

## Census Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018, in CSO Swords at 10am

### Attendees:

Aideen Sheehan,	Dept. of Transport, Tourism & Sport*
Brid Ní Chonghaile,	Dept. of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht
Nicola Tickner,	Dept. of Children & Youth Affairs*
Deirdre Cullen,	Dept. of Education and Skills*
Alan Cahill,	Dept. of Health*
George Hussey,	Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Cormac Nolan,	Dept. of Business, Enterprise and Innovation*
Margaret McConnon,	Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Martina Shaughnessy,	Dept. of the Taoiseach
Barry Colleary,	National Transport Authority (NTA)
Dr. Conor O'Toole,	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
Laurence Bond,	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)
David Howard,	Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
Dr. Grainne Collins,	National Disability Authority (NDA)
Hugh Kerr,	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
Rob Kitchin,	AIRO (NUI Maynooth)
Una Ní Dhubhghaill,	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration
Daniel O'Callaghan	Dept. of Public Expenditure and Reform

### CSO Staff

Richie McMahon	Cormac Halpin	Diarmuid Reidy	Declan Smyth
Eoin Whelan	Kathleen Hanney	Eileen Murphy	Brendan Murphy
Marcella Joyce	Sinéad McGarvey		

### Apologies

Laura Bambrick,	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan,	Association of Irish Local Government
John Manning,	Pobal

\* This representative is currently on secondment from CSO to the government department.

## Welcome/Overview

Richie McMahon on behalf of CSO welcomed everybody, outlined the agenda and the purpose of the meeting. Following brief introductions, he went on to state the value of the Census and the various constraints within which it is conducted. He then sought and received approval from the group for the minutes from the first CAG meeting in December. Richie also acknowledged the amount of work done to date in developing the draft Census questionnaires for the Pilot and noted the bilateral talks which CSO have had with relevant National organisations and other National Statistics Offices.

Cormac Halpin also made specific reference to the extent of the work done to date, acknowledging that substantial progress has been made and was keen to get observations on developments so far. Cormac drew attention to the submissions and received confirmation from the group that all submissions had been read. He outlined the substantial level of change in the questionnaire including the possibility of 10 new questions and many changes within existing questions. He also mentioned the additional /supplementary submissions received since the last meeting. Cormac also brought up the 3 questions not included in the Pilot (Other languages spoken in the home, Field of study and Number of children born) and pointed out that this did not preclude them from Census 2021. He went on to note that CSO is proposing to test two versions of the Census questionnaire in the Pilot. The Blue form (Form A) will approximate the control form and will more closely resemble the 2016 Census form whereas the Pink form (Form B) will be the test form and will contain more changes for testing.

## Housing Questions

### **Type of Accommodation & Year Built**

There was some discussion around these questions and the use of geo-directory to supplement the data for the year built question.

**Action – Although previously expected to be in a position not to test these two questions, CSO have suggested retaining as control questions, which was agreed. Both questions to be retained in Form A and type of accommodation on Form B only.**

### **Tenure**

In response to submissions, CSO suggested some changes to wording of the question in form B as follows: local authority replaced with 'County Council or City Council', Voluntary/Co-operative housing body replaced with 'Housing Association/Housing Co-Operative'. The Census 2016 question is to be retained as a control question in Form A.

**Action – The above approach was agreed by the group.**

### **Rent and New question on Mortgage**

On foot of submissions CSO suggested the removal of the 'per year' category. There followed a discussion around the inclusion of a mortgage payments question and the pursuance of mortgage data through admin sources. Richie also referenced the Household Survey unit and the difficulties encountered with this area. The group reflected that it would be worthwhile testing a mortgage question given the potential value which could be derived from resulting data.

**Action – The group agreed to the removal of 'per year' in both forms and the inclusion of a mortgage payment question in Form B only.**

## **Rooms**

Based on submissions received, CSO suggested the inclusion of text boxes to identify the number of bedrooms, which can be used as a measure for overcrowding within households.

**Action – The group agreed to add the number of bedrooms option, to be included in both forms.**

## **Central Heating**

Following consultation with Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and CSO's Environmental Statistics Division, CSO suggested an additional category "connection to district heating" which is used in continental Europe and may become more prevalent in Ireland.

**Action - There was agreement on the inclusion of the additional category in Form B only.**

## **Water Question**

Following discussions with the Water Statistics Steering Group, of which CSO is a member, CSO presented the question which retained each category but with simplified wording.

**Action – Agreed to test the new wording on both forms.**

## **Cars**

**Action – proposed change to the use of a write in box agreed by group, to be included in both forms.**

## **ICT (Information and Communications Technology)**

CSO suggested a revised question following a range of submissions on this topic and a general feeling that the question needed updating. As part of the process CSO sought input from internal survey sections and from the Department of Communications. There was some discussion around the categories, including the wording around smart phone and mobile phone. There was consensus that the location of Wi-Fi within the question should be re-examined.

**Action – The group agreed to the inclusion of 'internet cable' and removal of Wi-Fi and 'smart phone' from the descriptor in the category. This reviewed question is to be tested on both forms.**

*When all the agreed changes were put in place for the housing questions, CSO felt there was scope to test further questions. With this in mind, CSO re-examined the housing submissions and are now suggesting testing two additional questions on Renewable Energy and Smoke Alarms.*

## **New – Renewable Energy**

Having consulted with the Western Development Commission, SEAI and CSO's Environmental Statistics Division, CSO presented a proposed question on renewable energy. There was much discussion around this, including the category of wood stove, wood boiler and their appropriate positions within Q6 and Q7. It was, however, agreed to include wood as an option in both questions

**Action – There was agreement that CSO should proceed with the question in both forms.**

## **New – Smoke Alarms**

CSO presented a smoke alarm question and it was agreed to test the question as it was felt there was potential for a rich source of data when compared with other variables.

**Action – The group agreed to test a smoke alarm question in both forms.**

## **Individual Questions**

### **Name**

In order to facilitate improved name capture, an important consideration in potentially enhancing the incorporation of administrative data into the Census process, CSO proposed some changes to the text boxes. The changes include: Form A – first name and surname provided in a treble row of text boxes and Form B – two double rows separated for first name and surname.

**Action – There was agreement on the above changes.**

### **Date of Birth/Age – No changes proposed**

### **Sex**

Richie updated the group with information on plans for testing a new gender identity question within the Labour Force Survey, with input being sought from stakeholders. CSO agreed to explore the possibility of providing direction in the explanatory notes or on our website for those unable to fill in either option, as currently presented.

**Action - CSO to follow-up as indicated.**

### **Relationship question**

In order to free up space, CSO suggested removing two categories - grandparent and son/daughter in law. These categories are not required under EU regulation. CSO suggested the category of tenant (as per submission) would not work in the relationship question and have suggested a separate question for it. Following discussion on the categories to be dropped the changes were agreed.

**Action – There was agreement on proceeding with changes on both forms.**

### **Place of Birth**

In order to gain processing efficiencies, CSO suggested removing the third row of text boxes and amalgamating the text to offer one double row of text boxes, to write in either County or Country as appropriate.

**Action - Proceed with agreed change in Form B only.**

### **Current Marital Status – No changes proposed.**

### **Usual Residence and Usual Residence One Year Ago - No changes proposed.**

### **New – Tenant**

In response to submissions, CSO presented the question, 'Are you a tenant at your usual address?'

**Action – Agreed to test the question on both forms.**

### **Lived outside the republic.**

In order to improve the quality of the data received on this question CSO suggested the inclusion of the word 'ever' in the wording of the question. 'Have you ever lived outside the Republic of Ireland for a continuous period of one year or more?'

**Action - The group agreed to this change of wording to be tested in both forms.**

## Nationality, Citizenship

The concept of citizenship is important for demographic statistics consequently, CSO are proposing to test the following question “What is your country of citizenship?” There was a discussion around this with a suggestion to include the following instruction in the question ‘*If you have dual country of citizenship, please declare both*’.

**Action – Agreed to include the citizenship question and the above suggestion on country of dual citizenship on Form B, whilst retaining the nationality question on Form A.**

## Ethnicity

CSO are suggesting the question needs updating bearing in mind the need to retain comparability over time and the level of user demand. Following discussions at the ethnicity subgroup meeting CSO presented the following options: **Form A**, which was agreed at the ethnicity subgroup, and included 4 additional ethnicities to provide 12 in total (including ‘other’).

*Subsequently, prompted by the possibility that some ethnic groups may not be accurately identifiable through the format of the question on Form A, CSO suggested:*

**Form B** offering the respondent the opportunity to describe their ethnicity by providing a double row of write-in boxes under ‘other’ within the A, B & C groupings (this option is already available in the D grouping). This change however, would necessitate a reduction back to 10 ethnicities.

There was a discussion around the topic focusing on the size of the question and what might be sacrificed in order to accommodate it. The use of the word ‘background’ and the potential additional processing costs were also discussed. The group also discussed the wording of the question and noted possible repercussions if the question fails in testing. There was a suggestion to reduce the size of the ‘other’ to a single row of text boxes.

**Action – The group agreed to test the 2 variants.**

**Form A - Variant as agreed at the ethnicity subgroup.**

**Form B – Includes a write-in option within each ‘other’ box, but with one row in groupings A, B & C as suggested, and reduced to 10 ethnicities.**

## Religion

Cormac updated the group on the religion subgroup meeting, at which CSO suggested two draft questions. Diarmuid expanded on Cormac’s update adding there was much discussion around the questions with input from all members of the subgroup and he went on to outline their positions to the group. Atheist Ireland’s request for additional information to be added to the subgroup minutes was also noted. The group (CAG) discussed the proposed questions with consideration given to the inclusion of ‘if any’ and the position of ‘no religion’ within the question proposed for Form A.

**Action – Agreement to test the two new variants of the religion question in the Pilot, with the ‘No religion’ option placed at the top of the category list in Form A and the inclusion of “if any” in the wording of the question.**

## Number of children born

CSO proposed not to include this question in either Pilot form. The submissions received in respect of stillborn children and non-resident parents would be addressed in the context of the time capsule.

## **Irish Language**

Brid Ni Chonghaile, the representative of Dept. of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht outlined the department's position on the question, with reference to government policy. She requested that there should be a measure of how much Irish is spoken in the home. CSO proposed a question which measured the level of fluency.

**Action – It was agreed that CSO would include the measure of fluency question and discuss further changes bilaterally with the Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Update 14/03/2018. At the request of the Dept. CSO are including the following two questions:**

- 1. 'Is Irish the main spoken language of your household?' yes/no, to be included in the household questions.**
- 2. 'Did you grow up in a household where Irish was the main spoken language?' Yes/No (over 18's only). Both questions to be tested on both forms.**

## **Disability (2 Questions)**

Following the recommendations of the subgroup on Disability and Health, CSO suggested the retention of the 2016 disability questions as a control (Form A) and to the testing of a new version of the questions (Form B) as agreed at the subgroup. Following discussions, there was a suggestion to add childcare to option C in the second question. The National Disability Authority representative indicated that she would like to consult with colleagues before recommending this change. There was a suggestion to swap the word 'a' for 'any' in the same question. There was further discussion around the testing and evaluation of the question and how to proceed if it is deemed unsuccessful. There was also a suggestion to incorporate 'mental health' into both Forms.

**Action – The group agreed to proceed with the two suggestions ('a' for 'any' and mental health) in both forms. Form A will be largely the 2016 form and the new version agreed at the disability group would be Form B. The NDA agreed to revert to CSO with recommendation on the inclusion of 'childcare' in Option C in the second question. Updates (07/03/18) The NDA have requested that childcare should not be added. CSO have agreed to this request and will draft the question accordingly.**

## **Health/Tobacco Smoking**

The health question was discussed at the subgroup on disability. The subgroup recommended that consideration be given to the possible inclusion of a question on tobacco smoking. On that basis, CSO presented a draft question 'Do you smoke tobacco products?' with 4 possible responses. The Dept. of Health representative gave some background on the impact of smoking on the economy and its demographic breakdown and the benefits of having localised data. There was also discussion around the health survey next year.

**Action – There was agreement on retaining the health question and testing a new question on tobacco smoking in both Pilot forms.**

## Transport Suite of Questions

CSO proposed two variants of the questions, the 2016 questions on Form A with one change, the inclusion of 'childcare' to the wording of the questions. Form B was presented with the following suggestions:

- Addition of a filter prior to the question '*If NOT at work, school, college or childcare go to Q24*', negating the need to provide this category in each subsequent question on travel.
- Inclusion of 'childcare' to the wording of the questions.
- Inclusion of 'van' in 'other, including lorry' category
- Change to the use of a write in box for time leaving home.
- It was also proposed to drop 'work' from final category in travel to work question to now read '*mainly at or from home*'
- CSO also proposed a new question on 'what time do you usually arrive home?'

There was a discussion around the topic including challenges presented as a result of different starting times, drop offs en route and those who use multi-mode transport. The topic of 'work from home' was raised by the NTA representative.

**Action - There was agreement to test the questions as suggested. Update: Following discussions with NTA it is now proposed to include time you leave your workplace/place of education instead of time at arrival home.**

## Carers

CSO presented two options. The first was based on the 2016 question with the addition of 'support', 'neighbour' and 'health issue' included in the wording in order to make the question more inclusive. Also more detailed instruction on how to fill in the hours as follows 'Care provided on a 24 hour basis, 7 days a week equates to 168 hours'. The second proposed question was based on the Irish Health Survey (Form B). There was a discussion on the two options and it was decided to drop the question as presented on Form B and use the same wording on both forms. There was a suggestion to move the word 'disability' to the end of the question as the drafted wording could be restrictively interpreted.

**Action – It was agreed to use the same question on both forms with reordering of the word 'disability' within the question as above. However, on Form B, it was also decided to include an option to denote if person being cared for is a household member.**

## New - Volunteers

Having consulted with Volunteer Ireland, CSO presented two options. Following a discussion, the group felt the question was too 'open' due to the use of the phrase 'helping out' and the omission of any time parameter in the framing of the question. There was a suggestion to include the word 'regularly' and drop the repeated wording 'helping or voluntary work' in the categories and instead build it into the question.

**Action – It was agreed to use the same question on both forms and adopt the above suggestions.**

## Highest Level of Education

CSO presented two options, both with fewer supporting examples than the 2016 version. Following discussions, it was decided to further shorten Form B with the removal of the word 'level' after 'NFQ' from the explanation in each category.

**Action – The group agreed to the removal of the examples in both forms and the additional removal of the word 'level' after 'NFQ' as suggested, in Form B only.**

## **Principal Economic Status (PES)**

In response to a submission, CSO presented a new version of this question on form B, which subdivided unemployed into 2 categories A) less than 12 months B) more than 12 months.

**Action – The group agreed the changes as proposed and test on Form B. Form A will retain the 2016 version as a control.**

## **Employment Status**

CSO proposed to retain the existing version of the question as a control in Form A. Form B was presented with the same question with the addition of 'Is (was) your status full-time/part-time?' and provided two tick box options full time or part time.

**Action – The group agreed to the questions as presented, noting the additional question on Form B.**

## **New - Work from home**

The group discussed the format of a proposed new question on working from home and the suitability of including it in both versions of the Pilot form. CSO proposed to test the new question on Form B which captured whether the person worked from home and the number of days worked.

**Action - The group agreed to this proposal and test on Form B.**

## **Occupation**

In order to free up space CSO presented the 2016 question with shortened explanations on both forms and the removal of one of the rows of text boxes, whilst retaining two rows. CSO also proposed a new tick box for acres (in addition to the hectares) with a provision for decimal places within these text boxes.

**Action – The group decided to retain the shortened explanation and text box suggestions on both forms. It was also decided, on Form B only, to include the acres suggestion but without the decimal place.**

## **Industry**

In order to free up space CSO suggested removing the third line of text boxes in both forms.

**Action - The change was agreed by the group.**

## **Workplace Address**

CSO suggested the inclusion of 'childcare' in the question, with instructions as follows: *'If you are in both school and childcare, write in the address of your school'*. CSO also suggested the removal of the word 'work' from the 'work mainly at or from home' tick box located below write-in boxes. There was a suggestion to include a measurement of which days the respondent is working from home. However it was considered this might generate contradictory results.

**Action - The group agreed to include the childcare elements to the question as described above and the suggestion regarding the tick box text, to be reflected in both forms.**



## **New - Childcare question**

In response to submissions in this area CSO presented a new question, with the same format on both forms. There was a suggestion that category 4 'Au pair/Nanny/Child-minder (in child's home) may need to be separated out into individual categories.

**Action - The question was agreed pending CSO's commitment to liaise with Dept. of Children, on the issue raised above. Update: 27/02/2018 The Dept. has confirmed they do not foresee any issues and are happy to proceed with the question. This question to be tested in both forms.**

## **Absent Persons**

CSO suggested including a question on nationality and citizenship in the list of questions for absent persons on Forms A and B respectively.

**Action – This approach was agreed by the group.**

## **Time capsule/Free text box**

In response to submissions CSO suggested using the space on the second last page of the questionnaire (P23 on the 2016 form) to include a 'Time Capsule'. The objective of this is to facilitate people writing a message or note for their descendants / future researchers to be released in 100 years in line with the Statistics Act 1993. CSO suggested this could be used to record information in the context of the submissions made in the areas of non-resident parenting and stillborn children. The group was broadly supportive of the suggestion which is not intended for use as a statistical tool. There was some discussion around this and the practicalities of testing in the Pilot. There was a suggestion for one form to be used for feedback only and the other to be used as a time capsule.

**Action - CSO to consider approach to testing this in the Pilot. Update: Following internal discussions CSO have proposed including a placeholder description of and rationale for the Time Capsule in both Form A and B. Pilot respondents will be asked whether they would consider using the Time Capsule should it appear in Census 2021.**

This concluded the discussion on the questionnaire content.

## **Field Update**

CSO gave an update on the designation of the Pilot enumeration areas and associated field operation.

## **Next steps**

- Bilateral talks will take place as noted.
- Minutes will be circulated.
- The Pilot will take place in September of this year.
- The data captured in the Pilot will be analysed and a report will be produced and circulated to members of the CAG in Q1 2019 along with draft recommendations on Census 2021 content.
- The Census Advisory Group will reconvene in February or March of 2019 to discuss the report and advise on final content.
- The agreed form for Census 2021 will then be submitted by CSO for government approval.

