of Southampton
 - Paul Norman – University of Leeds
 - Phil Rees – University of Leeds
 - Ludi Simpson – University of Manchester

Acknowledgement of support

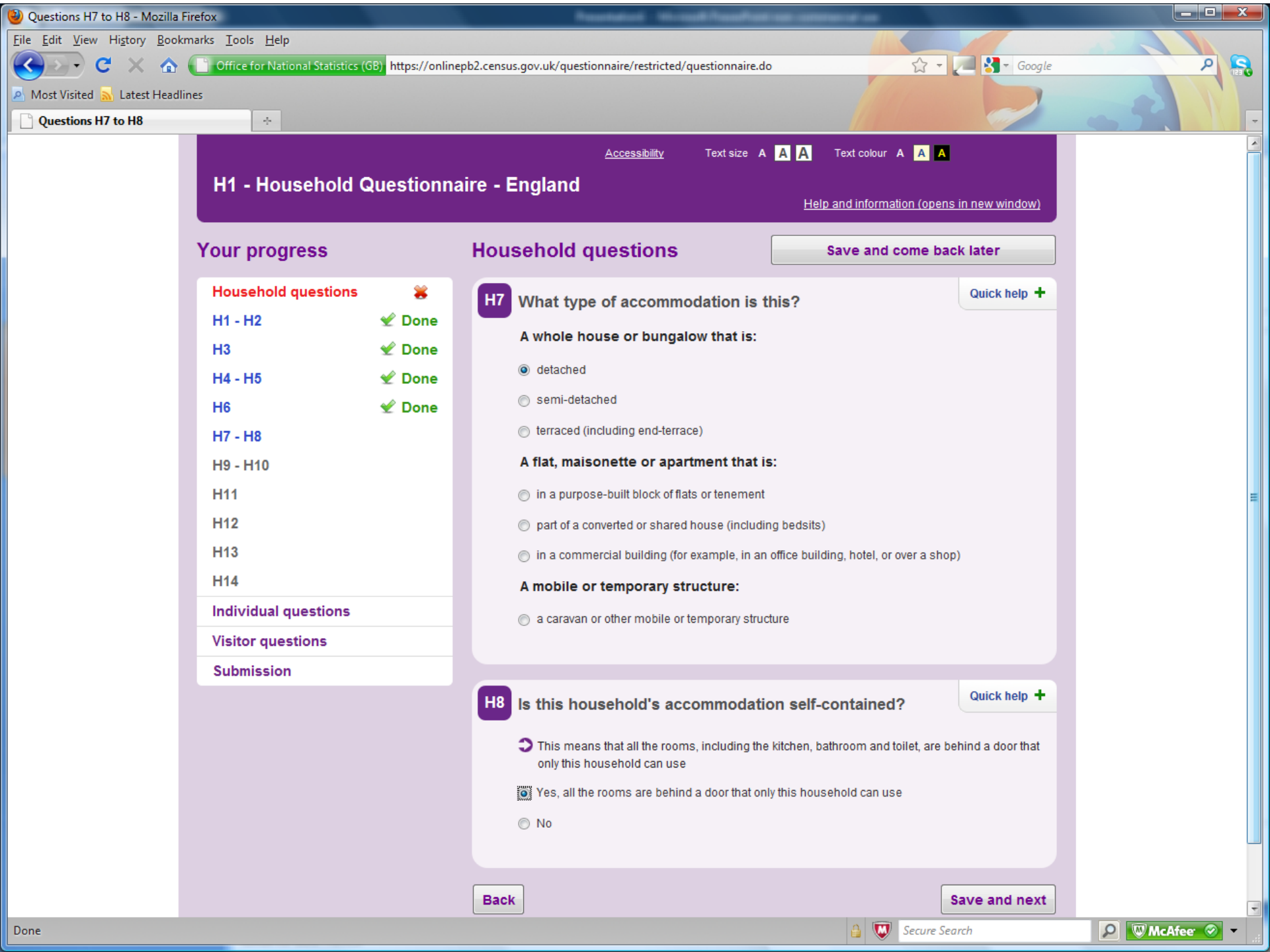
- Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)
- RGS-IBG Population Geography Research Group
- British Society for Population Studies
- Demographics User Group

The issues

- Strength of the census is due to a single database from a single enumeration (near-complete coverage, same set of questions)
 - So can be cut in many different ways (small areas, multivariate tables, interaction data, microdata, LS)
- There are real weaknesses of traditional census (timeliness, cost, response, risk...)
- Current consultation options differ in complex ways but neither provides what we are used to having

The options on the table

- Online census
 - Coverage challenges, non-response bias, mixed modes, cost of follow-up, standard “census” risks
- Administrative data and surveys
 - Will not yet provide characteristics for small areas, huge challenges: multiyear data and boundary change
- Enumeration and survey challenges are always geographically concentrated: address frame, hard to count, non-response...
- Missing link: characteristics from admin sources?
- Too early to take an informed decision?



H1 - Household Questionnaire - England

[Help and information \(opens in new window\)](#)

Your progress

- Household questions**
- H1 - H2 Done
- H3 Done
- H4 - H5 Done
- H6 Done
- H7 - H8**
- H9 - H10
- H11
- H12
- H13
- H14
- Individual questions
- Visitor questions
- Submission

Household questions

Save and come back later

H7 What type of accommodation is this? Quick help +

A whole house or bungalow that is:

- detached
- semi-detached
- terraced (including end-terrace)

A flat, maisonette or apartment that is:

- in a purpose-built block of flats or tenement
- part of a converted or shared house (including bedsits)
- in a commercial building (for example, in an office building, hotel, or over a shop)

A mobile or temporary structure:

- a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure

H8 Is this household's accommodation self-contained? Quick help +

This means that all the rooms, including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet, are behind a door that only this household can use

- Yes, all the rooms are behind a door that only this household can use
- No

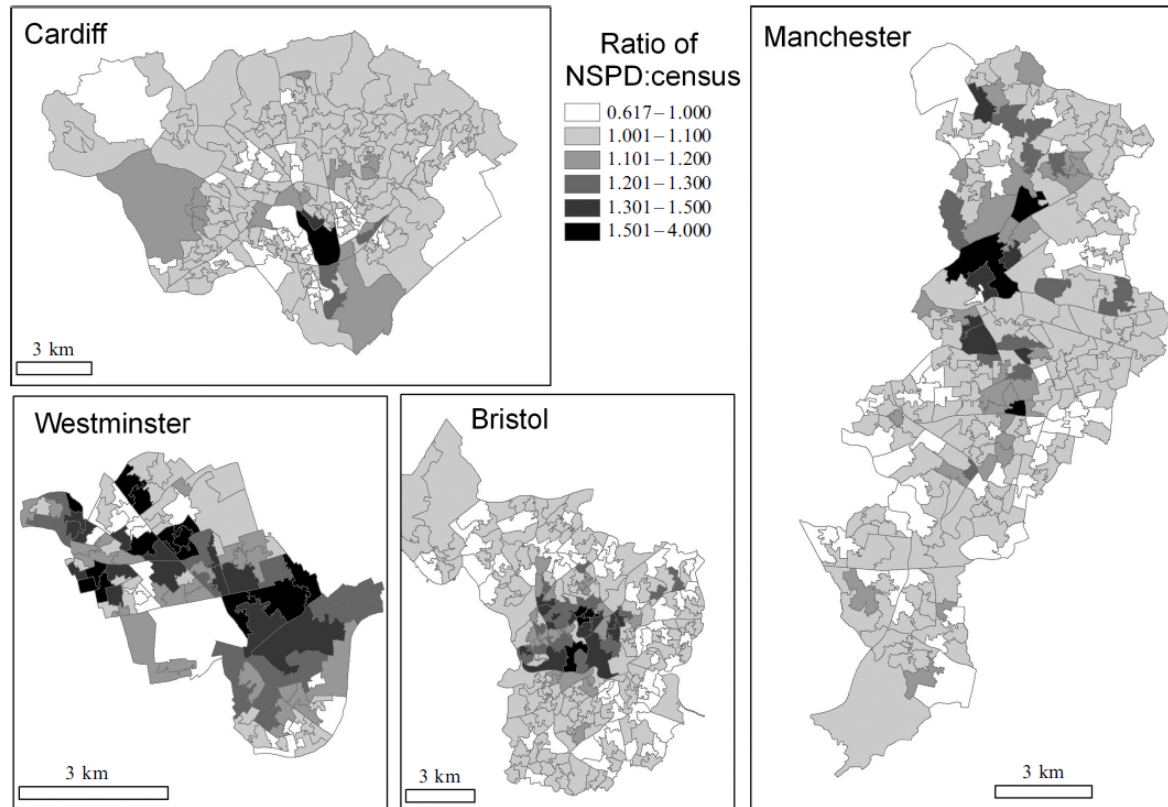
Back

Save and next

2001 Census: Manchester and Westminster Matching Studies Full Report

2001 Census

Local Authority Population Studies: Full report



Office for National Statistics, September 2004

Figure 4. Ratio of NSPD (National Statistics Postcode Directory) addresses to census household spaces, 2001 by LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Area): Cardiff, Westminster, Bristol, and Manchester.

Summary of uses (ONS, 2013)

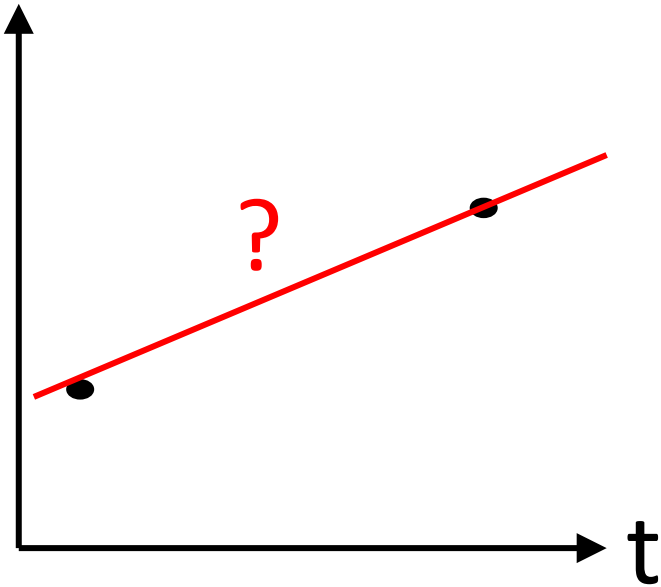
- DfT: “small area data are vital for the work of the department.”
- DECC: “an increasing need for up to date data at local authority and small area level because new models rely more and more on small area data.”
- DUG: “There is a strong demand from the commercial sector for OA level statistics”
- Third sector: “Small area census data is particularly important to the smaller, local charities, while detailed OA data and cross-tabulations are used by many for research purposes”

Not “just” building blocks

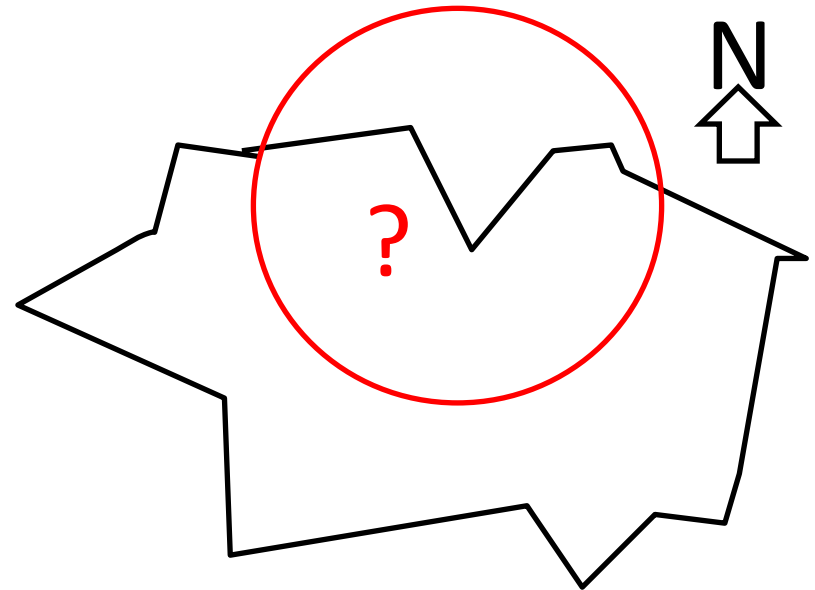
- Tendency to dismiss smallest areas as building blocks
- But exposure to environment, flooding, hazard, primary school catchments, housing conditions, access to services are multivariate issues not aggregated to LSOA/MSOA/LAD boundaries
- Important aspects of real lives vary over very small geographical scales
- And they change over time, reflecting new questions and new policies

If we must choose...

Unknown trend?



Unknown pattern?





Photos: David Martin

Thanks, but you're not done yet!

- Thanks for coming and engaging: you have identified yourself as part of this community
- You now carry a part of the responsibility for what happens next
- Buy your boss/staff a coffee and thrash out the real issues
- Join the debate/respond to the consultation
- It is not an option to just let this take its course and then regret the loss of small area social data for at least another decade

The census and future provision of population statistics in England and Wales

Public consultation

September 2013