



The Scottish  
Government

Cognitive Question Testing  
Scotland's Census Ethnicity  
Classification

Equalities



**COGNITIVE QUESTION TESTING SCOTLAND'S  
CENSUS ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATION**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the preparations for the 2011 Census, the Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake cognitive question testing on a provisional set of questions on Country of Birth, Religion, National Identity and Ethnicity.

The overall aim of the research was to provide evidence on how the different questions were interpreted by respondents and whether the questions elicited the required information.

Eighty-eight cognitive interviews were conducted with a broad range of respondents in terms of ethnic background, religion, age, sex and living in different parts of Scotland.

### 1) Country of Birth

This question was relatively unproblematic. There were occasional problems with the write-in box not being long enough for countries with particularly long names. Most people understood the impracticality of having a longer list of response options and were happy with the options provided.

***The question should be retained in its current format.***

### 2) Religion

The main problem with this question was the layout. Several respondents interpreted the “Other Christian” write-in box as a visual cue that signalled the end of the question and wrote their religion (e.g. Hindu) in that box. This resulted in several respondents answering this question more than once. ***Consideration should be given to amending the layout of this question to avoid the visual break caused by the “Other Christian” write-in boxes in the middle of the response options.***

***Consideration should also be given to whether there is a data requirement to specify other Christian churches or whether simply having an “Other Christian” option (with no write-in boxes) would be sufficient.***

Most people understood why it might be useful to collect data on religion and were happy with the inclusion of the question. However, a few people thought the question was being asked in connection with terrorism and, specifically, to find out the number of Muslims in Scotland.

Most people noticed that the question was asking about “current” religion rather than religion of upbringing but a few did not. ***Consideration should be given to underlining, or otherwise emphasising, the word “current”.***

Respondents were generally happy with the response options, although there was some confusion from people who had not lived in Scotland for long about whether “Church of Scotland” was the same as “Church of England”. ***The inclusion of a “Church of England” response option should be considered.***

There was some concern that the write-in boxes were too short. **Consideration should be given to increasing the length of the write-in boxes (e.g. by having two rows of boxes).**

### 3) National Identity

**Consideration should be given to not including this question.**

Most people understood the meaning of the question, however there were some misinterpretations. The word “identify” caused some ambiguity. There was also some confusion about the word “nation.”

Many respondents did not notice the instruction to “Tick all boxes that apply” and felt uncomfortable having to choose one nation. **If the question is retained, the instruction should be made clearer.**

Several respondents, and British respondents in particular, thought that the purpose of the question was to explore their views on Scottish devolution and independence.

There was also evidence that a social desirability effect might bias the results of this question: there was a view that immigrants should try to integrate and therefore the “correct” answer was Scotland and/or Britain.

As the only specified response options were all in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, some respondents inferred that there was less interest in “other” nations.

The write-in box was frequently described as too short, so respondents could not write-in more than one “other” nation. For some, this seemed to imply that the expected answer was from one or more UK countries, or UK countries and one other. **If the question is retained, the length of the write-in box should be increased.**

Some respondents felt the question was important as it meant that they could express their “Scottishness” or “Britishness“. **If the question is deleted, the recommendation to include “Scottish” and “British” in the Asian ethnic group response options becomes even more important.**

### 4) Ethnicity question

#### ▪ Layout

The main problem with this question was the layout. Many respondents initially thought that the White section constituted the entire ethnicity question because they interpreted the “Other white ethnic group” write-in space as a visual cue that signalled the end of the question and wrote their ethnicity (e.g. Black African) in that space.

Several versions of the questionnaire tried to correct this problem, mainly by increasing the indentation of the write-in spaces. The final version tested also put a letter in front of each section heading. However, not enough interviews with non-white respondents were conducted to fully assess the impact of the change. There appeared to be very little objection to lettering being used in relation to these headings. **The layout and lettering used in Version 6 (see Annex 1) should be tested further with more non-white respondents.**

A couple of respondents objected to the ordering of the sections in the question, feeling this should be done in alphabetical order as they were offended the “White” section was listed first. However, most non-white respondents were happy with the ordering and assumed it reflected the numbers of people from different ethnic groups in the Scottish population.

- **Interpretation of the question**

Most respondents seemed to understand the term “ethnic group”. However, there were several respondents who struggled with the term. Common misinterpretations included the ethnic groups the respondent came into contact with or socialised with.

Respondents felt that the explanation included in the 2001 Census would have helped them to understand the question better. ***Consideration should be given to amending “ethnic group” to “ethnic background.”***

- **Feelings towards the question**

Several non-white respondents did not like answering this question. It made some of them feel uncomfortable and some did not understand why this information was important.

The respondents who understood why this data was being collected were more likely to accept the question. However, simply adding an explanation of why the question is included will not completely solve the problem, as it was clear that some non-white respondents, even those who were in favour of the question and understood its potential usefulness in planning services and tackling discrimination, at some level “hated” this question being asked. ***Consideration should be given to including an explanation about why it is necessary to collect information on ethnicity in the Census.***

- **“White” section**

Virtually all respondents were comfortable with this section heading. The few respondents who objected were those that objected to colour labels throughout the form.

Scottish/British respondents sometimes found it difficult to choose between response options.

All of the Polish respondents interviewed were happy that a Polish response option was included - although a couple were unsure it should be included without recognising any other Eastern European countries. However, respondents from other Eastern European countries had mixed views towards the Polish option, with some feeling it should be removed as other countries were not represented, and others feeling it was good that the Polish had been recognised. ***We therefore suggest that the Polish response option should be retained.***

- **“Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups” section**

Although we did not specifically recruit respondents from “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups”, several respondents were from this group or had children who were.

The term “Mixed” was viewed unfavourably by several respondents who believed the term was, or could be, offensive. A few respondents favoured simply “Multiple Ethnic Groups”. However, some other respondents were not familiar with this term and indicated that the term “mixed” was needed to explain the section. ***We suggest the phrase “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic groups” should be retained for the time being. As people become more familiar with the term “multiple ethnic groups”, it may be possible to phase out the word “Mixed.”***

There was confusion about who should be included in this section. One interpretation was that it was only for a mix of different White ethnicities. Another interpretation was that it was only for a mix of White plus another ethnicity (and not, for example, Asian and African). Both of these interpretations were based on the fact that the “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups” section followed on from the “White” section. ***Consideration should be given to adding a short explanation of who should be included in this group.***

It was also suggested that consideration should be given to moving this section so it does not appear immediately after the “White” section. However, previous research has shown that this section was likely to get missed if placed towards the end of the question.

Further confusion was based on the use of the terms “Asian Scottish, African Scottish and Caribbean Scottish” and “Asian British, African British and Caribbean British” in other sections. Several respondents believed that these terms described people from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds (e.g. one Asian parent and one Scottish parent) which made it unclear who the “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups” section was intended for.

Several of the respondents also commented that the write-in box in this section was not long enough to describe multiple ethnic groups. ***This write-in box should be expanded so people feel able to write in an adequate description of their mixed or multiple ethnic groups.***

***Consideration should be given to conducting testing with more people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups.***

- **“Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British” section**

Respondents were generally happy about the phrasing of the heading, feeling it recognised the identity of Asians who are born and raised in the UK. ***We suggest that the phrasing of the section heading should therefore be retained. However, it is important to recognise that this may confuse some people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups.***

Most respondents were happy with the response categories that were included in this section, feeling most groups of Asians in the UK had been included. However,

several UK-born Asian respondents (and parents of UK-born Asians) found it difficult to accept that the response categories (unlike the heading) did not include any reference to Britain or Scotland. **Consideration should be given to adding Scottish and British to the individual response options (e.g. Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British.)**

Most Sikh respondents ticked the Indian response option and believed that the Sikh response option should be removed. They felt that Sikhism was a religion rather than an ethnicity and they were confused about its inclusion as an ethnic group. Most had either not noticed the Sikh option and ticked Indian “as usual”, or had noticed and been uncomfortable about having to choose between the two options. A couple of respondents had selected the Sikh option rather than the Indian option, but this was simply because they felt they were being more specific: they did not feel strongly about the inclusion of a Sikh option. **We suggest that the Sikh response option should therefore be removed.**

- **“African, Caribbean or Black” section**

The inclusion of the term “or Black” led to considerable confusion. Many respondents felt that the term “or Black” implied that Africans or Caribbeans were *not* Black, or were not necessarily Black. They wondered who the “or Black” people could be, or assumed that non-Black Africans or Caribbeans should be included. Most Black Africans and some White Africans therefore assumed that White Africans should be included in this section. **Consideration should be given to changing the heading back to the 2001 Census wording of “Black, Black Scottish or Black British.”**

Black Africans and Black Caribbeans were confused about whether to tick the “African....” or “Caribbean...” response option or the “Black...” option. Most selected “African...” or “Caribbean....” rather than “Black....”. This was because they felt it was more specific and they preferred to emphasise their area of origin rather than their skin colour. **Consideration should be given to deleting the “Black, Black Scottish or Black British” response option.**

In most cases, choice of response option did not stem from any objection to the word “Black...” and, indeed, many respondents had spontaneously described themselves as “Black African”. However, there were a few respondents who objected to the term “Black”.

The inclusion of the terms “Scottish” and “British” were generally seen as positive, but did lead to some confusion about whether this meant people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups should be included.

# 1. BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Background

As part of the preparations for the 2011 Census, the Scottish Government (SG) commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake cognitive question testing on a provisional set of questions on national identity and ethnic group. This forms part of a wider review of ethnicity classifications being conducted by the Scottish Government, in partnership with the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). This review has been ongoing for several years and involves an extensive programme of research and consultation<sup>1</sup>. It has considered the views and requirements of people from different ethnic groups and people who use census ethnicity data, as well as the methodological issues involved in developing survey questions which will enable the collection of accurate, robust and useful data on the Scottish population.

Following the 2001 Census, strong objections were raised about the use of the term Black in the ethnic group category relating to people of African or Caribbean ethnicity. More broadly, concerns were expressed that the 2001 question used a combination of ways to categorise ethnicity, including nationality, skin colour/race and geography (and did so inconsistently across ethnic group categories), and that it failed to capture the complexity, fluidity and multi-faceted nature of contemporary ethnic identity.

As part of the ongoing ethnicity review, the Scottish Government developed a revised ethnic group question, as well as a national identity question, which were included in GROS' 2006 Census Test<sup>2</sup>. Following the Census Test and the Census Test Follow Up Survey<sup>3</sup>, further research and consultation has been conducted<sup>4</sup>, and the test questions have been incrementally developed based on the findings of this work.

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<sup>1</sup> Research on 'Ethnic Identity and the Census' can be viewed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/06/22142242/22440>

The results from the 2005 'Review of Census Ethnicity Classifications Consultation' can be viewed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/06/22110457/04594>

<sup>2</sup> The Census Test questions and findings can be viewed here:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/2006-census-test/2006-census-test-evaluation.html#Evaluation>

<sup>3</sup> The report on the 2006 Census Test Follow Up Survey can be viewed here:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files1/the-census/2006-census-test-evaluation/j8566b.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Information on the GROS 2007 Census Consultation can be viewed here:

Whilst revisions have been made to the proposed ethnicity classification to address the concerns which have been raised, it is also possible that some of the changes could have unintended or unhelpful consequences. It is against this backdrop that the Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct detailed cognitive testing of the proposed ethnic group and national identity questions, in order to understand how respondents might interpret and answer revised questions, and thereby get an understanding of how the proposed questions work in practice.

## 1.2 Ethnicity and the Scottish Census

Ethnicity has been recorded in the Scottish Census only since 1991. The 1971 and 1981 censuses provided a proxy for ethnicity derived from each person's country of birth, but by 1991 this was no longer a useful basis for ethnic classification. Between 1991 and 2001 the categories for recording ethnic group changed with the introduction of over-arching categories of White/Black/Asian etc, the inclusion of 'mixed' categories, and the identification of Scottish and Irish as ethnic categories alongside British.

The rationale for the introduction of, and changes to, the ethnic group categories are interesting but secondary to the fact that they demonstrate the fluidity of ethnic classifications: the emergence of new information requirements reflects a combination of increasing awareness of ethnic difference and identity as social and political phenomena and the increasing complexity of ethnic classification in a multi-racial society. In addition, unlike many of the other questions addressed by the census, ethnicity is not an entirely objective fact but a personal and social construct reflecting "a real or putative shared identity based on one or more symbolic elements such as culture, language, religion, kinship, shared territory or physical appearance".<sup>5</sup> More specifically, research by Akinwale<sup>6</sup> comparing responses from the same people to the 1991 and 2001 Censuses as part of the ONS Longitudinal Study demonstrates that the ethnic group reported by individuals changes independently of social characteristics and question wording – people change their perception of their own ethnicity over time.

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<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/census-consultation/formal-consultations/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Bulmer (1999) *Ethnicity commentary* published at the ESRC Question Bank <http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/topics/ethnicity/ethnicitymartin%20bulmer.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Akinwale, O (2005) Change in ethnic group 1991-2001, Msc dissertation.

That ethnicity might change should be expected from the nature of the topic. It is, as Reber<sup>7</sup> notes, “a politicised social construction of reality” and we should expect debates around ethnicity (and religion, which Akinwale demonstrates as strongly linked to ethnic identity) to influence how people view themselves. This means that each person’s ethnic identity is a mix of:

- physical (essentially racial) characteristics – skin colour and other physical features
- nationality and ancestral nationality – many people born overseas may see themselves as British by having taken British nationality or by being British by birth and many Americans claim to be Scottish on the basis of distant ancestral connections
- group connections and adherence to cultural aspects associated with particular ethnic groups such as religion
- political events and debates – classic examples include the radicalisation of black Americans, the emergence of greater number of native Americans in US Censuses as people reappraised their own identity in changing political contexts. In the UK, the emergence of an Islamic identity among (and to refer to) young Asians in Britain is seen as replacing weaker connections with countries of ancestral origin and reflecting world politics.

In addition, the identity people report will reflect their perceptions of themselves, their perceptions of the questioner – how the person or body formulating the question expects them to respond to it - and their estimation of how their response might be interpreted. For example, in the Scottish Household Survey, which uses 2001 Census categories, respondents frequently do not choose the official categories for White people – Scottish, Irish, Other British, etc – and prefer to classify themselves as British (not ‘other British’, simply British).

The Census faces a peculiar challenge in collecting data. It is the definitive statement of social and demographic facts. In its own right it is the most important (and often the only) source of information at small area level, and it sets the benchmark for other datasets which adopt the classifications used in the Census and compare their outputs with Census findings. While the Census needs to be as accurate as possible, since it is a self-completion exercise, it is also limited in the burden it can place on respondents and in the complexity of the task it asks them to perform. Census questions are necessarily a compromise. But because

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<sup>7</sup> Reber (1996) quoted in Akinwale op cit

of its role in providing data and shaping other types of data collection, the Census not only records social phenomena, it is instrumental in shaping those phenomena, or at least in the period between Censuses, it helps define the way in which issues are discussed. It helps to create the language used to discuss and analyse ethnicity and it helps to form the boundaries of the discussion: ethnic groups are more likely to be analysed and discussed if they are officially recognised and categorised in the Census.

Proposals to amend the ethnicity question for the 2011 Census need to be viewed in the light of these different features of ethnicity and the Census. Three things flow from this discussion:

- there is no objective fact of ethnicity that remains fixed. Instead, people change their identification of themselves in response to social changes;
- the Census will necessarily be limited in its capacity to record the full range of variation in ethnic groupings. It is an exercise in finding the best fit between the need to collect robust and useful data, the range of ethnicities possible and the limited space within which to record them; and
- since it is a self-completion exercise, people have to rely solely on the information on the form to identify themselves among the categories. They will therefore attach meaning to categories and might adapt their responses to reflect their interpretation of the categories given to them.

The methods used in this research reflect these issues and draw on the need for clarity and simplicity in collecting data and people's responses to survey questions. It also anticipates where response problems might arise and the implications of these problems for data collection and data processing.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim of the research is to provide evidence on:

- how the different questions are interpreted by respondents; and
- whether the questions elicit the required information.

More specifically, the objectives are to:

- explore how respondents interpret and answer the revised ethnic group, religion and national identity questions;
- identify problems with the way the revised questions are being answered;
- explore the acceptability of, and preference for, different category labels, particularly the 'Black', 'African' and 'Caribbean' category labels;
- test how well respondents are able to map their perceptions of their ethnic identity to the ethnic categories provided;
- to explore how respondents' understandings of ethnicity, religion and national identity may differ;
- identify ways in which the order of questions may impact on respondents' answers; and
- inform SG recommendations about how the proposed question(s) could be improved/revised and, where feasible, to test this using iterative cognitive question testing of the revised question(s) over the test period.

### **3. METHODS**

This section outlines the research methods used in this project and highlights any limitations on the data resulting from these methods. Overall, 88 cognitive interviews were conducted with a broad range of respondents from different ethnic backgrounds, religions, age, sex and living in different parts of Scotland.

#### **3.1 Cognitive Interviewing**

Cognitive interviewing is a widely used approach to critically evaluate survey questionnaires. It allows an investigation into the way target audiences understand, mentally process and respond to survey materials. For example, when a questionnaire is designed it is possible that the author may intend one interpretation of a question but find that respondents presented with the question adopt an alternate understanding. If cognitive interviewing is used successfully in testing questions, leading to appropriate findings or insights, survey materials can then be modified to enhance clarity<sup>8</sup>.

There are several different techniques that can be used in a cognitive interview. A technique called “retrospective probing” was deemed to be most appropriate for this study. Retrospective probing involves the interviewer presenting a question to be answered, the respondent answering it and the interviewer following up by probing for specific information relevant to the question or to the specific answer given (e.g. What does this question mean in your own words?). This probing can be done immediately after an individual question is asked or after the respondent has completed all the questions. As four reasonably brief questions were being tested in this study, we used retrospective probing after a respondent had completed all the questions.

#### **3.2 The sample**

The sample of respondents was designed to reflect the range of ethnic groups in Scotland, to cover a range of ages and to cover both men and women. It was not intended to be statistically representative of the Scottish population.

The sample was designed to include people from the main groups that we anticipated might:

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<sup>8</sup> Willis, G.B. (2005). Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design

- have trouble working out the meaning or intention of the question
- have difficulty locating a response option that they feel accurately describes them.

We interviewed:

- 30 African/Caribbean/Black respondents. This included 15 African/African Scottish/African British respondents, 13 Caribbean/Caribbean Scottish/Caribbean British respondents and 2 “other Black” respondents;
- 20 Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British respondents. This included 9 Pakistani respondents, 7 Indians respondents, 1 Mixed Bangladeshi/English respondent 1 Chinese respondent and 2 “other Asian” respondents;
- 10 White Scottish/ British respondents. This included 5 White Scottish respondents and 5 “other White” respondents;
- 7 White African respondents;
- 7 Sikh respondents; and
- 14 Eastern European respondents. This included 8 Polish respondents and 6 respondents from other Eastern European countries: 2 Albanian respondents, 2 Czech respondents, 1 Estonian respondent and 1 Latvian respondent.

### 3.3 Respondent Selection

Most respondents were recruited from respondents to the Scottish Household Survey (SHS)<sup>9</sup> who had agreed to be re-contacted for follow-up research for the Scottish Government.

The SHS dataset allowed us to sample respondents on the basis of their ethnicity (as classified by the SHS), religion, age, sex and location. Opt-out letters were sent to all potential respondents, asking them to contact Ipsos MORI if they did not want to be approached to take part in the survey. In the event, none did opt-out and they were then telephoned to arrange a convenient time for interview.

In cases where there were not enough respondents on the SHS database (Africa/Caribbean/Black respondents and Sikh respondents) or where the SHS did not collect the necessary demographic information

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<sup>9</sup> Further information about the Scottish Household Survey can be found here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/16002>

(e.g. Eastern European respondents and White African respondents) additional respondents were recruited via on street recruitment (in Edinburgh and Glasgow) and ‘snowballing’ from contacts<sup>10</sup>. We did not use community groups for recruitment because we were conscious of the politicised nature of some of the debate around ethnicity labels and wanted, as far as possible, to avoid recruiting individuals who had already been involved in the debate or who might feel they should ‘represent’ the views of their community group. None of the respondents were personally known to the research team and we were careful to ensure that no more than two respondents were ‘snowballed’ from the same source.

### 3.4 Fieldwork

Cognitive testing is a method used to assess the effectiveness of survey instruments in eliciting the required information from respondents. During the cognitive interviews we used a combination of interviewer observation (for example, noting points at which the respondent looked puzzled or confused, where they hesitated, where they seemed to be taking care or where they seemed to skim over or ignore instructions or response categories) and retrospective verbal probing (asking a series of questions after the respondent has completed the survey instrument). The questions to be tested were provided by the Scottish Government. The questions covered:

- country of birth;
- current religion;
- national identity; and
- ethnic group.

Six slightly different versions of the form were used over the testing period (by ‘form’ we mean a sub-section of the full Census form with the relevant questions). These are all attached at Annex 1. The difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> versions of the form was the addition of a ‘Polish’ response option in Q7 (ethnic group). All of the interviews with Polish and other Eastern European respondents were conducted *after* the addition of this response option. Versions 3 to 5 had increasing indentation of the ‘other’ write-in boxes, in an attempt to solve the problem of respondents thinking that the write-in boxes signalled the end

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<sup>10</sup> Snowballing involves asking respondents for an introduction to other potential respondents who fit the relevant criteria and may be willing to take part in the study – with the anticipated result that the original sample will “snowball” into a larger one. This technique is regularly used for hard-to-reach populations.

of a question (this issue is discussed in detail in the main findings). The final version tested (Version 6) added letters A to E next to the headings in Q7, in a further attempt to clarify that it was all one question.

Interviews were conducted using a topic guide<sup>11</sup> designed by Ipsos MORI in partnership with the Scottish Government (attached in Annex 2). Most interviews were conducted in respondents' homes. For the convenience of the respondent, several others were conducted in a quiet room in the Ipsos MORI office in central Edinburgh, in a private corner of a café or restaurant, and one was conducted in a private interview room in a Scottish Government office in Glasgow. Interviews lasted around 45 minutes on average. The discussions were digitally recorded and transcribed. Respondents were given £20 in cash to cover any expenses, to acknowledge that they had given up time to take part, and to encourage participation from a wider range of people.

All interviews were conducted in English. This was on the basis that those with little or no English language ability would tend to delegate the completion of the Census form to someone within the household able to complete the form in English, or take it to a community group, spiritual leader or some other proxy able to provide substantial help with the interpretation and comprehension of the form in English.

### **3.5 A note on the terminology used in the report**

One of main aims of the research was to explore perceptions, preferences and definitions in relation to terms used to describe ethnic groups. Inevitably, in writing this report we have had to choose certain terms over others in describing respondents. Our aim in each case has been to be as clear as possible in the context and we have not attempted to be completely consistent. Other than when we are explicitly discussing the findings and implications from the research, our use of any particular term should not be interpreted as a recommendation on terminology. The wording is that of the authors of this report and not the Scottish Government or the General Register Office for Scotland. If our choice of any terms causes offence to readers or to the respondents who helped us with the research, we sincerely apologise.

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<sup>11</sup> A topic guide is a document that outlines the topics that should be covered in an interview. It often gives examples of the types of questions that might be asked, however, the precise wording used will vary as a result of the interviewer's exchange with the respondent.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Country of Birth



4 What is your country of birth?

Scotland

England

Wales

Northern Ireland

Republic of Ireland

Elsewhere, *please write in the present name of the country*

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.1.1 Layout

There were no problems with the layout of this question.

#### 4.1.2 Interpretation of the question

Virtually all respondents found this question clear and easy to understand.

#### 4.1.3 Response options

Most respondents felt there were enough response options included as all of the countries in the UK were listed and, since most of the people completing the Census would be born in these countries, there was no need to include more. The impracticality of including many more countries was recognised:

*“It’s obviously a Scottish Census so having all those countries is enough...even if you added more, it would still never be enough to satisfy everyone so I think that is probably pretty adequate.”*  
(Female, aged 18-24, White African)

*“I wouldn’t expect a list of every country because people are born all over the world.”* (Male, aged 18-24, Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups)

While most respondents did not mind having to write in their country of birth, a few felt there should be more response options. These respondents felt that the response options should reflect the ethnic mix of people in Scotland:

*“...so many Indians living in this country I think they deserve to have a box...”* (Female, aged 60+, Asian Indian)

*“Scotland is said to be a multi-cultural country and looking at that list, I would like to say that it is too small.”* (Male, aged 45-59, Black African)

In the interest of “fairness,” a few respondents felt that all the response categories should be removed and replaced with a write-in box:

*“It should be “what is your country of birth?” and then that is it. You don’t have to put in Scotland, Ireland or Wales or whatever just what is your country of birth.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Black Caribbean).

A few people felt that the write-in box was not big enough. This was especially the case when referring to some of the Caribbean islands that contain too many characters in their name to fit them into the current write-in box.

### **Summary**

This question is relatively unproblematic. There were no problems with the interpretation of the question. There may be occasional problems with the write-in box not being long enough for countries with particularly long names. There were a few requests for a longer list of countries to be included as response options and an alternative suggestion that it would be ‘fairer’ for everyone to have to write-in. However, most people understood the impracticality of having a much longer list and were happy with the response options provided.

### **Suggested Changes**

Retain the ‘Country of Birth’ question in its current format.

## 4.2 Religion

**5** What is your current religion, denomination, body or faith?

None

Church of Scotland

Roman Catholic

Other Christian, *please write in*

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Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Pagan

Sikh

Another Religion, *please write in*

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### 4.2.1 Layout

The main issue with this question was the layout. Early in interviewing it was apparent that respondents initially thought that the religion question was two separate questions. They thought that the response options down to the “Other Christian” write-in box were one question, so they wrote their religion in this “Other Christian” write-in space (e.g. they wrote Hindu in the “Other Christian” write-in box). They did this because the write-in box acted as a visual break. Most respondents then continued to tick their relevant box listed towards the end of the question as well, without crossing out their previous answer. A similar issue also affected the ethnicity question which is discussed in section 4.4.1.

### 4.2.2 Views about the purpose of the question

Most of the respondents understood the importance of collecting this information for the purpose of the Census:

*“It’s an important question for the census because it tells you a lot about the mixture of the society and also the needs of the society.”* (Male, aged 25-34, White Polish, Roman Catholic)

However, a few respondents misunderstood the reason behind collecting this information, assuming it was related to terrorism:

*“I think they are collecting this information because of the stuff that’s going on with the Islamic faith and things like that. I could*

*be totally wrong but I mean why else would they want to know your religion.”* (Female, aged 35-44, White Scottish, None)

*“I think it is because nowadays there is terrorism which has been caused by Muslim or Islamic religion.”* (Female, 45-59, Black African, Roman Catholic)

#### **4.2.3 Interpretation of the question**

Virtually all respondents understood the question. However, several did not understand the term “denomination,” especially those with poorer English language skills:

*“I wouldn’t pick up on the word denomination...The question should be simpler.”* (Male, aged 18-24, White African, Roman Catholic)

*“Why are they asking this “denomination” word...it’s not very simple language to understand? I think it is a complicated question.”* (Female, aged 60+, Asian Indian, Hindu)

However, this did not affect their overall understanding of the question as they did understand “your current religion.” This led some respondents to suggest the question should be simplified to, “What is your current religion?”

Respondents noticed and understood the word “current.” There were several cases where respondents’ current religion differed from the religion they were brought up in:

*“I think that’s actually very important because I was brought up in a Roman Catholic household, I went to a Catholic school, my current faith is not Catholic.”* (Female, aged 25-34, White African, No religion)

However, for some there was a certain familiarity with questions like this, which meant they scanned the question and did not notice the word “current.” They therefore provided an answer based on the religion they were brought up in. If the word “current” could be made more prominent in the question this may reduce the likelihood of people not noticing the word.

#### 4.2.4 Response options

Respondents were generally happy with the response options, feeling that the main religions practised in Scotland were covered. However, a couple of respondents were confused about whether the Church of Scotland was the same as the Church of England. One of these was from England:

*“You would have thought they would have had Church of England down but there again I suppose there is lots of different religions maybe, I don’t know, Church of Wales or Church of Ireland, I don’t know. You would have thought it would have said the common British religions first.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Black Caribbean, Other Christian)

*“I see Church of Scotland but which one would be protestant? Maybe someone who has stayed here for a very, very long time would probably know the difference.”* (Female, aged 45-59, Black African, None)

One respondent felt uncomfortable answering this question. She did not feel the ‘none’ option really described her position because she was not an agnostic or an atheist. However, because she was not active in any particular church, she did not feel justified in saying her ‘current religion’ was anything else.

*“I feel uncomfortable putting none but I would feel uncomfortable ticking a box because it simply wouldn’t really be true. I think it’s quite hard for somebody like myself, because I definitely, have a sort of floating belief in things and I occasionally go to a Church of Scotland church...however ticking “None” does not distinguish me from someone who is quite firmly atheist, they would be ticking the same.”* (Female, aged 45-59, White Scottish, ticked ‘None’)

She said she would have felt more comfortable ticking “Other Christian” if the question was worded “which comes closest to your current belief?” No other problems with the ‘none’ response option arose, but because we disproportionately sampled from particular ethnic minority groups which tend to have a high proportion of religious adherents, our sample contained very few people who did not affiliate themselves quite closely with a particular religion. It may be worth exploring this issue further with

a larger sample of atheists, agnostics and people who have no particular affiliations but do have some belief.

Although virtually all respondents were happy with the range of response options, a couple of other respondents suggested that Rastafarianism and Orthodox should also be included. However, some other respondents suggested that there was no need for the response categories and, similar to the suggestion about the Country of Birth question, all the response options should be removed and replaced with a write-in box.

Several respondents felt that both of the write-in boxes included in the question were too short.

### **Summary**

The main problem with this question is the layout. Several respondents interpreted the 'Other Christian' write-in box as a visual cue that signalled the end of the question and wrote their religion (e.g. Hindu) in that box. They went on to tick their religion correctly when they moved on to the next part of the question but did not delete or amend their previous answer.

Although most people understood why it might be useful to collect data on religion and were happy with the inclusion of the question, a few people thought the question was being asked in connection with terrorism and, specifically, to find out about the number of Muslims.

Some respondents did not understand the term 'denomination' but this did not affect their overall understanding of the question.

Most people noticed that the question was asking about 'current' religion rather than religion of upbringing but a few did not. It may be worth testing a version with the word 'current' underlined or otherwise emphasised.

Respondents were generally happy with the response options although there was some confusion from people who had not lived in Scotland for long about whether 'Church of Scotland' was the same as 'Church of England'. It also may be worth testing the acceptability of the question with a larger sample of atheists, agnostics and people who have no particular affiliations but do have some belief.

There was some concern that the write-in boxes were too short.

**Suggested Changes**

Amend the layout to avoid the visual break caused by the 'Other Christian' write-in boxes in the middle of the response options. Consider whether there is a data requirement to specify other Christian churches or whether simply having an 'Other Christian' option (with no write-in boxes) would be sufficient.

Consider the inclusion of a 'Church of England' response option.

Consider increasing the length of the write-in boxes (e.g. by having two rows of boxes).

Consider underlining, or otherwise emphasising, the word 'current'.

Test the question with a larger sample of atheists, agnostics and people who have no particular affiliations but do have some belief.



However, there was some confusion resulting in several misinterpretations of the question:

- Ethnicity or nationality groups of the people you socialise with

*“I would need probably about two pages or three pages to write the nation or nations of people that I identify myself with most, because I do class myself as a people person.”* (Male, aged 35-44, Black Caribbean)

- Countries visited or preferred

*“What they are asking you about is which country you prefer to live in, I live in Scotland, we’re happy here but when we get the chance we go on holiday and go to Spain.”* (Male, aged 60+, White Scottish)

*“Other nations, actually I’ve never been to Australia but I would like to go to Australia and I like Australian people so perhaps I would include Australia.”* (Female, aged 25-34, White African)

- Nationality and Legal status

*“At the moment I still currently have a Zambian passport so I would say Zambia.”* (Female, aged 45-59, Black African)

There were several reasons for this confusion:

### 1) *The word “identify”*

The term “identify” appeared to be quite an ambiguous term for some respondents, who did not know what the word meant in this context.

### 2) *Not understanding what is meant by “nation(s)”*

There was some confusion about what a “nation” was. A couple of respondents answered “Afro-Caribbean:”

*“I just say Afro-Caribbean, I am Black, my parents are of mixed race background. I do believe I’m Afro-Caribbean, I was born in the Caribbean.”* (Male, aged 35-44, Black Caribbean)

A Caribbean respondent also found it difficult to view the smaller islands he identified with as “nations” as the word is usually associated with larger populations:

*“It is just an island, it is a small island when you think of a nation you think of something really big.”* (Male, aged 35-44, Black Caribbean)

Another Caribbean respondent answered England and Britain, rather than the Caribbean island she came from because, *“I don’t see Dominica as a country of nation by itself, it’s just an island basically.”*

A couple of respondents said that they felt “European” but because the question specified “nations” they could not express this.

#### **4.3.3 “Tick all boxes that apply”**

Another major issue with this question was that many respondents did not notice the “Tick all boxes that apply” instruction. Some of those respondents who did not see the instruction explained how they felt torn between which response options to choose and were therefore uncomfortable, until they noticed the multi-tick option or it was pointed out to them. This was particularly difficult for some of the respondents who have lived in Scotland or the UK a long time but were originally from another country:

*“I probably would have written two things like Scotland and Zimbabwe in the ticky box bit, if I had noticed.”* (Male, 18-24, Black African)

*“It’s hard for me to say which country is most important to me, there should be two answers.”* (Male, aged 35-44, White Polish)

This was also difficult for those respondents who identified with countries in the UK, as Britain was also an option. They therefore thought they had to choose between their specific country or Britain (for example, whether to choose Scotland or Britain).

#### **4.3.4 Scottish devolution and independence**

Several respondents, and British respondents in particular, thought that the purpose of the question was to explore their views on Scottish devolution and independence. Some of these people therefore ticked Scotland and Britain, or just Britain rather than Scotland, and explained that this was because they were not in favour of Scottish independence.

*“I thought it was a bit of an odd question, just thinking all right, this is towards devolution then.”* (Female, aged 35-44, Asian Pakistani)

*“I’m not really a Scottish nationalist, so ‘do you identify Scotland as a nation in its own right?’, that’s a political question probably and I don’t.”* (Male, aged 35-44, White Scottish)

*“When I saw this... immediately I was thinking to myself, are they wondering if I would vote for independence in a referendum?”* (Female, 25-34, White English)

#### **4.3.5 Social desirability**

Some people could not understand why this question was being asked and felt that it might be a test of their loyalty, or sense of feeling Scottish or British. Many respondents mentioned that even if a person is from another ethnic group or background, they *should* try to “fit in” to the country they live in, with several making reference to terrorists whom live in this country:

*“I suppose it would be quite interesting as there have been quite a few cases in the UK where British born Muslim have, I suppose technically, committed treason...so I can see why it is something you would want to monitor.”* (Female, aged 18-24, Asian Indian)

Although all the respondents making these points seemed to genuinely identify with Scotland, it shows that there is a perception of what the “right” answer should be to this question, unlike other questions that are less subjective. This suggests that there may be a propensity for respondents to give what they perceive to be socially desirable responses and that responses to this question may not necessarily be representative of respondents’ true feelings about the countries they identify with most.

#### **4.3.6 “Other nation or nations” write-in boxes**

Two related issues were raised regarding the “Other nation or nations” write-in boxes. Firstly, because the only specified response options were all in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, some respondents inferred from this that there was less interest in “other” nations:

*“It kind of seems to say which British nation do you relate to most, but I suppose if you are from another country and you were born in another country and you lived there and you came here, you might obviously automatically think to write that country in the box.”* (Female, 25-34, Black Caribbean)

Secondly, the write-in box was frequently described as too short, so respondents could not write in more than one “other” nation. For some, this seemed to imply that the expected answer was from one or more UK countries, or UK countries and one other.

#### **4.3.7 Importance of the question**

Some respondents felt the question was important as it meant that they could express their “Scottishness” or “Britishness”:

*“For me, it was difficult to settle in here and because I have done that I feel Scottish. Sometimes I go back to the Caribbean and they haven’t heard of Scotland, it’s England, somebody might say English, I will say I am not English I am Scottish. So this is very, very important. I think it is a good question.”*  
(Female, aged 25-34, Black Caribbean)

*“For me it’s about saying very strongly, yes I’m Asian but I’m Scottish, born and brought up in Glasgow...I’m Scottish.”*  
(Female, aged 25-34, Asian Indian)

## **Summary**

Most people understood the meaning of the question. However, there were some misinterpretations: a few thought it referred to the ethnicity or nationality of people they socialised with, a few thought it referred to countries they liked or would like to visit and a few thought it referred to their legal status or nationality.

The word “identify” caused some ambiguity. There was also some confusion about the word “nation”.

Many respondents did not notice the instruction to “Tick all boxes that apply” and felt uncomfortable about having to choose one nation.

Several respondents, and British respondents in particular, thought that the purpose of the question was to explore their views on Scottish devolution and independence.

There was also evidence that a social desirability effect might bias the results of this question: there was a view that immigrants *should* try to integrate and therefore the “correct” answer was Scotland and/or Britain.

As the only specified response options were all in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, some respondents inferred from this that there was less interest in “other” nations.

The write-in box was frequently described as too short, so respondents could not write-in more than one “other” nation. For some, this seemed to imply that the expected answer was from one or more UK countries, or UK countries and one other.

Some respondents felt the question was important as it meant that they could express their “Scottishness” or “Britishness”.

## **Suggested Changes**

Consider not including the question. If the question is not included, the recommendation to include “Scottish” and “British” in the Asian ethnic group response options (e.g. Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani, British Pakistani) becomes even more important.

If the question is retained, increase the length of the write-in boxes and emphasise the instruction to “Tick all boxes that apply”.

## **4.4 Ethnicity question**

Examples of this question are included in Annex 1.

### **4.4.1 Layout of the question**

As with the religion question, a serious issue emerged very early in interviewing with the layout of the question. Many respondents initially thought that the ethnicity question was several separate questions.

They thought that the “White” section of the question was the entire ethnicity question and wrote their ethnic group (e.g. “Black African” or “Pakistani”) in the “Other white ethnic group” write-in space. They did this primarily because the write-in box at the end of the section acted as a visual break. In addition, because the “White” section was longer or a similar length to most of the previous questions, this acted as a further visual cue that it constituted a complete question. Most had simply not registered the word “white” in the “Other white ethnic group” response option. They had skimmed over, what they thought, were the complete list of response options, not found ‘themselves’ and automatically written in a response in the “other” box without reading the response option carefully.

After respondents had written in their ethnicity, they moved onto what they thought was the next question. At that point they realised what had happened, looked down further, found ‘their’ response option and ticked it. However, even though they realised their mistake, most did not go back and delete the response written in the “White” section. This meant they had provided two responses to the ethnicity question. For example, a Black African respondent would initially write in the “Other white ethnic group” option, and then also tick the “African, African Scottish or African British” option.

As this issue was discovered early in interviewing, another version of the question was designed that indented the write-in boxes so there was less of a complete visual break between sections. However, after 5 versions of the question (see Annex 1), which gradually increased the indentation of the write-in boxes, respondents were still making the same mistake.

By the fifth revised version of the question, it was apparent that increasing the indentation was not enough to stop these respondents making this mistake. To solve the problem, several respondents

suggested using letters to precede section headings, similar to the layout of the question used in the 2001 Census:

*“I personally found this one easier because of the A, B, C, D, E and this time I actually read what was stated here because it says to choose one of the sections from A to E.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Black other)

However, it was important to assess how respondents felt about the lettering. It has been argued by some that lettering the sections, in the current order they are in, may be considered offensive because section A is White and, culturally, the letter “A” often signifies the best or most desirable section. It was possible to explore respondents’ views on this issue as they were shown the 2001 version of the ethnicity question (which included lettering). Very few non-white respondents had any objection to this format and understood that the letters intended to be helpful and not imply superiority of different groups:

*“It doesn’t bother me and I don’t think I really noticed or thought about that, I don’t think it has got any significant underlying meaning.”* (Male, 18-24, Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: Bangladeshi and English)

Indeed, a few respondents thought the suggestion that they might object to the lettering was slightly offensive in itself. The final version of the question used in the study did include lettering. However, only nine interviews with non-white respondents were undertaken with this version of the form so it is difficult to assess the impact of the change. None of the respondents who were interviewed using this version of the questionnaire had any objection to the letters being used.

Regarding the ordering of the sections, most felt that the order of the response categories (White first, etc.) was acceptable and assumed that this was due to the number of people from different ethnic backgrounds present in the Scottish population. However, there were a couple of respondents who felt that the sections should be put in alphabetical ordering and that it was offensive to have “White” as the first section:

*“It just makes it seem like “White” is the most important to them, to do that first instead of any other ones.”* (Female, aged 35-44, White African)

*“I would have it in some kind of logical order, instead of having the White category first, to show you are not placing the White ethnic group higher than anyone else...things like that niggle me.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Asian Indian)

### **Summary**

The main problem with this question is the layout. Many respondents initially thought that the White section constituted the entire ethnicity question because they interpreted the “Other white ethnic group” write-in space as a visual cue that signalled the end of the question and wrote their ethnicity (e.g. Black African) in that space.

They went on to tick another response option when they moved on to the next part of the question and realised their error, but did not delete or amend their previous answer. Several versions of the questionnaire tried to correct this problem, mainly by increasing the indentation of the write-in spaces. The final version tested also put a letter in front of each section heading. However, not enough interviews with non-white respondents were conducted to fully assess the impact of the change.

There appeared to be very little objection to lettering being used in relation to these headings.

A couple of respondents objected to the ordering of the sections in the question, feeling this should be done in alphabetical order as they were offended the “White” section was listed first. However, most ‘non-white’ respondents were happy with the ordering and assumed it reflected the numbers of people from different ethnic groups in the Scottish population.

### **Suggested Changes**

Test the layout and lettering used in version 6 with more non-white respondents.

#### **4.4.2 Interpretation of the question**

Almost everyone felt that they understood the term 'ethnic group'. However, it was clear when probed that definitions did vary. They often included country of birth, area of origin of family or ancestors, race, skin colour and culture - but some respondents included some of these aspects and not others, and their emphasis on different aspects varied. For most people, their personal interpretation did not actually affect the

response option selected e.g. a white person, born in Scotland, whose recent ancestors were all born in Scotland and who interpreted it as "where your family is from" would tick the White/Scottish option. Another person in the same circumstances, who interpreted it as being about skin colour, would still tick the White/Scottish option. Similarly, an Asian Scottish person might tick the Pakistani option regardless of whether their personal interpretation emphasised the area of their family's origin or race.

Some groups of respondents, however, had more of a choice to make - or *felt* they had more of a choice to make - between two options. For example, Black Africans could tick "African, African Scottish or African British" or "Black, Black Scottish or Black British"; Black Caribbeans could tick "Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British" or "Black, Black Scottish or Black British"; White Africans could tick an option under the "White" heading, or "African, African Scottish or African British"; Sikhs could tick "Indian" (all the Sikhs in our sample were Indian) or "Sikh"; and people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups could tick "Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups" or could select one part of their heritage and tick the relevant option for that. It was only really for these respondents that the interpretation of "ethnic group" and the emphasis they placed on different aspects of ethnicity came into play. The choices they made tended to indicate an emphasis on area of origin (their own and their families') rather than race or culture but this is discussed in more detail in the relevant sections below.

However, a few respondents, who were older and had poorer English, were less confident about the meaning of the term. Some thought it meant the nationality of the people you socialise with. The word "group" seemed to mislead them into thinking "Ethnic Group" meant a social group:

*"I come into contact with people from Russia, from Africa."*  
(Female, aged 45-59, White Polish)

*"I've got a few Sikh friends, we meet them as well...Ethnic Group means all the people you meet."* (Female, aged 60+, Asian Indian)

A white British woman, who understood the term, also felt uncomfortable with the word "group" because she felt it suggested that people of the same ethnicity automatically grouped together. She felt it implied a lack of integration and preferred the use of the term "background."

A few other respondents were familiar with the term “ethnic group” used only when referring to people from “*minority*” ethnic groups. They therefore understood “ethnic group” to mean a minority group in the population, however this did not affect their ability to answer the question:

*“Ethnic means the smaller minorities, not the main group of the population. People who have come from abroad but they’re in a minority number rather than the main bulk of the people.”*  
(Male, aged 60+, Asian Indian)

*“You [referring to the interviewer] don’t have an ethnic group because you are Scottish.”* (Male, aged 45-59, Asian Pakistani)

*“I didn’t realise Scottish was an ethnic group. I always assumed other people who had different ancestral backgrounds were ethnic people... foreigners.”* (Female, aged 35-44, Scottish)

This difficulty in understanding led some people to suggest that the term “ethnic group” should be altered to ethnic or cultural background as they found these terms easier to understand. They also usually found the description offered in the 2001 Census question (*Choose ONE section from A to E, then [tick] the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background*) to be helpful in explaining the meaning and suggested that this should be included in the 2011 question.

### **Summary**

Most respondents seemed to understand the term “ethnic group”. However, there were several respondents who struggled with the term. Common misinterpretations included the ethnic groups you come into contact with or socialise with.

Respondents felt that the explanation included in the 2001 Census would have helped them to understand the question easier.

### **Suggested Changes**

Consider amending “ethnic group” to “ethnic background.”

#### **4.4.3 Feelings towards the Ethnicity question**

This question made some non-white respondents visibly uncomfortable. A few explained that it was usually a question they would not answer:

*“When I get application forms for things I usually leave that question out. I hate that question.”* (Female, aged 35-44, Asian Pakistani)

Most said that they probably would complete it in a Census, however, because it was more “official” and they thought it was more legitimate to collect such information in a Census (compared with a job application, for example.)

A few explained that they did not like answering this question because they did not feel it was relevant in the current day. They felt that identifying people by the colour of their skin was insulting and resulted in divisions in society:

*“I don’t like people asking me my ethnic minority because that really is hard to... [Looks uncomfortable] Why do they ask me? What’s the point? What’s the difference? Why do they want to know?”* (Female, aged 35-44, Black African)

To a certain extent, this problem might be alleviated if respondents understood why the question was asked in the Census:

*“I suppose some of the logic is that the services or whatever can be properly geared if you know what your target populations are, but on the other hand the very exercise will make some people uncomfortable because I can feel a discomfort myself. I take it because on balance I think it’s probably a good thing.”* (Female, aged 45-59, Asian Indian)

However, simply including an explanation of why the question is included will not completely solve the problem. It was clear that some non-white respondents, even those who were in favour of the question and understood its potential usefulness in planning services and tackling discrimination, at some level objected to being asked and were not happy that it was still felt necessary to be asked. For these respondents, there was a real sense that they felt a little stab of pain every time “*that question*” was asked.

### **Summary**

Several 'non-white' respondents did not like answering this question. It made some of them feel uncomfortable and some did not know why this information was important.

The respondents who understood why this data was being collected were more likely to be accepting of the question. However, simply including an explanation of why the question is included will not completely solve the problem as it was clear that some non-white respondents, even those who were in favour of the question and understood its potential usefulness in planning services and tackling discrimination, at some level 'hated' this question being asked.

### **Suggested Changes**

Consider including an explanation about why it is necessary to collect information on ethnicity in the Census.

#### **4.4.4 Section specific issues**

##### 1) *“White”*

Virtually all White respondents were comfortable with this section heading. It was a description they were familiar with. However, some White Africans and Black Caribbeans were more sensitive about using colour labels:

*“We try not to use you’re White, you’re Black, you’re Coloured, whatever.”* (Female, aged 35-44, White African)

As the response options for the UK were first in the section, this meant that White Scottish or British respondents could easily find the description of their ethnic group:

*“I just ticked that one straight away because I know I’m not in the rest.”* (Female, aged 35-44, White Scottish)

However, this was less clear with “White” Africans, an issue discussed later in this section under “African, Caribbean or Black.”

- *UK respondents*

Several UK respondents described the difficulty they had in deciding which option to tick. The main difficulty was in choosing between the Scottish, English or British options. This issue has been discussed previously in the “National Identity” section and the choice of option appeared to be linked to this previous question. For example, for some respondents, if they had chosen Scottish on the “National Identity” question, it was more acceptable to choose Britain in the “Ethnicity” question. However, some respondents decided which option to tick according to their passport/nationality:

*“I am British because I hold a British passport”* (Female, aged 35-44, White Scottish)

If respondents also had close family ties with Ireland or England, this also influenced their decision:

*“I’m thinking my dad’s background is from Scotland...it’s not quite as simple as being English. Then we have some Irish blood as well many, many generations back. So British would probably be slightly more accurate.”* (Female, aged 25-34, White English)

- *The Polish response option*

All of the Polish people interviewed were pleased to see that they had a specific response option instead of having to write in. This was because it made them feel that they were more recognised and even welcomed as a group:

*“...it’s more than welcome to find your own ethnic group identified, that’s nice.”*(Male, aged 25-34, White Polish)

*“It’s much nicer, you feel somebody is treating you seriously, somebody is thinking about you.”* (Male, aged 35-44, White Polish)

Respondents felt that the reason for the inclusion of a Polish response option was the recent increase in numbers of Poles in Scotland. A couple of the Polish people felt that including a “Polish” option but not options for other Eastern European countries may be divisive. Another respondent suggested including some other main Eastern European ethnic groups:

*“Polish as an ethnic group is included here, but for example, Lithuanian or Latvian is not, whereas obviously Polish would probably be a larger migrant group than Lithuanian or Latvian but I would still expect them all to be included or none of them.”*

(Male, aged 25-34, White Polish)

One respondent felt so strongly about the inclusion of a Polish response option, with no other Eastern European options, that she suggested it should be removed.

Some respondents from other Eastern European countries were opposed to the inclusion of a Polish option. These respondents did not understand why Poles were the only group to be recognised:

*“Are the Polish people so special? We have maybe 500 ethnic groups in the world. You can’t put them all down, definitely not, so why are the Polish there and nobody else...If you put Polish you should put other Eastern Europe countries, or just the original people who stay here [meaning the UK and Irish].”*

(Male, aged 25-34, Estonian)

For a couple of these respondents, the inclusion of this option also seemed to exacerbate negative feelings towards Poles in Scotland. A few of these respondents felt annoyed that the Census was recognising the Polish as they believed that the Poles are only here for the “economic advantage” and not to “integrate” into British society. There was also frustration about Scottish or British people assuming that they are Polish and the perception of “extra” provision being made for Poles in Scotland and Britain (e.g. Polish language signs).

However, the other Eastern Europeans had little objection to the inclusion of the option, recognising that it had been added because there were so many Polish people in Scotland:

*“Well it’s logical because it is the biggest minority in Scotland. I understand why Polish is in a group with the Scottish, English and Welsh...they are already part of local society...it’s nice they are treated like this.”* (Female, aged 18-24, multiple ethnic background: Latvian and Russian)

A couple of Polish respondents felt that there should be more uniformity between questions and that if the Polish option was included in the

Ethnicity question, it should also be included in the Country of Birth and National Identity questions.

In general, the inclusion of the Polish response option was viewed by virtually all Polish respondents and some of the other Eastern European respondents, as a positive addition.

- *The Gypsy/Traveller response option*

No Gypsy/Traveller respondents were included in the sample. Although a few respondents commented on this option, any findings are purely speculative so have not been included in this report.

### **Summary**

Virtually all respondents were comfortable with this section heading. The few respondents who objected were those that objected to colour labels throughout the form.

Scottish/British respondents sometimes found it difficult to choose between response options.

All of the Polish respondents interviewed were happy that a Polish response option was included - although a couple were unsure it should be included without recognising any other Eastern European countries. However, respondents from other Eastern European countries had mixed views towards the box, with some feeling it should be removed as other countries were not represented, and others feeling it was good that the Polish had been recognised.

### **Suggested Changes**

None. The Polish response option should be retained.

## 2) “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups”

Although respondents were not specifically recruited because they were from a “mixed or multiple ethnic group” a few respondents spoke of their mixed or multiple backgrounds and several respondents were parents of children from this group. We were therefore able to explore some of the issues with these respondents.

### ▪ *Phrasing*

There were several comments made about the phrasing of the heading, especially about the term “mixed”. Several respondents believed this was a derogatory term:

*“It sounds revolting. It is like some calling me “coloured,” it is disgusting. That is horrible.”* (Male, aged 35-44, Black Caribbean)

*“The word mixed is always a strange one anyway because it sounds as if things are muddled up.”* (Female, aged 18-24, White Scottish)

*“...do you know, African, Asian, some people find the term ‘mixed’ very offensive like ‘half caste’ they don’t like that.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Black African)

One parent in particular did not like the term and felt that it failed to recognise her son’s “Scottish side”:

*“That’s where he would go and to me that is the worst one. Particularly if you are a proud Scot, it doesn’t allow you to be, and most people wouldn’t accept that.”* (Female, aged 45-59, Black Caribbean)

A few respondents mentioned that they preferred the phrase “multiple ethnic groups.” However, this term confused one parent whose children were “mixed”:

*“I don’t even know what a multiple ethnic group is. I know what an ethnic group is, what is a multiple ethnic group?”* (Female, aged 35-44, White Scottish, boyfriend from a mixed or multiple ethnic group: Philippino and Scottish)

A respondent whose grandchild is half Scottish and half Indian suggested the alternative term “multiple heritage:”

*“It’s better than the other older ones, half breed, half caste.”*  
(Female, aged 45-59, Asian Indian)

- *Interpretation*

There was also some confusion surrounding the actual meaning of the term. Several respondents felt that if you had parents that were different nationalities, of the same skin colour, you could still be included in this section. Others felt that this section was only for people that were “mixed” in race:

*“Mixed would be a mixed race person as opposed to a mix of people of the same colour.”* (Female, aged 18-24, White African)

A couple of respondents suggested this feeling may be due to the fact that the section is placed immediately under the “White” section, which to them implied that it was only for a mix of “White” plus another ethnicity. Another interpretation was that it was only for mixes of different white ethnicities.

One of the main issues that arises when looking at how respondents from multiple ethnic backgrounds, or parents, answer the question is the fact that they can potentially chose between different response options. A couple of respondents had such varied multiple ethnic backgrounds that they felt it would be too difficult to write it all down:

*“Well to be honest I’m mixed, my family is mixed. My mum is from Africa, they are obviously from Africa but they are mixed, they have got like mixtures in them. They’ve got like Asian, Black, White, Arabic so just to make it easier for me I just say I’m from Africa because I can’t be bothered to start listing all the things that I’m mixed with... what am I going to say? I can’t say I’m mixed with White, Black, Asia... all of them.”* (Female, aged 18-24, Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group)

*“My mother however, her family is Creole. Creole basically is a mixture between African slavery descendent, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch. But my grandmother said that some of her family came from Canada...and then I was like okay, is*

*there another [response option], because I think you still have a sense of identity and just want to write it down. Mixed ethnic can mean anything...I usually go for the other [Black] so I can write down where I am actually from.”(Female, aged 25-34, Black South American)*

For another respondent, this predicament was made more confusing because of the “Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British” section heading:

*“I wasn’t quite sure whether to tick that one [Mixed or multiple ethnic group] and then this one [Bangladeshi] because it’s under the title of Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British...I don’t know whether that means I’m just Bangladeshi in ethnicity which I’m not...but Asian British applies most to me...so that sort of kind of confused me.” (Male, aged 18-24, Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups)*

The confusion with this section heading is discussed further in the “Asian, Asian Scottish and Asian British” section.

Several respondents also commented that the write-in box was too small to write in an adequate description:

*“...there isn’t enough space... is that like ten boxes or something? That’s barely enough to even write Scottish, let alone anything else.” (Female, aged 18-24, White Scottish)*

*“I don’t think Bangladeshi and British would fit into that box.” (Male, aged 18-24, multiple ethnic background: Bangladeshi and British)*

## **Summary**

Although we did not specifically recruit respondents from “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups”, several respondents were from this group or had children who were.

The term “Mixed” was not viewed favourably by several respondents who believed the term was, or could be, offensive. A few respondents favoured simply “Multiple Ethnic Groups”. However, some other respondents were not familiar with this term and indicated that the term “mixed” was needed to explain the section.

There was confusion about who should be included in this section. One interpretation was that it was only for a mix of different White ethnicities. Another interpretation was that it was only for a mix of White plus another ethnicity (and not, for example, Asian and African). Both of these interpretations were based on the fact that the “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups” section followed on from the “White” section.

Further confusion was based on the use of the terms “Asian Scottish, African Scottish and Caribbean Scottish” and “Asian British, African British and Caribbean British” in other sections. Several respondents believed that these terms described people from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds (e.g. one Asian parent and one Scottish parent) which made it unclear who the “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups” section was intended for.

Several of the respondents also commented that the write-in box in this section was not long enough to describe multiple ethnic groups.

## **Suggested Changes**

Retain the phrasing “Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups” for the time being. Although there is clearly some objection to the term “Mixed”, there is already considerable confusion about who should be included in this section and some people are not familiar with the term “Multiple ethnic groups”. As people become familiar with the term “multiple ethnic groups”, it may be possible to phase out the word “Mixed”.

Consider adding a short explanation of who should be included in this group. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to moving this section so it does not appear immediately after the “White” section. However, previous research has shown that this section was likely to get missed if placed towards the end of the question<sup>12</sup>.

Expand the write-in box so people feel able to write in an adequate description of their mixed or multiple ethnic groups.

Consider testing with more people from Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic\\_group\\_statistics/downloads/ethnic\\_group\\_statistics.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic_group_statistics/downloads/ethnic_group_statistics.pdf)

3) *“Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British”*

▪ *Phrasing*

Respondents felt that the section heading adequately described Asians living in Scotland and Britain. Several respondents mentioned the importance of including “Asian Scottish or Asian British” in the heading as this recognised the identity of Asians who are born and raised in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK. These respondents included older Asian respondents who had been in the UK for a long time and now felt “Scottish” and/or “British”, as well as younger Asians who were born and raised in the UK:

*“I like that category heading...I actually fit properly into that whereas...it was always “other”...whereas I actually properly fit into an actual heading...”* (Female, aged 18-24, born in Scotland, Scottish Asian)

*“Yes, it is important because see our children are born over here, brought up and living with the Scottish people, so naturally they have that kind of feeling that I am Scottish, they all support Scotland, so naturally they always say they are Indian Scottish, they don’t say that we are Indian they say Indian Scottish.”* (Female, aged 60+, lived in Scotland over 10 years, Asian Indian)

*“...if I were to be given those categories and say where do you place yourself I’d probably say either one of these, Asian Scottish or Asian British because I have been here for so long anyway. I think that is reasonable.”* (Female, aged 45-59, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Scottish Asian)

Another respondent, who agreed with the phrasing of the section heading, did so because he felt it adequately described him. However, this was because he was from a mixed or multiple ethnic group:

*“...a lot of people would have understood that as second generation having been born in Britain but with both parents being Bangladeshi. For me I put it because it’s a mixture of both Asian and British which is what I feel like I am.”* (Male, aged 18-24, born in the UK, multiple ethnic backgrounds: Bangladeshi and British)

Therefore, using the “Asian Scottish or Asian British” terms in the heading, may mean people from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds feel this describes them better than the “Mixed or multiple ethnic group” response option. A similar issue is discussed in the “African, Caribbean or Black” section below.

One respondent was positive towards the phrasing of the heading but would have preferred it if the “Asian Scottish or Asian British” heading had been written in a different order:

*“Well, I would have put British Asian, yeah I would have put that. Asian British means that I’m probably Asian first and British second. British Asian means that I’m of Asian decent but I’m British first...I would feel better with that the other way round.”* (Female, aged 35-44, born in the UK, Asian Pakistani).

- *Response Options*

Most Asian respondents felt the response options included in this question were acceptable because all the main groups of Asians present in Scotland had been recognised. However, several UK born Asian respondents (and parents of UK born Asians) found it difficult to accept that the response options (unlike the heading) did not include any reference to Britain or Scotland:

*“Because the thing is I feel Scottish, but I feel Pakistani as well, but if someone said what are you, I would say Scottish because I am born in Scotland and because I’m born Scottish, so I feel like I am Scottish”* (Male, aged 18-24, born in Scotland, Pakistani Scottish)

*“It is confusing you know, which box should I tick? Pakistani? But I know I’m Pakistani and British.”* (Female, aged 25-34, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Asian Pakistani)

These views were echoed by another respondent, who felt that, for the younger Asian British or Asian Scottish generation, the current response categories would not be acceptable:

*“I think it probably will be acceptable to my generation, the next generation it won’t...They wouldn’t [accept the response options] because they would be born in Scotland or England or Wales, so they wouldn’t like their name tag to be with another*

*country because they probably haven't been to another country, they were born here.*" (Male, aged 60+, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Asian Indian)

These respondents would prefer other options that included Scottish or British in the response options in the "Asian..." section similar to that in the "African, Caribbean or Black" section:

*"...because like again you know how it says Pakistani, I want to say I am Asian British, I was looking for a bit saying Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British, that would maybe have made it easier."* (Male, aged 18-24, born in Scotland, Pakistani Scottish)

Another suggestion was, *"Why can't there be a British option under Asia, like in the white category?"* (Male, aged 35-44, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Asian Indian)

Although most of these respondents still ticked the relevant response option in the Asian section, one respondent wrote in Asian British (in the "other" write-in box with the "Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British" section) as he did not feel the current options described him in an acceptable way.

A Taiwanese respondent was not happy to be included in the "Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British" section as he believed that the word "Asian" was used more regularly to describe people from Asia that were *"not oriental."*

### **Summary**

Respondents were generally happy about the phrasing of the heading, feeling it recognised the identity of Asians who are born and raised in the UK. However, it is important to recognise that this may confuse some people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups.

Most respondents were happy with the response categories that were included in this section, feeling most groups of Asians in the UK had been included. However, several UK born Asian respondents (and parents of UK born Asians) found it difficult to accept that the response categories (unlike the heading) did not include any reference to Britain or Scotland.

### **Suggested Changes**

Retain the section heading “Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British”.

Consider adding Scottish and British to the individual response options (e.g. Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani, or British Pakistani)

- *The Sikh response option*

Virtually all of the Sikhs interviewed felt that the “Sikh” response option included in this section should be removed and were surprised it had been included. Most of them ticked the Indian response option instead. The reason cited most frequently was that they felt that Sikhism is a religion not an ethnic group:

*“Sikh is a religion, Sikh is not a country...same as Christianity that is not England that is just a religion.”* (Male, aged 60+, Sikh)

*“Because somebody from any ethnic background can be a Sikh if they are White or Irish or whatever, it’s like a lifestyle as well as a religion, it’s not really an ethnic group.”*(Male, aged 18-24, Sikh)

*“Sikhism is a religion and I always thought your ethnic group is Indian.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Sikh)

A few respondents could not understand why Sikhs were being recognised in the ethnicity question and other religions were not:

*“Because Sikhs they belong to India. They are Indian there is nothing is different from Hindus...That’s my thinking, I think 99% of people would think that way.”* (Female, aged 60+, Asian Indian, Hindu)

*“If you have Sikh then you should have Muslim, you should have Jewish.”* (Male, aged 25-34, Sikh)

Another commonly cited reason for ticking the Indian response option was that respondents simply did not notice the Sikh response option. Respondents were familiar with the “usual” format of ethnicity questions and were not expecting to see a Sikh option. Most of them looked for the Indian option and did not look further at any other options:

*“Actually I didn’t notice that. Why is Sikh there? That doesn’t make sense.”* (Male, aged 25-34, Sikh)

*“I saw Indian, I just scanned through it because Indian is always kind of the answer that’s there.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Sikh)

*“I’ve filled these forms in quite a lot over the years and I just knew there was an Asian there, the Asian would be split into Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian.”* (Male, aged 45-59, Sikh)

However, some respondents also felt uncomfortable having to choose between an Indian option and a Sikh option, when both were applicable to them:

*“India is a nation I belong to before I come here, it is where I was born. As I say, Sikh is a religion, it is not a country, so I couldn’t relate myself just to Sikh.”* (Male, aged 60+, Sikh)

*“If I had noticed it the first time the Sikh option I would have ticked that as well but I wouldn’t just tick that on its own.”* (Male, aged 18-24, Sikh)

A couple of respondents did tick the Sikh option but they did not strongly prefer it to the Indian option. They ticked it just because it was there and it was more specific:

*“Because Sikhism is more specific to who I am, yes I’m Indian but I’m a Sikh so that’s slightly different...but I don’t like it there,*

*you've got Jewish there as well. I just didn't expect that to be there at all.*" (Female, aged 25-34, Sikh)

*"I'm quite happy to fill it out as that [Sikh], probably if that hadn't been there I would have ticked Indian."* (Female, aged 45-59, Sikh)

### **Summary**

Most Sikh respondents ticked the Indian response option and believed that the Sikh response option should be removed. They felt that Sikhism was a religion and they were confused about its inclusion as an ethnic group. Most had either not noticed the Sikh option and ticked Indian 'as usual', or had noticed and been uncomfortable about having to choose between the two options. A couple of respondents had selected the Sikh option rather than the Indian option but this was simply because they felt they were being more specific: they did not feel strongly about the inclusion of a Sikh option.

### **Suggested Changes**

Remove the Sikh response option.

#### 4) *"African, Caribbean or Black"*

- *Phrasing*

There was considerable confusion among Black Africans and Black Caribbeans about the phrasing of this heading. This was due to the inclusion of the words "or Black". They could not understand how Africans and Caribbeans could be separated from being "Black":

*"I think mostly if you are Black you are either African origin or Caribbean origin, obviously you have Black American or whatever but I don't understand, "or Black," it should be Black African or Black Caribbean."*(Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

*"Because if you are African, African is mostly likely a Black man, a Black person and a Caribbean most likely a Black person, so "or Black", what that's supposed to mean? I don't know."* (Male, aged 35-44, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

As most respondents could answer “African...” and “Black...” or “Caribbean...” and “Black...” this led to confusion over how they were expected to answer the question: using their area of origin or their skin colour?

*“I didn't really understand that question and what they were looking for. The origin of the person, like I said the country or is it the colour they are looking for? It's like you are not very sure what they are trying to find out.”* (Female, aged 45-59, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African)

Only two of the African/Caribbean/Black respondents interviewed were born in the UK. Both of these respondents felt the “Black” part of the heading was for people that were black but were born in the United Kingdom. This view was supported by several other respondents:

*“...some people don't want to say I'm from the Caribbean or African they would rather be called Black.”* (Female, aged 45-59, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African)

*“If I was born here I will just put myself under Black not African but Black.”* (Female, aged 45-59, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black African)

Most Black Africans and Black Caribbeans concluded that “or Black” meant that this section also included White Africans:

*“...maybe White Africans or biracial Africans would write in?”* (Male, aged 18-24, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black African)

*“that's confusing...I suppose you can have a White Caribbean here [referring to the Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British box]* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

- *Choice of Response Option*

As the option to tick “Black, Black Scottish or Black British” was also separated out from “African...” and “Caribbean...” there was considerable confusion among respondents about which box to tick as they could have ticked one of two boxes:

*"I was confused... it seemed as if Black and African were two separate things because they were given two separate ticky boxes... It says tick one to indicate your Ethnic Group but really here I could tick two...African that applies, Black that applies"* (Male, aged 18-24, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black African, chose to tick the "African, African Scottish or African British" response option)

*"Like I said, I think especially here, I was looking for Africa down here and then when I did get down here I was stuck between this tick and the other [Black] tick"* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black African, chose to tick the "Black, Black Scottish or Black British" response option)

A respondent's decision over which option to tick depended mainly on which they felt best described them. Virtually all respondents chose the "African, African Scottish or African British" or "Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British" options. This was generally because they felt that these response options were more specific in determining their ethnic group than "Black, Black Scottish or Black British":

*"...some times you need to know a little bit more, so I wanted to be more specific, but the categorization is fine."* (Male, aged 35-44, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black African)

*"If they say Black you don't know what they are talking about, because other people are Black but they're not Africans."* (Female, aged 45-59, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African)

*"Because I am actually Black but I would choose the word Africa first, that way you know immediately that I am from this continent... because Black can be anywhere."* (Female, aged 18-24, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African)

*"This doesn't acknowledge where I'm from, this just says Black, Black Scottish or Black British"* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black African)

It was more important, for these respondents, to state their area of origin than their skin colour.

One respondent was confused as to whether she had answered the question correctly because she felt she had not been able to state that she was “Black” as well as Caribbean: *“I might have ticked the wrong one there.”* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

A couple of respondents said they would have preferred the opportunity to include both in a description of their ethnic group:

*“I think if you are going to have anything write either Black Caribbean or Black African.”* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

*“I would prefer more “Black Caribbean” actually.”* (Female, aged 18-24, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black Caribbean)

Indeed, some pointed out that they were so used to the terms “Black African” or “Black Caribbean” being used in ethnicity questions they felt they made the question clearer:

*“It puts Black in front so then you quickly identify with it because you can be White African, so you have Black this and then you know.”* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

*“...some forms where...they ask if you are White or if you are Black and if you are under Black, you can also be African Black, or you can be Caribbean Black, I think that’s understandable, you wouldn’t get offended by that”* (Female, aged 25-34, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black Caribbean)

*“You know how you see some forms online, they will say Black, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black American or mixed, I think that is a lot easier, people are probably used to seeing those kind of things. It’s not like I didn’t know I was Black and African but I just expected to see Black African.”* (Female, aged 18-24, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African)

Three respondents felt they needed to identify that they were Black and African. This resulted in one ticking both the “African...” and “Black...” response options, another ticking the “African...” option and circling

“Black” in the main heading and another writing in “Black African” in the “Other Black” space:

*“I wrote in Black “other” [Black African] as I was not white African and I was not just Black Scottish.”* (Male, aged 35-44, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black African)

However, for a couple of respondents, the choice of the “African” response option was simply because they did not notice the “black” option. This did not happen with Caribbeans as their response option is positioned immediately next to the “Black” option:

*“I didn’t even notice the Black Scottish part, I saw Africa like that is my point [option].”* (Female, aged 18-24, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African)

A few respondents chose to tick the “Black, Black Scottish or Black British response option. The main reason given by a couple of these respondents was that they felt that “White” respondents could also choose the African or Caribbean response options and the “black” option meant they could express they were “Black”:

*“I was a bit confused because it says African here, African Scottish and then here it says Black, so I am both. African can be anything, it could be Asian, it could be White and Black, so if you want to be specific you say Black...that’s how I picked.”* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black African)

*“...because in the Caribbean we have got White Caribbean, Caucasian Caribbean, Indian Caribbean and stuff like that. To define my status I couldn’t say Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British because it could mean I have not singled out myself by it.”* (Male, aged 35-44, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black Caribbean)

It is possible that the problems with the layout of the question may have contributed to fewer people needing to identify that they are “Black” in this section. As many respondents had written Black African or Black Caribbean in the “Other white ethnic group” section, they may have already felt that they had expressed that they were “Black” and did not feel the need to do so again.

A couple of respondents chose the “Black, Black Scottish or Black British” option because they felt more British or European than African, so felt this described them more adequately:

*“Because I think like, as I was born in Portugal that is the best option to say”* (Male, aged 18-24, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black)

- *Colour labels*

Although most respondents chose “African...” or “Caribbean...” rather than “Black...” this was not because of any objection to the word “Black”:

*“It’s quite acceptable to me, I have no reservations about it, that is what I am and that is my identity. That will never change.”* (Male, aged 45-59, lived for 1-4 years in Scotland, Black African, ticked “African...”)

*“I don’t mind the use of the word Black.”* (Female, aged 25-34, Born in the UK, Black Caribbean, ticked “Caribbean...” after crossing out “Black...” tick)

*“It’s a word that is used to describe a race so I have nothing against saying Black.”* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean, ticked “Caribbean...”)

*“I couldn’t find a better way [than “Black”] to identify myself basically.”* (Male, aged 35-44, length of time living in Scotland not stated, Black Caribbean, ticked Caribbean...”)

However, five of the thirty Black respondents did choose the “African...” or “Caribbean...” response options because they did not like the word “Black.” Two of these respondents chose to tick this option because they specifically did not like the word “Black”. For one of these respondents specifically, this word seemed to hurt and she found it extremely disrespectful. She did not want to say the word, even referring to it as the “B’word”:

*“It sounded better, it sounded less offensive if you like, it sounded better than African and the ‘B’ word.”* (Female, aged 35-44, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black African)

The other respondents, who objected to the term “Black”, did so because they had a more general objection to colour labels:

*“Someone come around with this census and there is no Black on it, I say good no Black, no White”* (Male, aged 45-59, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

*“I don’t think it’s necessary any more whether it is Black or it is White if you have Caribbean then that’s good to know.”* (Male, aged 35-44, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

These people felt that colour labels can cause division in society so would prefer for these not to be used in an ethnicity question.

- *Wording of Response Options*

Several of the respondents commented on the inclusion of the terms “Scottish” and “British” (e.g. “African, African Scottish or African British”). In general, this was seen as positive:

*“It’s quite good how they’ve worded this bit “African, African Scottish or African British”, that’s quite good.”* (Male, aged 18-24, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black African)

*“I think for me Caribbean Scottish is very important because as I said, Scotland is my adopted home. I love Scotland”* (Female, aged 25-34, lived for 10+ years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

However one respondent did not see the need for these additions:

*“I don’t think “Caribbean Scottish” or “Caribbean British” sounds correct. I think if you are Caribbean whatever, you could be Caribbean Welsh, Caribbean Irish, Caribbean whatever, but you are a Caribbean person so why spell out all of these different things?”* (Male, aged 35-44, Born in the UK, Black Caribbean)

Several respondents who were not from mixed or multiple ethnic groups themselves, believed that these terms were used to describe mixed or multiple ethnic groups instead of Africans or Caribbeans that have lived in Scotland or Britain for a long time or were born in Scotland or Britain:

*“Like half Caribbean and half African. Like if your mum is African and your dad is Scottish or it could be the other way round.”* (Female, aged 18-24, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

*“What I understand by Caribbean Scottish is I am mixed, maybe my parents are from both.”* (Male, aged 35-44, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

The parent of a mixed Caribbean and Scottish child was also confused in relation to this section:

*“This here Caribbean Scottish right, I don’t know what Caribbean Scottish is. I am looking at it as a mix, say it was a White mix son who has a Caribbean dad and a Scottish mum he could say he is Caribbean Scottish...he would be doing everything which was the Scottish way of life. When he’s at dad’s now he is listening to reggae music so that’s the Caribbean side of it, so he could class himself as Caribbean Scottish.”* (Male, aged 35-44, lived for more than 4 years and less than 10 years in Scotland, Black Caribbean)

This has implications for the results of the Census as people may tick this response option if they are from mixed or multiple ethnic groups, instead of the “Mixed or multiple ethnic group” response option.

As discussed earlier, a similar confusion existed with the terms “Asian Scottish or Asian British.” However, as few respondents from mixed or multiple ethnic groups were included in this study it is difficult to assess how big a problem this is.

Alternatively, if Black African or Black Caribbean respondents, who feel Scottish or British, misunderstand these terms as meaning people from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds, they may not feel that they are given any opportunity in the response options to express their Scottish or British attachment. This happened with one respondent and as a result, he responded by multi-ticking the White British and “Caribbean...” response options:

*“Some people might say yes I am British but my heritage is Caribbean, why can’t I tick both and that is what I have done”* (Male, aged 35-44, Born in the UK, Black Caribbean)

- *White Africans*

In general, most White Africans answered the question using the “Other white ethnic group” write-in. However, by including “or Black” in the section heading this led to some confusion over whether the section included White Africans. This resulted in one respondent ticking both the “Other white” and the “African...” response options. She explained that she had answered the question in this way because it was Scotland’s Census question:

*“..because over here a lot of people call me African, so the Scots consider me to be an African so I thought since I’m filling out a form in Scotland, I’m African.”*

(Female, aged 35-44, White African, Edinburgh)

Another, initially chose the “Other White” section, but later altered her choice to the “African...” option. She indicated that she had made this decision due to sensitivity that derived from growing up in South Africa and not wanting to appear racist by not placing herself in the “African...” section.

However, the other White Africans did not find this question as confusing and all ticked the “Other White” response option. They would not define themselves as “African” because at home in Africa, this was only used to describe Black Africans:

*“I’ve never been part of Africa, even though I come from Africa, I was born there. Even if I’m there, if I say I’m African, they will say “no, you’re not,” because it’s a race thing, a nationality, or generally that’s how it’s perceived.”* (Female, aged 18-24, White African, Edinburgh)

*“...for me it is a very clear distinction that they want Africans or Black South Africans born in South Africa whereas White South Africans are kind of European immigrants, even though it might be our grandparents or something. For actual Africans it is their great, great, great grandparents born there.”* (Male, aged 18-24, White African, Edinburgh)

However, one of these respondents, despite choosing to tick the “Other White” section, still felt unsure of the way she had answered the

question. She thought the “African British” labelling in the African section could also mean that she should have ticked the African option:

*“As I was going down I thought oh no, I’ve made a mistake, I saw African and thought oh...I saw African and immediately I thought maybe I made a mistake...there is also an African British as well and that could be a bit ambiguous in a sense that I am actually African British, I was born in South Africa but my relatives and my extended family is in the UK.”* (Female, aged 25-34, White African, Edinburgh)

### **Summary**

The inclusion of the term “or Black” led to considerable confusion. Many respondents felt that the term “or Black” implied that Africans or Caribbeans were *not* Black, or were not necessarily Black. They wondered who the “or Black” people could be, or assumed that non-Black Africans or Caribbeans should be included. Most Black Africans and some White Africans therefore assumed that White Africans should be included in this section.

Black Africans and Black Caribbeans were confused about whether to tick the “African....” or “Caribbean...” response option or the “Black...” option. Most selected “African...” or “Caribbean....” rather than “Black....” This was because they felt it was more specific and they preferred to emphasise their area of origin rather than their skin colour.

In most cases, it did not stem from any objection to the word “Black...” and, indeed, many had spontaneously described themselves as “Black African”. However, there were a few respondents who objected to the term “Black”.

The inclusion of the terms “Scottish” and “British” were generally seen as positive but did lead to some confusion about whether this meant people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups should be included.

### **Suggested Changes**

Consider changing the heading back to the 2001 Census wording of “Black, Black Scottish and Black British”.

Consider deleting the “Black, Black Scottish or Black British” response option.

#### 4) *“Other ethnic group”*

No Arab or Jewish respondents were included in the sample. Although a few respondents commented on these options, any findings are purely speculative so have not been included in this report.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Versions of the ethnic group question**

Six slightly different versions of the ethnic group question were used over the testing period.

#### ***Version 1***

No Polish Box

14/09/07-25/09/07

3 Black Africans

1 Sikh

3 White Africans

1 White British

Total: 8 Respondents

#### ***Version 2***

Polish box included

25/09/07-27/09/07

1 Asian Indian

1 Asian Pakistani

3 Black Africans

1 Black Caribbean

1 Black Other

Total: 7 Respondents

#### ***Version 3***

Increased indentation of the other write-in boxes and “any other white background” altered to “any other white ethnic group”

28/09/07-01/10/07 (Never used in field)

**Version 4**

2/10/07-12/10/07 Increased indentation of the other write-in boxes

3 Asian Indians

2 Asian Others

4 Asian Pakistanis

3 Black Africans

1 Black Caribbean

1 Black Other

4 Polish

2 Sikh

2 White Africans

2 White Scottish

Total: 25 Respondents

**Version 5**

Further increased indentation of the other write-in boxes

13/10/07-29/10/07

2 Asian Indians

1 Asian Bangladeshi

2 Asian Pakistanis

1 Asian Other

3 Black Africans

10 Black Caribbeans

4 Polish

2 White Africans

6 White Scottish/British

Total: 31 Respondents

**Version 6**

Added letters A to E next to the headings in Q7 in a further attempt to clarify that it was all one question.

30/10/07-07/12/07 (End of fieldwork)

1 Asian Indian

1 Asian Pakistani

3 Black Africans

1 Black Caribbeans

4 Sikhs

1 White Scottish/British

6 Other Eastern Europeans

Total: 17 Respondents







## ANNEX 2

### Topic Guide

Description	Aims and comments	Time (mins)
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Introduce self, Ipsos MORI            If you have a colleague with you, explain that they are here to observe you.            Research commissioned by the Scottish Government which involves talking to members of the public to understand how they would answer a set of revised possible questions for Scotland's 2011 Census and other Scottish official statistics.</p> <p>Information about importance of Census (e.g.it is used by government, health authorities and many other organisations to allocate resources, tackle discrimination and plan services for everyone.</p> <p>Thank participants for agreeing to be interviewed, mention should take c 1 hour.            Anonymity of respondents and MRS (Market Research Society) code of conduct            Permission to audio/video record, explain how it will be used.</p>	<p>Warm-up.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>1. Completing the Census questions</b></p> <p>Firstly, we would like you to complete these questions. I'd like you to work through the questionnaire as if this is the day of the Census and you have just received this form through your door, and I was not here. Just work at your own pace.</p> <p><b>[In general throughout the questionnaire, note any spontaneous comments, expressions or body language. Also make notes on which text they read where this can be observed without asking. NB- for the ethnicity question whether they read the whole question before answering or just launch into it? Do they read the category headings?]</b></p> <p><i>[Let the interviewee complete the questions]</i></p> <p><i>We are now going to ask you some questions about the questionnaire you have just completed.</i></p>	<p>This part of the interview involves completing the revised Census questions.</p>	<p>5</p>

<p><b>2. Verbal probing on country of birth q.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about this question? <i>[Probe: Do you find it easy/difficult to understand? Why?]</i></li> <li>• What did you think of the response categories? <i>[Probe: Could they be improved/not improved? Did they give you enough of a range of responses? Why/why not?]</i></li> </ul>	<p>Cognitive interviewing begins on the set of proposed Census questions. Country of Birth is included to ensure the ethnicity question is answered in the appropriate context.</p>	<p>5</p>
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<p><b>3. Verbal probing on religion question</b></p> <p>What does this question mean to you? <i>[Probe: Important/unimportant? Meaning of the words?]</i></p> <p>What came into your mind when you were asked this question? <i>[Probe: Why?]</i></p> <p>What does this question mean in your own words? <i>[Probe: How? Why?]</i></p> <p>How did you decide which boxes to tick?</p> <p>What did you think of the response categories? <i>[Probe: Could they be improved?]</i></p> <p>Did you find the question relevant or irrelevant? <i>[Probe: Why/why not?]</i></p>	<p>The religion question is also included to ensure the ethnicity question is answered in the appropriate context.</p>	<p>5</p>
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<p><b>4. Verbal probing on which nation or nations do you identify with most</b></p> <p>What does this question mean in your own words? <i>[Probe: Why do you describe it like that? How do you feel about the phrasing of your question? Why?]</i></p> <p>What does this question mean by “nation(s) you identify most with”? <i>[Probe: Why? Is it related to country of birth?]</i></p> <p>How important is this question to you? <i>[Probe: Why/ why not?]</i></p> <p>Do you find this question relevant or irrelevant? <i>[Probe: How relevant/irrelevant?]</i></p> <p>Was it an easy or difficult question to answer?</p> <p>Did you notice that you could tick more than one box?</p>	<p>This question was not included on the 2001 Census- this is an additional question that will precede the revised ethnicity question.</p>	<p>10</p>
<p><b>5. Verbal probing on ethnicity question</b></p> <p>Some people read questions by scanning over them first. Others read the entire question and check it again. Which approach do you usually use when reading questions? What did you do on this occasion? <i>[Probe: Why? Did they read the category headings, e.g. White, etc.]</i></p> <p>Did you notice you could only tick one box?</p> <p>How did you decide which box to tick? <i>[Probe: Why/why not? If you could, would you tick more? Would you write in? Why/why not?]</i></p> <p>Did you notice that there were overall headings for each section?</p> <p>What do you think of the category heading over the box you chose to tick? E.g. Mixed or Multiple Ethnic groups <i>[Probe: Could it be improved? How would you like it to be phrased?]</i></p> <p>What do you understand by the term ‘ethnic group’? <i>[Probe: Why?]</i></p> <p>How well do you feel the description <i>[insert their choice]</i> describes your ethnic group? Is the description acceptable/ unacceptable to you? <i>[If</i></p>	<p>The main question to probe, exploring whether interviewees feel that the revised question gives them an opportunity to describe themselves sufficiently.</p>	<p>15</p>

<p>not, probe whether alternative description preferred]</p> <p>How do you normally describe your ethnic group? How does this compare to how you describe your ethnic group on this question? <i>[Probe: Same, different?]</i></p> <p>Is there a difference between the nation you “identify” with the most and your ethnic group? <i>[Probe: If so, what?]</i></p> <p><i>[For Sikhs: Is there a difference between your religion and your ethnicity? [Probe: If so, what?]</i></p> <p>If wrote in: Why did you decide to write in? Why did you decide not to use any of the other boxes? What did you think about the size of the write in box?</p> <p>How do you feel about the other categories listed? <i>[Probe: Why?]</i></p> <p>Do you have any children? If so, do you think you would have any issues in answering this question on their behalf?<i>[Probe: Why/why not?]</i> <i>Do you think you would have any issues answering this for your parents? [Probe: Why/why not?]</i></p> <p>Do you have any comments you want to make about this question and the categories listed?</p>	<p>This is included to explore if parents with mixed race children could identify any potential issues</p> <p>The ones not ticked by the respondent</p>	
<p><b>6. Completing a final question</b></p> <p>Finally, we would like you to complete this question. I'd like you to work through the question as if this is the day of the Census and you have just been asked to answer it, and I was not here.</p> <p><i>[Let the interviewee complete the questions]</i></p>	<p>This part of the interview involves completing the 2001 Census question. Interested in seeing how people would have answered the previous question.</p>	5
<p><b>THANK RESPONDENTS</b></p> <p>Is there anything else that is relevant, that you would like to add, that hasn't already been mentioned? We would like to thank you for taking part and remind you that the findings will be used by the Scottish Government to improve wording of the next Census.</p>	<p>This section will wrap up the discussion.</p>	

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