

Analysis of Response Rates to 2001 Census

Overview

- Census response fell between 1991 and 2001 for most age-sex groups.
- Other countries have also seen declines in response rates during the past decade.

Overall response rates to 2001 Census

- Proportion of people returning a Census form in England and Wales was 94%.
- An additional 4% of the population were estimated by enumerators to be resident in households;
- Combined, this gives an overall response rate to the 2001 Census of 98% for England and Wales.
- The table below shows local response rates (proportion of people returning a Census form) and provides comparisons with the national and regional averages.

	Overall response rate
Luton	86%
Bedford Borough	93%
Mid Bedfordshire	98%
South Bedfordshire	96%
East of England	95%
England and Wales	94%

- Luton had the 19th lowest overall response rate in England and Wales (of 376 districts). The only other non-London Borough districts that featured in the bottom twenty were Slough (15th) and Ceredigion, Wales (18th).

Response rates by age and gender

- Under-enumeration varies across different age-sex groups. Response rates were lowest for those in their twenties, and particularly men in this group. In England

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and Wales rates varied from 98% for females aged 75-79, to 87% for 20-24 year old males.

- Response rate for children much lower in 2001 than 1991.
- Generally is a higher response rate for women than men, although in 2001 this difference was smaller than at previous Censuses.
- Biggest difference in response rates between 1991 and 2001 is for 20-24 year old females, where the 2001 response rate was 6% lower than in 1991.
- The table below shows response rates by gender for Luton, the Bedfordshire districts, the region and the national average:

	Overall response rate	Male response rate	Female response rate
Luton	86%	85%	88%
Bedford Borough	93%	91%	94%
Mid Bedfordshire	98%	97%	98%
South Bedfordshire	96%	96%	97%
East of England	95%	95%	96%
England and Wales	94%	93%	94%

- Within Luton, rates ranged from 95% for 80-84 year olds, to 73% for 20-24 year olds. The appendix shows all the response rates by age band for Luton, and England & Wales.

Response by area

- Inner city areas had the lowest response rates, as was expected. These areas have the characteristics known to be most likely to be associated with census non-response – higher proportions of non-English speaking population, multi-occupancy etc.
- The response to the 2001 Census was lower across all the different area categories, with roughly the same fall noted across all areas. However, Inner and Outer London recorded larger declines in response rates than other areas, with Inner London not only having the lowest response rate in 1991, but also recording the largest absolute decline between 1991 and 2001.

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- Across all across all areas, there were seventeen districts that had response rates above 99%. All these areas are defined as non-metropolitan areas on the 1991 Census area classification. The ten districts that had the lowest response rates were all Inner-London boroughs.

Highest and lowest response rates by Local Authority 2001

Rank	Highest response rates		Lowest response rates	
1	Teesdale	99%	Kensington & Chelsea	64%
2	Castle Morpeth	99%	Hackney	72%
3	Selby	99%	City of London	74%
4	South Norfolk	99%	Westminster – City of	74%
5	St Edmundsbury	99%	Tower Hamlets	76%
6	Broadland	99%	Hammersmith & Fulham	76%
7	North Devon	99%	Camden	77%
8	Kennet	99%	Southwark	77%
9	Chester-le-Street	99%	Islington	78%
10	Alnwick	99%	Lambeth	79%

One Number Census

- Most countries undertaking a census attempt to measure the level of under enumeration by way of a post-enumeration survey and/or by comparing aggregate census counts with aggregate data from other sources e.g. health registers or benefit records.
- Assessing the level of census response allows the re-basing of a population estimate series, but until now the census response rate has not been adjusted for under-enumeration.
- A Census Coverage Survey (a sample re-enumeration survey) was carried out after the main census survey to adjust for the estimated under-enumeration. This is the 'One Number Census', and is as if the census had accounted for all people. It also means that tables produced from census results will account for the whole population.

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Appendix

Response rates to 2001 Census, by age band, Luton, and England & Wales

<i>Age Group →</i>	All	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
Luton	86%	81%	86%	85%	82%	73%	83%	85%	92%	89%
England & Wales	94%	90%	92%	94%	93%	88%	89%	92%	93%	95%

<i>Age Group →</i>	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
Luton	90%	87%	90%	94%	91%	94%	93%	95%	94%
England & Wales	96%	97%	97%	97%	98%	98%	98%	97%	97%

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