



Birmingham counts down to 2011 Census

On 27 March 2011 all residents in the UK will be asked to take part in the census by completing a questionnaire about their household.

The census is an estimate of the population that is carried out every ten years. Everyone is asked the same questions on the same day to paint a snapshot of the city's population and its characteristics. When residents fill in the census questionnaire their answers are turned into anonymous statistics that are used to help the council and other organisations decide where local services, transport, housing, and schools are needed.

The questionnaire covers a broad range of topics including health, sex, age, marital status, language, employment, relationships between household members, ethnic background, religion and type of accommodation.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate that each person counted in the census is worth £5,000 to the Local Authority over 10 years. This means that an undercount of just 100 people could mean Birmingham misses out on £500,000 worth of funding.

From now until census day on 27 March 2011, ONS and Birmingham City Council staff will work together with community organisations and local partners to raise awareness of the importance of the census and to support residents who need help in filling in the questionnaire.

How you can help

You can help make the census in Birmingham a success by filling in the census questionnaire yourself, and supporting those around you to do the same. The questionnaire must be completed in English, so can you support those whose first language isn't English? Are you a member of a community group that could hold a drop-in centre on census day? If yes, please get in contact.

During the course of the 2011 Census over 600 part time opportunities will be created in Birmingham. All posts are being recruited by Capita on behalf of ONS and will be advertised through their website www.censusjobs.co.uk.

The recruitment of Community Advisors- who will be responsible for promoting the Census at a grass-roots level to encourage participation in the community- starts on May the 17th.

Other positions will include: Co-ordinators who will oversee fieldwork activities and Collectors responsible for following up questionnaires from non responding households. ONS would like to promote these opportunities widely within local areas and gain people with experience of working with local communities.

If you have any questions about the census, want to get involved, or have suggestions about how we can make it a success in Birmingham please contact Amerdip Kaur, Senior Policy Officer, Corporate Policy and Performance Team, census@birmingham.gov.uk