

Census 2021 – #CountCarersIn: Briefing for Carers UK Affiliates

Overview:

The Census 2021 is being held on 21 March 2021 in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) runs the Census in England and Wales and is independent from government. **This briefing relates to England and Wales.**

Census 2021 contains a specific question (question 24 in England and Wales) on the provision of unpaid care: *“Do you look after, or give help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?”*

It is vital that all those providing unpaid care identify themselves as a carer in Census 2021, by ticking ‘yes’ to question 24 and indicating the number of hours per week they care for. To ensure this happens, we are running a campaign called #CountCarersIn.

We need your help in promoting the census and our campaign to carers (see ‘Promoting the Census’ section below – and our [campaign toolkit](#) – for more info).

The rest of this briefing explores: (1) why the census is important for unpaid carers and gives a short history; (2) the opportunities the census provides to local and national carers organisations; (3) ideas for promoting the census to carers in your area; and (4) a timeline of key dates to be aware of.

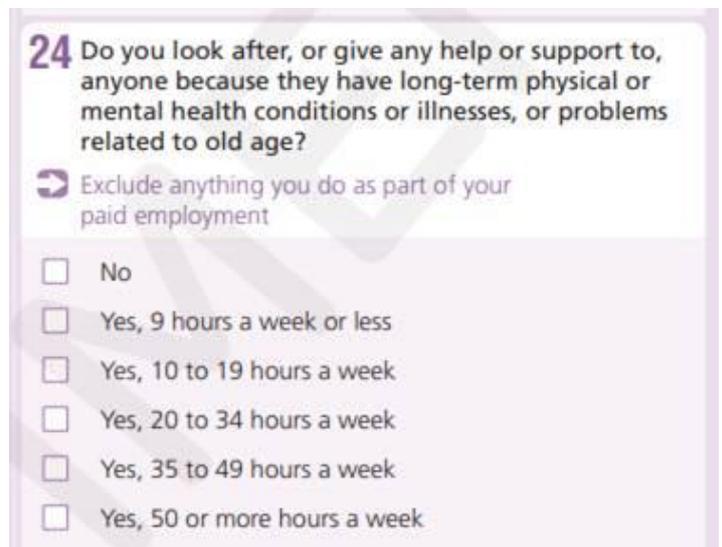
A short history – unpaid carers and the Census

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) runs the census in England and Wales and is independent from government. Completers’ details are protected by law and information published is always anonymous.

Census 2021 is being held on 21 March 2021 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland will be holding its census in 2022 due to COVID-19. Census 2021 will be the first digital-first census.

Carers UK is pleased that Census 2021 will again contain a specific question (question 24 in England and Wales) on the provision of unpaid care.

The exact wording of the question in Census 2021 regarding unpaid carers is as follows: *“Do you look after, or give help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?”*



24 Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

Exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment

- No
- Yes, 9 hours a week or less
- Yes, 10 to 19 hours a week
- Yes, 20 to 34 hours a week
- Yes, 35 to 49 hours a week
- Yes, 50 or more hours a week

The 2001 census was the first to include a question about carers. By 2011, when this question was repeated, it found that the number of carers had risen by 11%, outstripping population growth.

The importance of identifying carers in the census

National and local carers organisations rely on the census as a vitally important data source regarding unpaid carers. This is especially the case due to a lack of other means at national level of identifying carers systematically.

Why is including a question in the census on carers important? First and foremost, it recognises carers.

Because of the census, in every local area and nationally we also know:

- The gender breakdown of unpaid carers.
- That carers are less likely to be in work than non-carers.
- Carers providing a lot of care have poorer health than non-carers.
- The breadth and range of ethnicity of carers.
- How old carers are and how much this varies in different areas.
- That deprived areas are more likely to have higher numbers of carers.
- Rural areas have more older carers.
- Which people are more likely to be a carer, and their religious identity.

The census informs decisions on services, such as healthcare, education, and transport, and it also provides a more accurate and up to date figure for the number of carers in the UK. Census 2021 will also for the first time provide information about LGBTQ+ carers.

This information is used by national and local government to make decisions about these services and the different levels of support needed in different areas. This information is also used by organisations like Carers UK to campaign for greater rights and recognition for carers.

About Census 2021

Census 2021 will be the first digital-first census. To complete the census, people will be provided with an “access code” by ONS, this will be provided to every household through the post. To fill in the census, households will enter the code into our secure website.

ONS will also make help available if people need support completing the census: *“We’ll have an online help area and offer help by phone, webchat, email, social media or text message. If you can’t get online or need help completing the census online, there’ll be Census Support Centres across England and Wales. We’ll also have guidance in a range of languages and accessible formats.”*

ONS have also made downloaded resources available to help people promote the census – see here: [census.gov.uk/downloadable-resources](https://www.census.gov.uk/downloadable-resources)

Promoting the census to unpaid carers / our campaign toolkit

Our ask is that Affiliates promote the census to unpaid carers and make clear the importance of people identifying as a carer if they are looking after or supporting others. Through our #CountCarersIn campaign, it is also important we reach people who have not identified as a carer before.

Below we outline some simple steps you can take to promote the census / our campaign:

1. Put info about identifying as a carer when completing the census on your **website**.
2. Include information about the census in your **regular emails** to unpaid carers.
3. Put out **Tweets and Facebook posts** regarding the census in the run up to 21 March.
4. Include information about the census in any **engagement sessions** you hold with carers.

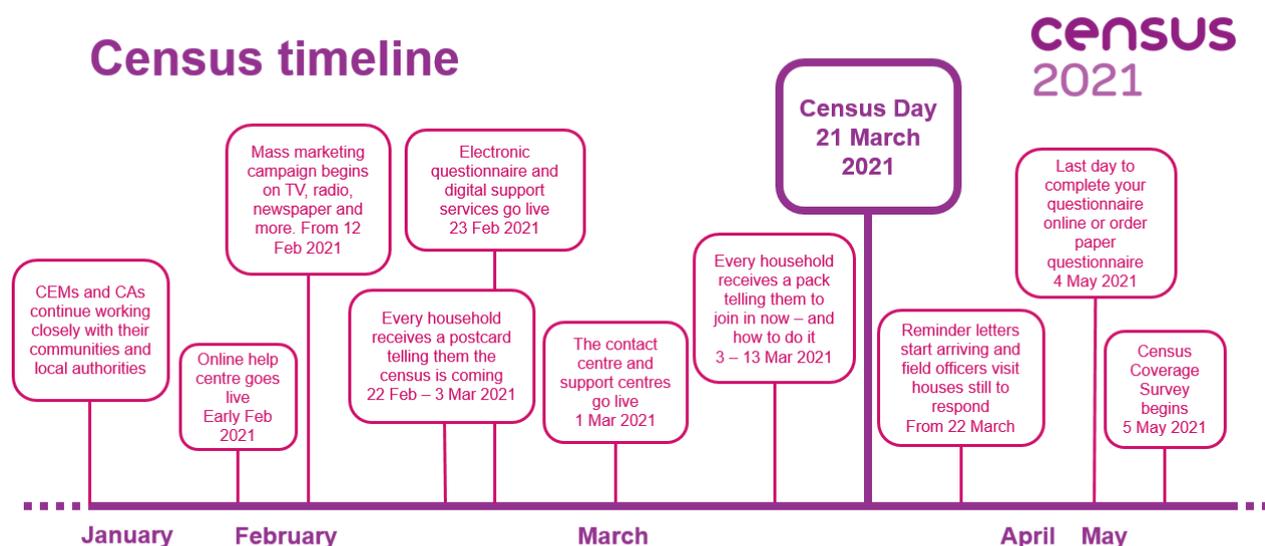
We have created a campaign toolkit which includes suggested content for each of the above ideas. [You can access the toolkit here.](#)

The key timings for promoting our #CountCarersIn campaign are as follows, with headline messages:

- **23 Feb – 03 March:** *Census 2021 is coming / will include a question on unpaid care*
- **03 – 21 March:** *vital carers complete the census and tick yes to question 24*
- **21 March:** *It is census day – make sure you tick yes to question 24*
- **After 21 March:** *you have until 4 May to complete your census / identify as a carer*

Timings for Census 2021 and next steps

ONS have released a detailed timeline for how the census will be promoted, when the census is taking place, and the deadline for completing the census – see details below.



Key timings to be aware of include the following:

- **Early February 2021:** Online help centre goes live ([see here](#)).
- **22 February to 3 March 2021:** Every household will receive info about the census.
- **23 February 2021:** Electronic questionnaire / digital support service goes live.
- **3 to 13 March 2021:** Every household will receive a census pack.
- **21 March 2021:** Census Day.
- **22 March 2021:** Reminder letters / field office visits for non-completers will begin.
- **4 May 2021:** Last day to complete your online form / order paper questionnaire.

Contact

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