

2021 Census: First Results – SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Summary

On Tuesday 28 June 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the first results of the 2021 Census, which focused on national and local authority area population totals and an age/sex breakdown of the population (rounded) by five-year age groups. The figures reported that the estimated population of the City & County of Swansea on Census Day (Sunday 21 March 2021) was 238,500.

The first 2021 results for Swansea were outlined in a separate earlier briefing note, available at www.swansea.gov.uk/2021census_results.

A range of additional supplementary information was also published at this time, and this note summarises the key information available for Swansea:

- Households (with at least one usual resident)
- Population density (number of people per square kilometre)
- Components of the 2021 Census estimates
- Response rates
- Background reports (links to ONS 2021 Census methodology and other information)
- On-line responses (*note: originally published October 2021*).

Further information and more detailed results from the 2021 Census, including data for local areas (below local authority level) and statistics on local population characteristics, will be part of future Census release phases beginning in November 2022. Later this year, the 2021 mid-year population estimates – the first to be based on the latest Census results – will also be published by ONS, with the mid-year estimates for 2012 to 2020 due to be revised (re-based using 2021 Census data) in early 2023.

Households

The first Census results provided rounded local authority level estimates of the number of households (with at least one usual resident). In the Census, a household is defined as *'one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area'*.

There were an estimated 1,347,100 households in Wales on Census Day, which is a 3.4% (44,400) increase on the 2011 total (1,302,676 households). This is a lower rate of growth than between 2001 and 2011 in Wales, when the number of households grew by 7.7%.

There were an estimated 105,000 households in Swansea in the 2021 Census, 7.8% of the Welsh total, and the second highest figure in Wales (behind Cardiff). This is approximately 4,700 households lower than the previous reported figure for Swansea (the last pre-census Welsh Government estimate for mid-2020) but a 1.5% increase on the 2011 Census figure of 103,500.

Population density

Population density has been calculated using population estimates rounded to the nearest hundred. It gives the estimated number of usual residents per square kilometre. There were an average 150 residents per square kilometre in Wales in 2021, slightly higher than the 148 figure in 2011. The population density in Wales is considerably lower than in England, where there were 434 residents per square kilometre.

In Swansea there were 632 usual residents per square kilometre in 2021, the fifth highest of the Welsh local authority areas – behind Cardiff (2,572), Newport, Torfaen and Caerphilly – with Powys (26) the least densely populated area in Wales. The 2021 Census figure for Swansea showed a -0.2% change on the 2011 Census (633 usual residents per sq. kilometre), reflecting the small reduction in the population total.

Components of the 2021 Census estimates

The supplementary information published by ONS with the first Census results included a *Local authority comparison tool*. Worksheet 01 (Comparison of measures) shows the contribution of the different estimation components towards the final published census estimates for Swansea, with Wales and England & Wales figures added for comparison. Whilst the majority of the estimates include people who responded to the census, further adjustments are made to reflect people missed (or counted more than once) in the census, so that estimates represent the whole population.

The various adjustment processes added almost 10,000 (net) to the initial Census count of Swansea residents (from returned questionnaires), as summarised in Table 1. Further information is also available via the ‘Notes and definitions’ section below.

Table 1: Components of the census estimate of usual residents

Area	Swansea	Wales	E & W
Census estimate of usual residents	238,500	3,107,500	59,597,300
<i>consisting of:</i>			
Count of usual residents	229,000	2,994,600	57,788,000
Adjustment for: undercoverage in households	+9,700	+126,300	+2,137,500
overcount in households	-2,700	-32,900	-596,200
undercoverage in communal establishments	+1,500	+13,300	+221,800
Other local adjustments	+1,000	+6,200	+46,300

Source: Census 2021 Local authority comparison tool, England and Wales, Office for National Statistics. © Crown copyright 2022.

Notes and definitions:

- i. Count of usual residents: those who have responded to the census.
- ii. Adjustment for undercoverage in households: some people are not recorded on a census questionnaire. ONS estimate the number of people who have been undercounted and add them into the estimates. This part of the undercoverage adjustment relates to people living in households.
- iii. Adjustment for overcount in households: some people are recorded more than once on the census (for example by being recorded as usually resident at two addresses). ONS estimate the number of people who have been overcounted in this way and remove them from the estimates.
- iv. Adjustment for undercoverage in communal establishments: This is the other main part of the adjustment for undercoverage and relates to any undercoverage of the population in communal establishments.
- v. Other local adjustments: some limited adjustments have been applied to specific local authorities where there has been good evidence that the standard census methods needed a minor adjustment.
- vi. Figures may differ slightly in future releases because of the impact of removing rounding and applying further statistical processes.
- vii. Details of the adjustment processes and other aspects of the methodology are available via the ‘Background reports’ section.

The worksheet also included figures for Council Tax occupied households alongside the published census estimates of households. Council Tax figures for ‘occupied households’ have been produced by taking the published 2021 Council Tax counts of ‘chargeable dwellings’ – as provided (in Wales) by Welsh Government via StatsWales – and removing counts of addresses listed as empty or as second homes, and adding in exempt addresses that could be occupied (for example, student HMOs).

The Council Tax occupied households figure shown for Swansea of 107,700 is above the Census estimate of 105,000. However, direct comparisons are affected by:

- rules around exemptions and discounts (e.g. for second homes) which vary by LA;

- Council Tax records and Census counting individual rooms in a communal establishment (e.g. student halls) differently;
- an 'occupied dwelling' on Council Tax may not reflect that the address is someone's place of usual residence according to the census definition;
- the Council Tax data having a different 'reference date' (October to December 2021 in Wales), which would therefore not reflect changes between Census Day and that date.

Response rates

The response rate is calculated as the census count for an area or group divided by the final census estimate. Response rates are initially provided for usual residents and (nationally) for households. It is different to the *return rate* (information not yet available), which relates to the proportion of Census questionnaires which were returned.

One of ONS' key targets for the 2021 Census was to achieve a 94% response for England and Wales (E&W) overall, and at least 80% in each local authority area. The overall response rate for usual residents in Swansea for the 2021 Census was 96%, which is above the rate in 2011 (92%). Similar improvements in response rates between Censuses occurred in Wales (2011: 93%; 2021: 96%) and England & Wales (up from 94% to 97%).

In Swansea, the total Census count (all people) was 229,000 (rounded) which when expressed as a proportion of the total 2021 Census estimate (238,500, rounded) derives the overall response rate of 96%.

Response rates are also published by age (5-year group). In Swansea, the highest response rate (98%) was recorded across all age groups 55-89, with the lowest response among the 15-19 group (92%) followed by those aged 0-4 and 20-24 (both 93%).

The most significant gap, in numeric terms, between the 2021 Census count and Census estimate in Swansea occurred in the 15-24 age range; at 2,500 people in total (rounded).

Background reports

ONS have published a number of additional reports which set out the initial results and various aspects of the 2021 Census background, methodology and process:

Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021 (statistical bulletin): featuring rounded population and household estimates for local authorities in Wales, with initial commentary. An equivalent bulletin for 'England and Wales' was also published.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/census2021>

Quality and methodology information (QMI) for Census 2021 (report): details the strengths, limitations, uses, users and methods used for Census 2021 in England and Wales.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/methodologies/qualityandmethodologyinformationqmiforcensus2021>

Maximising the quality of Census 2021 population estimates (methodology paper): how ONS maximised the quality of Census 2021 population estimates during the processing and quality assurance of the final statistics.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/methodologies/maximisingthequalityofcensus2021populationestimates>

Coronavirus and the operational impact on Census 2021 (October 2020 article): showing potential impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the operational plans for Census 2021 and the design changes and contingency plans made in response.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/planningforcensus2021/censusdesign/coronavirusandtheoperationalimpactoncensus2021>

Further methodology reports and information will be published by ONS later in 2022.

On-line responses

The earlier ONS report *Designing a digital-first census* (October 2021) reported that 88.9% of households in England and Wales responded online to the 2021 Census, above ONS' target of 75%.

The mode of initial contact (whether sent a paper questionnaire or a letter with an access code) strongly influenced whether people responded online or on paper. 89.0% of all households in England and Wales were sent a letter with an access code (with paper questionnaires available on request); of those, 94.2% completed their census online and 5.8% on paper. Of the 11.0% of households sent paper questionnaires (including an access code to respond online), 46.4% completed it online.

In 2021, the overall proportion of returns submitted online was lower in Wales (68%) than in England (90%). This is likely to be due to Wales having a higher percentage of households in which initial contact was with a paper questionnaire rather than an online access code (50% in Wales compared with 9% in England) – mostly due to Wales having more areas where ONS anticipated take-up of the online option would be lower.

In Swansea, 43% of households in 2021 were paper first (below the Wales average of 50%). The Swansea figures for online share of responses in 2021 were as follows:

- Paper first – responded online: 44% (Wales 42%)
- Digital first – responded online: 93% (9th highest of Wales LAs, average 93%).

Further background information, together with small area figures (the online share of household responses by Lower layer Super Output Area), is available via the link below:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/articles/designingadigitalfirstcensus/latest>

Comparisons can be made with the 2011 Census, which provided users with the opportunity to complete their questionnaire on-line for the first time. The 2011 on-line response rate in Swansea was only 15.0% (Wales 13.4%; England & Wales 16%), which indicates how much this aspect of society has changed since the previous Census.

Conclusions

This briefing note summarises the more significant elements of the additional information released by ONS alongside the first 2021 Census population estimates in June 2022 (and earlier). Further information on the Census methodology is due to follow in due course.

More detailed results from the 2021 Census, including statistics for local areas (below local authority level) and further information on local population characteristics, are due for publication in phases beginning in November 2022 and continuing into 2023.

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If you would like any additional information about the Census, or have any other queries regarding population and demographic change in Swansea, please contact:

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