



Scotland's Census 2021 – Topic Consultation
Response from the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

[Click here](#) to read the consultation paper.

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. SCoJeC advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, by providing information and assistance to educational, health, and welfare organisations, representing the Jewish community in Scotland to Government and other statutory and official bodies, and liaising with Ministers, MSPs, Churches, Trades Unions, and others on matters affecting the Jewish community. SCoJeC also provides a support network for the smaller communities and for individuals and families who live outwith any Jewish community or are not connected with any Jewish communities, and assists organisations within the Scottish Jewish community to comply with various regulatory requirements. SCoJeC also promotes dialogue and understanding between the Jewish community and other communities in Scotland, and works in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders to promote equality, good relations, and understanding among community groups.

In preparing this response we have consulted widely among members of the Scottish Jewish community.

Please note that we have only responded with regard to those topics of relevance to the Jewish Community in Scotland. These are:

Migration Ethnicity and National Identity Language Religion
Citizenship Voluntary & Unpaid Work User Satisfaction Evaluation

Topic: Migration

1a. What do you, or have you used 2011 Census information about migration for?

- Resource allocation
- Service planning and delivery
- Targeting investment
- Policy development and monitoring
- Research requirement
- Not used
- Other purposes

1b. For what specific purpose do you, or have you used 2011 Census information on migration?

The only one of these sub-topics that we used was “country of birth” in order to find out the number of Jewish people who identify themselves as Israeli, and provide support to them, since many told our 2012 inquiry into *Being Jewish in Scotland*¹ and 2015 follow-up investigation into *What’s Changed about Being Jewish in Scotland*² that they no longer feel safe in Scotland, and often seek to hide their identity, for example, by telling their children not to speak Hebrew in public, or answering that they are Turkish or Italian if asked, for example, about their accent. However, “country of birth” is not an entirely satisfactory identifier, since the figure in the 2011 census of exactly 400 people who said they were born in Israel includes people who were only incidentally born there (such as children of temporary residents) and excludes people who were born in Arab countries, Russia, and Eastern Europe, and whose families subsequently found refuge in Israel.³

“Country of birth” data is also an aid to identifying the number of surviving Holocaust survivors, which enables welfare organisations in the Jewish community to plan appropriate provision of support.

2a. At what geographical level do you, or have you used information about migration?

2b. If you need information about migration for population sub-groups, please describe.

As we explained in an earlier response⁴, in 2013 we received assistance from the Statistical Information Services at the National Records of Scotland, who provided information from the 2001 census (because the 2011 data was still not available) relating to numbers of people in Scotland stating their country of birth as Israel, and the cross-tabs with religion of upbringing and current religion. A more detailed table, providing this information by local authority level, meant that we could plan a project to support Israelis living in Scotland⁵ more strategically, ensuring that we would offer the most services and activities in the parts of Scotland where there were the most Israelis.

3a. Is UK comparability a requirement for you/your work on migration?

- Yes, essential need
 Yes, some need but not essential
 No

¹ <http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/bjis.pdf>

² http://www.scojec.org/4cs/4cs/15v_4c46_bjis2.pdf

³ For a detailed discussion of this issue, see the recent research paper by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research: *Britain's Israeli diaspora: A demographic portrait* (JPR, November 2015)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4252#.VpNVc2R96nY>

⁴ <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/scottish-council-jewish-communities>

⁵ http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_yachas/yachas.html

3b. What type of comparisons are you making? Select all that apply.

- Comparisons at similar levels
- Comparisons at different levels
- Other

3c. Please provide details of the comparisons you are making, with reference to the relevant sub-topic where possible.

Due to the small numbers in the UK as a whole, many organisations providing support to, for example, Holocaust survivors, and Israelis, work on a cross-border basis. An understanding of the relative size, and, where possible, of the distribution of these communities, assists these organisations to plan appropriate service provision.

4a. In 2021, is maintaining comparability with 2011 and/or earlier censuses for migration important for you/your work?

- Yes
- No

4b. Please tell us why, making reference to the relevant sub-topic where possible.

It is obviously useful to be able to observe long-term patterns of change, but there is no point in collecting unintelligible data, and, whilst longitudinal comparability is useful, it is more important that the 2021 classifications should be meaningful than that they should be unduly constrained by comparability with the figures from previous censuses.

5. Do you, or have you analysed information about migration in combination with any of the 2011 Census topics listed in the consultation paper?

- Yes
- No

As stated above, we analysed 2001 data for people stating their country of birth as Israel, and the cross-tabs with religion of upbringing and current religion but we have not had the facilities to analyse the comparable 2011 migration data and religion data (which did not, of course, include religion of upbringing).

6a. Are you aware of alternative (non-census) sources of information about migration?

- Yes
- No

The only other research of which we are aware, has been published by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research (JPR) *Britain's Israeli diaspora: A demographic portrait* (footnote 3 above), but this is itself largely based on census data.

6b. Do the alternative source(s) meet your current requirements?

- Yes
- No

While the JPR analysis is useful, since the data is largely based on information from the census, it does not provide any substantial new insights into the numbers and distribution of Israelis living in Scotland.

7a. Did the information collected in the 2011 Census about migration meet your needs?

- Fully
- Partially
- No

As stated in the consultation paper (3.3), “The 2011 Census allowed identification of international migrants via two questions – country of birth, and usual address one year ago.” However, although both of these may provide valuable demographic information, neither adequately captures migration as it is normally understood, i.e. international migration.

In addition, country of birth actually masks the information that we would find useful, namely how many people in Scotland can properly be described as Israeli. Country of birth is not a good proxy for this information, since, as we have already explained above, people born to temporary residents, who have not lived in a country since early childhood, are unlikely to have strong emotional or other connections with that country, while the majority of long-term immigrants, particularly refugees who fled there to escape persecution are likely to have developed a strong national identity despite not having been born there.

7b. Do you require any additional information about migration if it were to be included in the 2021 Census and why?

- Yes
- No

We agree that there is likely to be “a strong user demand for a range of migration-related data in the future”, but this must be accurate and intelligible, rather than making use of poor proxies. We therefore support the proposal in the consultation paper (4.6) to introduce a question about nationality or citizenship, as this would provide more accurate information to assist with planning for service-provision.

Topic: Ethnicity and National Identity

1a. What do you, or have you used 2011 Census information about ethnicity and national identity for?

- Resource allocation
- Service planning and delivery
- Targeting investment
- Policy development and monitoring
- Research requirement
- Not used
- Other purposes

1b. For what specific purpose do you, or have you used 2011 Census information on ethnicity and national identity?

Many people who do not practice Judaism as a religion nevertheless consider themselves to be Jewish by ethnicity or culture. (This has been demonstrated by the Canadian census, in which respondents were able to identify themselves as “Jewish” separately in the religion and ethnicity questions and in which the number identifying in either way was 27.6% more than those identifying themselves Jewish by religion alone.)

Many of these people prefer to use culturally specific communal welfare and social facilities where available, especially at times of particular vulnerability, when they may be seeking familiarity and structure perhaps because of illness, or when there has been a death in the family, so full and accurate statistics are required to enable effective planning of service provision.

2a. At what geographical level do you, or have you used information about ethnicity and national identity?

2b. If you need information about ethnicity and national identity for population sub-groups, please describe.

We would like to be able to use information about ethnicity at Scotland, Health Board, and Council levels, but, as explained below, because of the current classifications, the available data are not sufficient for our needs.

3a. Is UK comparability a requirement for you/your work on ethnicity and national identity?

- Yes, essential need
- Yes, some need but not essential
- No

3b. What type of comparisons are you making? Select all that apply.

- Comparisons at similar levels
- Comparisons at different levels
- Other

3c. Please provide details of the comparisons you are making, with reference to the relevant sub-topic where possible.

Due to the small numbers in the UK as a whole, many communal organisations that provide services to the Jewish community, and particularly to specific sectors within the community, work on a cross-border basis. An understanding of the relative size, and, where possible, of the distribution of these communities, assists these organisations to plan appropriate service provision.

4a. In 2021, is maintaining comparability with 2011 and/or earlier censuses for ethnicity and national identity important for you/your work?

- Yes – to some extent
- No

4b. Please tell us why, making reference to the relevant sub-topic where possible.

As we have stated above, it is obviously useful to be able to observe long-term patterns of change, but there is no point in collecting unintelligible data, and, whilst longitudinal comparability is useful, it is more important that the 2021 classifications should be meaningful than that they should be unduly constrained by comparability with the figures from previous censuses.

5. Do you, or have you analysed information about ethnicity and identity in combination with any of the 2011 Census topics listed in the consultation paper?

- Yes
 No

6a. Are you aware of alternative (non-census) sources of information about ethnicity and identity?

- Yes
 No

The Jewish community also gathers information itself is through synagogue membership figures and by extrapolation from level of demand for other communal services such as burial, and a number of relevant research papers, some based on census data, have been published by Jewish Policy Research⁶.

6b. Do the alternative source(s) meet your current requirements?

- Yes
 No

As already stated above, it is self-evident that the data collected by the Jewish community cannot reflect changing patterns of demand without independent objective comparators. Moreover, information collected by synagogues and other religious bodies

⁶ 2011 Census: Initial insights about the UK Jewish population (JPR, December 2012)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=692#.VpNcPZN96nY>

2011 Census: Initial insights into Jewish neighbourhoods (JPR, February 2013)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=1242#.VpNZfJN96nY>

2011 Census: A tale of two Jewish populations (JPR, July 2013)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=1902#.VpNcn5N96nY>

2011 Census: Thinning and Thickening (JPR, December 2013)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=3292#.VpNaJZN96nY>

Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013 (JPR, February 2014)
http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=3351#.VpNb_pN96nY

Health and disability in Britain's Jewish population (JPR, February 2015)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=3942#.VpNaiZN96nY>

Jewish families and Jewish households (JPR, March 2015)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=3982#.VpNaUZn96nY>

Strictly Orthodox rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community (JPR, October 2015) <http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4222#.VpNatpN96nY>

Britain's Israeli diaspora: A demographic portrait (JPR, November 2015)
<http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4252#.VpNVc2R96nY>

necessarily does not include those who, although strongly identifying as ethnically Jewish, do not subscribe to Judaism as a religion, and do not, therefore, participate in the activities of these organisations, or those who live in areas where there is no local synagogue. Many of these people do, however, prefer to use culturally specific communal welfare and social facilities where available, especially at times of particular vulnerability, when they may be seeking familiarity and structure perhaps because of illness or when there has been a death in the family, but figures collected in this way cannot provide information for effective planning of service provision.

7a. Did the information collected in the 2011 Census about ethnicity and national identity meet your needs?

- Fully
 Partially
 No

7b. Do you require any additional information about ethnicity and national identity if it were to be included in the 2021 Census and why?

- Yes
 No

Since, as we have already explained, many people who identify themselves as ethnically Jewish while not practicing Judaism as a religion still prefer to use culturally specific services, we are unable to plan effective service provision without this information. We regret that the “religion of upbringing” question was not included in the 2011 questionnaire since this previously was a useful proxy to made it possible to extrapolate information about this group.

Ethnicity is a complex area, and many people do not regard themselves as having a single identity; the response they give often depends on the context. As more accurate understanding of people’s ethnicity will facilitate more effective service provision (for example, culturally appropriate services may be different for a person of Jewish/Polish ethnicity than for a person of Jewish/Iranian ethnicity), although responses will, undoubtedly, be more difficult to code and analyse (though no more so than the 2011 “national identity” question), the 2021 census should ask people for as much detail as possible, either by means of a write-in answer, or, at very least a rubric advising people to “tick as many as apply” of long list of possible ethnicities, including both “other” with a write-in option, and, for our purposes, “Jewish”.

8. Other comments relevant to ethnicity and national identity.

Ethnicity

Although the classification used in the 2011 census was an improvement on that in 2001, we remain concerned both about a number of aspects of the ~~current~~ 2011 question:

- the mix of colour, political geography, and genuinely ethnic descriptors;
- the inherently offensive nature of the terms “black” and “white”, which in any event have no bearing on “cultural background” (as ethnicity was described in the 2001 census);
- the discriminatory presumption that Scots, Britons, Irish, and Poles are “white”.

- the presence of “Scottish” at the head of the list, thereby biasing responses from those who might otherwise have selected “Asian Scottish” for example;
- the placing of “mixed or multiple” in the middle the list, so that what the categories were that could contribute to the “mix or multiple” had not yet been stated;
- the confusion introduced by including “X Scottish” or X British”; and
- the presence of no fewer than 5 “other” write-in boxes.

The consultation paper acknowledges (3.5) that “Collecting this information in the census is particularly important because many minority ethnic groups in Scotland are too small in number to be captured effectively by sample surveys.” However, that deficiency is not addressed by the question used in 2011, partly for the reasons stated above, but primarily because the categories used are in many cases too wide to capture the range of distinct ethnic groups, “African” being the most obvious example.

As stated above, we therefore very strongly favour a single write-in box to enable respondents to express their identity in their own terms. Concerns about legibility should be minimised by the preference for on-line submission, and the response we have previously been given, that the data would then be too difficult to analyse, is contradicted by the fact that that format has already been employed for the 2011 “national identity” question.

National Identity

We do not regard the present question on “national identity” as fit for its purpose: the fact that the only categories for which tick-boxes are provided are for subsets of British, together with the subjective wording of the question (“what do you feel is your national identity” – stress added), gave the impression that the question was concerned more with a domestic political issue than with an attachment to any other UN member state.

In order to improve the quality of data, we would, therefore, support the proposal (consultation paper 4.6) for an explicit objective question on citizenship.

Topic: Language

The question “Do you use a language other than English at home?” is insufficiently precise, as a positive response could relate to anything from a monolingual household that uses only a foreign language at home, to occasional use of terms remembered from grandparents, to households that use two or more languages on a daily basis. We would recommend that the 2021 question should request at least some indication of frequency, either in the wording of the question or in the range of responses offered.

Topic: Religion

1a. What do you, or have you used 2011 Census information about religion for?

- Resource allocation
- Service planning and delivery
- Targeting investment
- Policy development and monitoring
- Research requirement
- Not used
- Other purposes

1b. For what specific purpose do you, or have you used 2011 Census information on religion?

2011 census data has assisted us in carrying out and analysing the findings of our 2015 inquiry into *What's Changed about Being Jewish in Scotland*⁷, and in planning effective service provision, particularly to provide support for people who, the inquiry reveals, feel very vulnerable and isolated due to the recent increase in antisemitic incidents.

2a. At what geographical level do you, or have you used information about religion?

2b. If you need information about religion for population sub-groups, please describe.

It is useful to us to have data at all levels from Scotland-wide to very local. While we accept the importance of not identifying individuals, and the smaller the group the more disclosive the data, falsehoods resulting from 'switched' data are also more problematic. It matters more, for example, if the published data switches a Jew from Lewis with a Sikh from Orkney, than if it were to switch a Catholic from Wishaw with a Protestant from Leith, and could result in our very limited resources being targeted at apparent communities that in fact do not exist – which vitiates the main public purpose of the census!

3a. Is UK comparability a requirement for you/your work on religion?

- Yes, essential need
- Yes, some need but not essential
- No

3b. What type of comparisons are you making? Select all that apply.

- Comparisons at similar levels
- Comparisons at different levels
- Other

⁷ http://www.scojec.org/4cs/4cs/15v_4c46_bjis2.pdf

3c. Please provide details of the comparisons you are making, with reference to the relevant sub-topic where possible.

Due to the small numbers in the UK as a whole, many communal organisations that provide services to the Jewish community, and particularly to specific sectors within the community, work on a cross-border basis. An understanding of the relative size, and, where possible, of the distribution of these communities, assists these organisations to plan appropriate service provision.

4a. In 2021, is maintaining comparability with 2011 and/or earlier censuses for religion important for you/your work?

- Yes
 No

4b. Please tell us why, making reference to the relevant sub-topic where possible.

As a result of problems with the Scottish census question (see Q.7a below), the 2011 data are not comparable either with the 2001 data or with 2011 data from England and Wales. Since the 2001 data were more comprehensive, as it collected information about people with Jewish heritage, as well as those who identified as Jewish by religion, we recommend that the priority for the 2021 census should be comparability with 2001 rather than 2011.

5. Do you, or have you analysed information about religion in combination with any of the 2011 Census topics listed in the consultation paper?

- Yes
 No

6a. Are you aware of alternative (non-census) sources of information about religion?

- Yes
 No

The Jewish community also gathers information itself is through synagogue membership figures and by extrapolation from level of demand for other communal services such as burial, and a number of relevant research papers, some based on census data, have been published by Jewish Policy Research (*see footnote 6 above*).

6b. Do the alternative source(s) meet your current requirements?

- Yes
 No

As already stated, it is self-evident that the data collected by the Jewish community cannot reflect changing patterns of demand without independent objective comparators. In particular it does not include people who are less religiously committed or who do not have a synagogue or other communal services nearby, perhaps because they live in a rural area, so figures collected in this way cannot provide adequate information for effective planning of service provision.

7a. Did the information collected in the 2011 Census about religion meet your needs?

- Fully
 Partially
 No

There were a number of problems with the “religion” question that, individually and in combination, are likely to have depressed the number of people who identified themselves as Jewish.

In addition to the fact that this was a voluntary question, which itself depresses the response rate, we are aware from our own informal survey and also from two formal academic studies⁸, that around 1 in 3 Jewish people in Scotland did not tick the “Jewish” box, for a number of reasons of which the most worrying is a fear that being identified as Jewish, even by a Government body, could result in discrimination or worse.

The wording of the religion question also discouraged some people from ticking “Jewish”. As the Consultation Paper notes, unlike the ONS questionnaire in England and Wales, which asked straightforwardly, “What is your religion?”, the Scottish question asked “What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?” (stress added). The Scottish question discouraged positive responses as even people who strongly identified as being Jewish by religion but lived outwith any of the four Scottish cities that has a synagogue could only truthfully respond that they do not belong to any religious body. Consequently the data are not comparable with those from other parts of the UK. In the 2001 census this problem was to some extent compensated for by the second question about religion of upbringing, but this is no longer the case. We therefore continue to urge that the question should be revised for the 2021 census to ask what is the respondent’s religion.

7b. Do you require any additional information about religion if it were to be included in the 2021 Census and why?

- Yes
 No

As we have explained above, we require data about Jewish identity in its widest sense, to include both people who practice the religion and those who do not do so but who are of Jewish descent or heritage, or who identify in any way with Judaism or the Jewish community, and so could make claims on communal facilities or could suffer from antisemitic discrimination or abuse or. This could be obtained firstly by simplifying the religion question so that there is no risk of misinterpretation, and secondly by the inclusion of “Jewish” as a possible answer to the ethnicity question.

⁸ "Amongst Jews, about a third say they have no religion" Westminster Faith Debates (Linda Woodhead, Jewish Chronicle, October 2013)
<http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/112220/new-surveys-shed-light-who-we-are>

"Jews should exhibit the same propensity to report 'No Religion' or to refuse to answer the question, as the whole population. ... in Scotland the figure was 33% ." (Jewish Policy Research Institute, JPR News, Spring 2003)

8. Other comments relevant to religion.

We agree with the statement in the “Comment” column of the table at 3.7 in the consultation paper that “Further information [about religion data] is required to better understand user need for 2021”, and are therefore surprised that this is not also reflected in the “Initial View” column of the same table. As we have stated above, further consideration of the question is required to ensure that the 2021 question gathers full, intelligible, and useful data.

New sub-topic: Citizenship

For reasons stated above, we support this proposal, but if this is phrased in terms of passports, in order to obtain full and accurate information, it should ask what passports the respondent is eligible to hold rather than which he or she does in fact hold.

New sub-topic: Voluntary and unpaid work

We would support this proposal since volunteering is essential to many public services, yet is generally undervalued and indeed ignored.

User Satisfaction

Overall, how satisfied were you with NRS's online consultation service today?

- Very satisfied**
- Satisfied**
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**
- Dissatisfied**
- Very dissatisfied**

The online format may be satisfactory for an individual responding on his or own behalf, but it is unusable for a representative organisation such as ourselves which must circulate draft responses for comment and revision to ensure that the final response accurately reflects the views of constituency we represent. We have not, therefore, used the online questionnaire. However, the only alternative provided on the Scottish Government website was a non-interactive pdf version, which is also not practicable. An editable Word document version of the questionnaire – which we have since discovered was available on the NRS website – should also have been provided on the Scottish Government website. Since it was not, we had to spend additional time in compiling this document by a laborious process of copy and paste; the ease with which a response can be submitted should not be dependent upon which website happens to have been seen by the respondent.

Evaluation

1. How satisfied were you with this consultation?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

The online format may be satisfactory for an individual responding on his or own behalf, but it is unusable for a representative organisation such as ourselves which must circulate draft responses for comment and revision to ensure that the final response accurately reflects the views of constituency we represent. We have not, therefore, used the online questionnaire. However, the only alternative provided on the Scottish Government website was a non-interactive pdf version, which is also not practicable. An editable Word document version of the questionnaire – which we have since discovered was available on the NRS website – should also have been provided on the Scottish Government website. Since it was not, we had to spend additional time in compiling this document by a laborious process of copy and paste; the ease with which a response can be submitted should not be dependent upon which website happens to have been seen by the respondent.

2. How would you rate your satisfaction with using Citizen Space to respond to consultations?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

We contacted both the Scottish Government web team and Citizen Space themselves shortly after the new system was introduced in order to highlight the following problems. These have still not been addressed.

a) Finding out about new consultations

The front page of the “consultations hub” shows four or five consultations that are about to end, and four or five that have already closed. The main page, which shows “all open consultations”, lists these in order of closing date, with the most distant closing date at the top. The “advanced search” allows the list to be filtered by “status” (any, open, forthcoming, closed), “audience”, “interest”, “department”, and “title”. Since a newly issued consultation may have a shorter closing date than others already issued, there is no way other than scrolling through the long list of open consultations, and remembering what was already on the list the day before, of identifying newly published consultations. Many individuals and organisations will, therefore, fail to notice the publication of consultations to which they would like to respond until these reach the “about to close” list on the front page, when it will probably be too late for them to do anything about it. In order to remedy this:

- i) the front page should be changed to list newly issued consultations alongside a reminder of those that are about to close;
- ii) the “advanced search” should be improved to enable consultations to be filtered by date of publication.

b) Responding to consultations

As we have explained above, the online response form is impractical for representative organisations that must ensure the final draft provides a full and accurate account of the views of their members or affiliates. A writable Word document version should always be provided as an alternative, so that drafts can be circulated electronically, comments collated, and appropriate revisions made, before the final response is submitted. If this cannot be done, there is a risk that responses from representative organisations, that would naturally be expected to have been approved by that organisation’s constituency, will be the personal views of the individual who wrote the response.

January 2016