

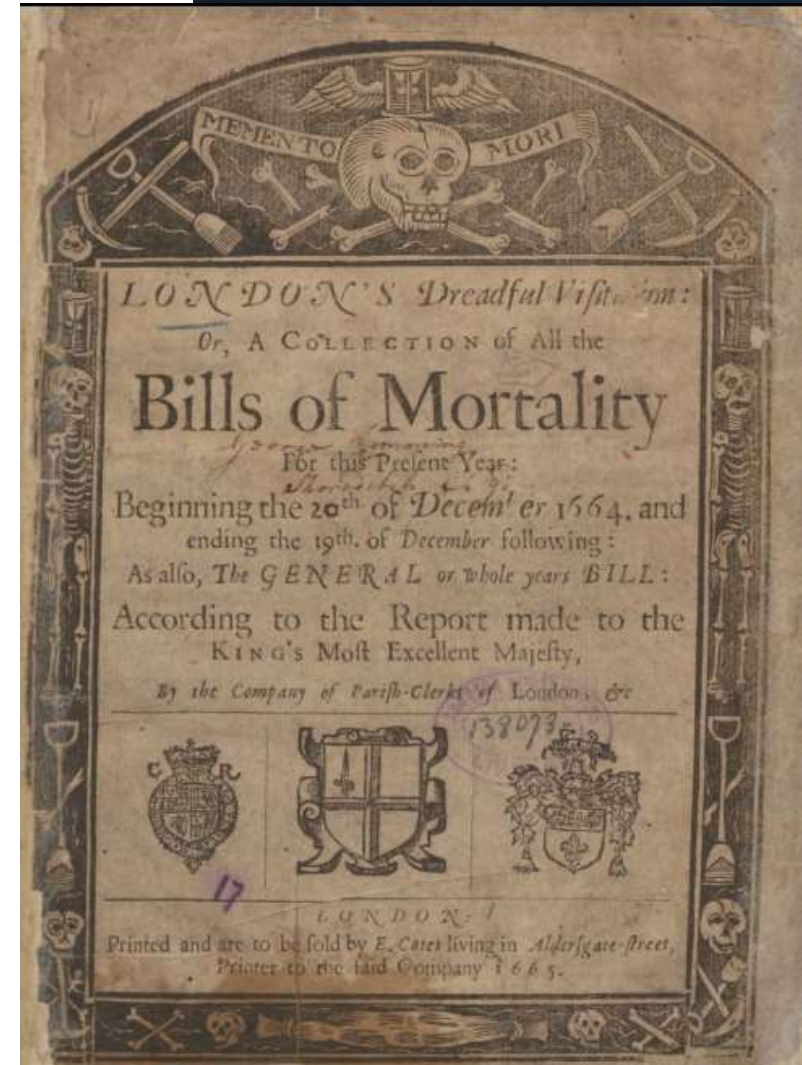


# A PARTIAL AND INCOMPLETE HISTORY OF THE UK DEMOGRAPHIC SYSTEM

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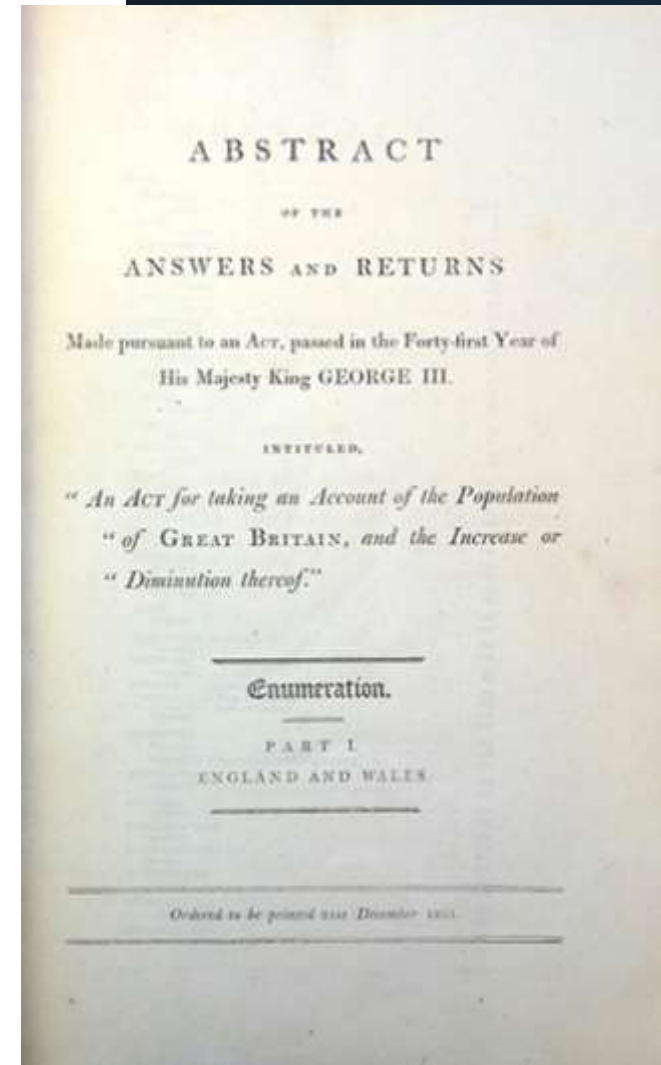
# Pre 1801

- Domesday book – took 20 years to compile!
- Parish Records
- Bills of Mortality
- Very little national data - reconstructions  
Wrigley and Schofield The Population History of England, 1541-1871 (1981)



# 1801-1951


- 1801 - Census
- From 1841 Censuses every 10 years except 1941
- Census Act 1920



# Census Act 1920

5(1) It shall be the duty of [the Statistics Board in relation to England and Wales and the Registrar General for Scotland in relation to Scotland] from time to time to collect and publish any available statistical information with respect to the **number and condition** of the population in the interval between one census and another, and otherwise to further the supply and provide for the better co-ordination of such information, and [the Board or Registrar General for Scotland] may make arrangements with any Government Department or local authority for the purpose of acquiring any materials or information necessary for the purpose aforesaid.

Census Act, 1920.  
[10 & 11 Geo. 5. Ch. 41.]



ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS. A.D. 1920.

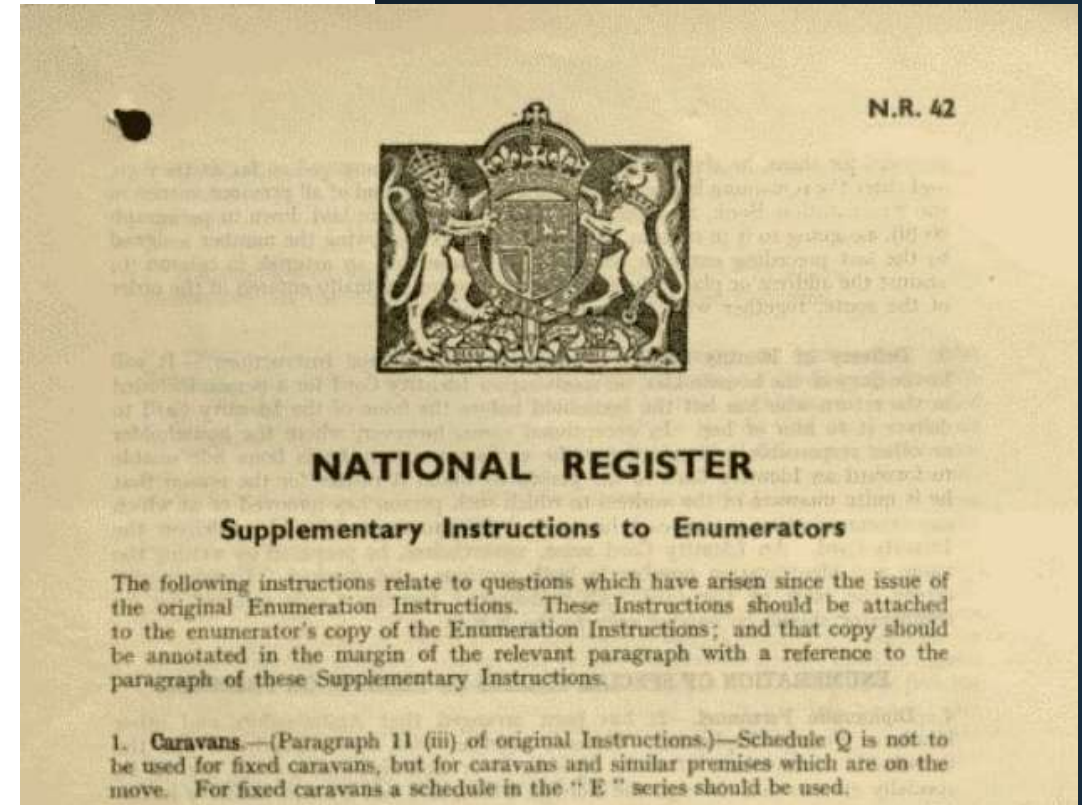
Section.

1. Power to direct taking of census.
2. Duty of Registrar-General to carry out census, and provision for expenses.
3. Regulations with respect to proceedings for taking census.
4. Preparation of reports and abstracts.
5. Preparation of statistics in respect of periods between one census and another.
6. Provision with respect to local census.
7. Expenses of local authorities.
8. Penalties.
9. Application to Scotland.
10. Short title and extent.

SCHEDULE.

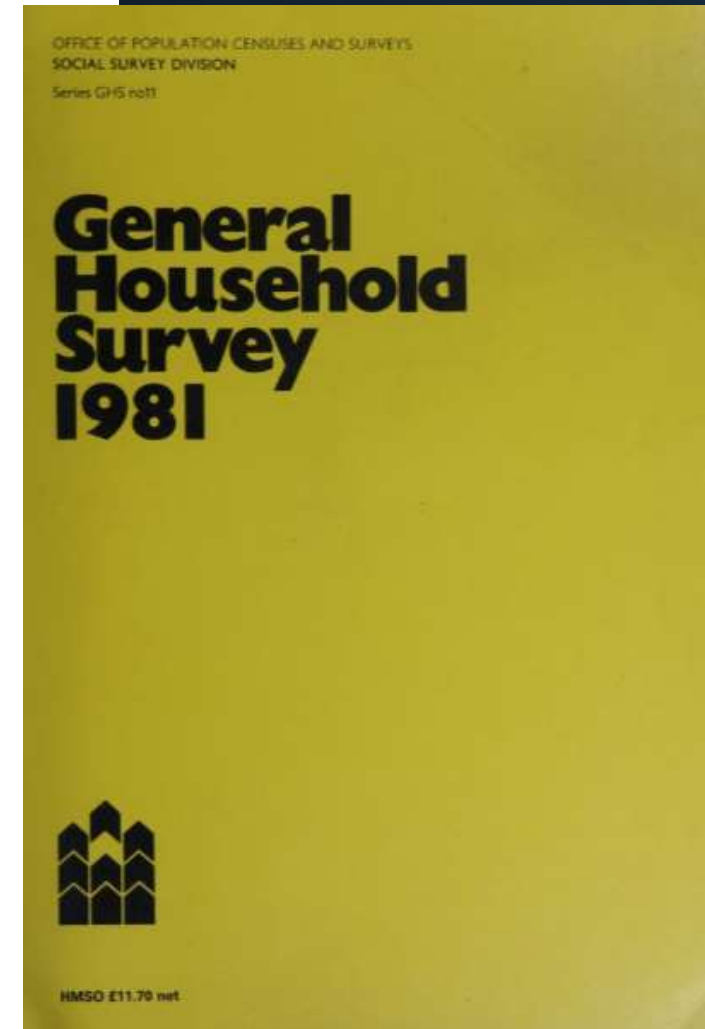
# 1801-1951

- 1801 - Census
- From 1841 Censuses every 10 years except 1941
- Census Act 1920,
- Civil Registration, Population Statistics Act 1938
- Social surveys
- Population Register 1939
- Concerns over low fertility in the 1930s  
Population Investigation Committee



# 1951-2001

- 1966 Sample Census
- 1970 Creation of the Office for Population Censuses and Surveys
- 1971 (– until 2012) General Household Survey
- British cohort surveys
- ONS Longitudinal Study (1974), Scottish LS (2001), Northern Ireland LS (2006)
- 1996 Creation of Office for National Statistics

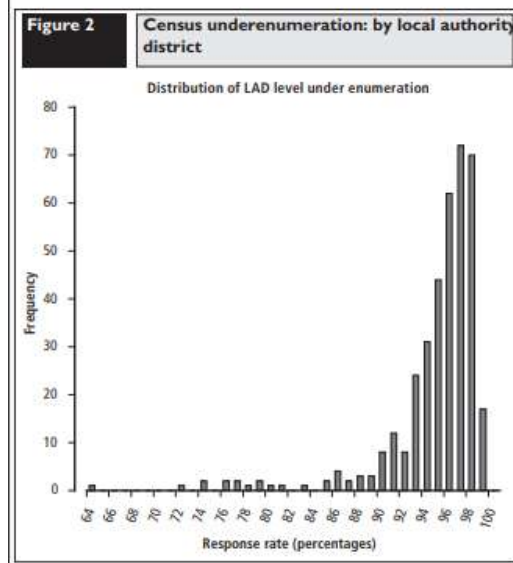
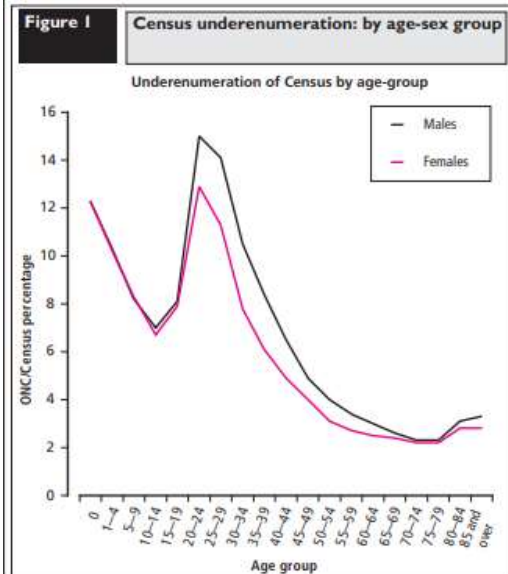


## 2001 onwards – slide 1

- Fully coverage adjusted 2001 Census
- GP registration data used for internal migration E&W
- Improving Migration and Population Statistics programme – distribution of international migrants
- Registration review – not accepted but online registration and other changes made.
- Changes to surveys

### Box one

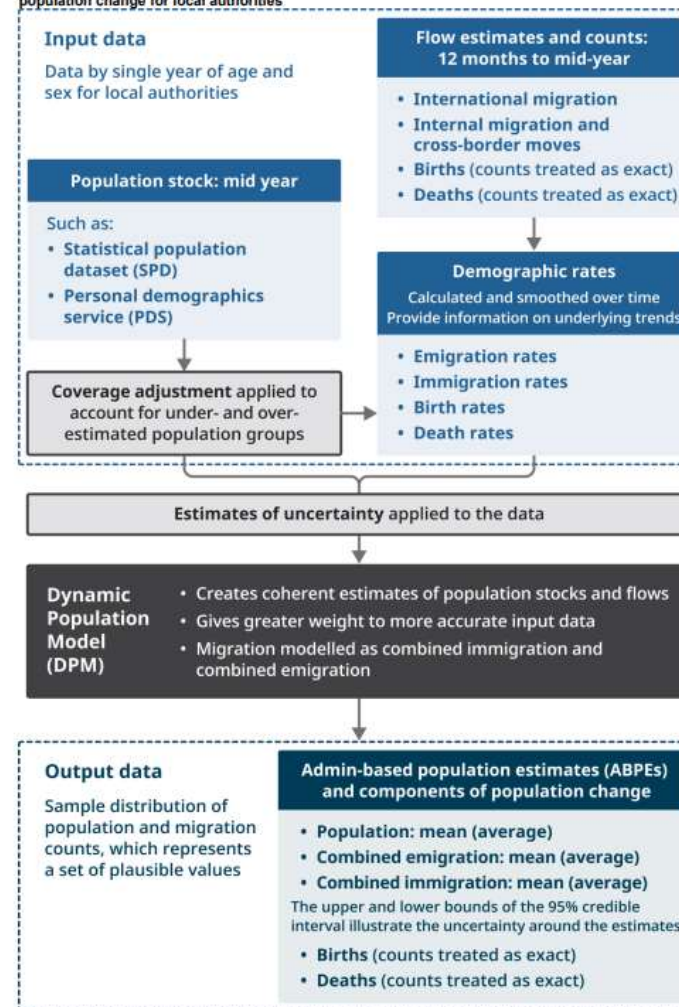
2001 Census Response Rates



## 2001 onwards – slide 2

- Admin data Programme (FPMS)
- Pandemic – forced end of IPS – sped up use of admin data
- 2021 Successful E&W and NI Censuses
- 2022 Ultimately successful Scottish Census
- Issues with survey response
- Dynamic Population Model
- Gender and Generations Survey

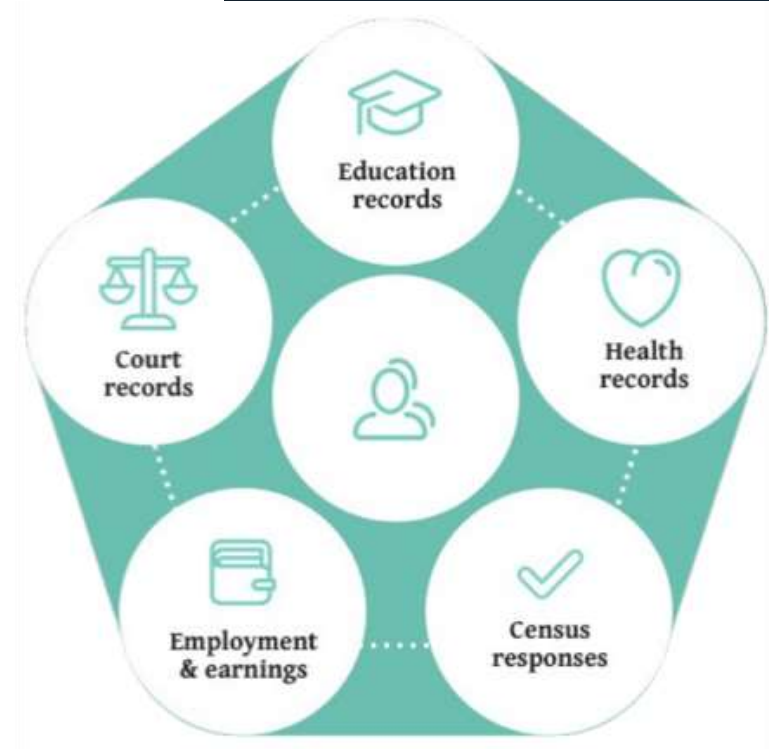
Figure 1: How the Dynamic Population Model (DPM) estimates the population and components of population change for local authorities



Source: Mid-year admin-based population estimates (ABPEs) from the Office for National Statistics

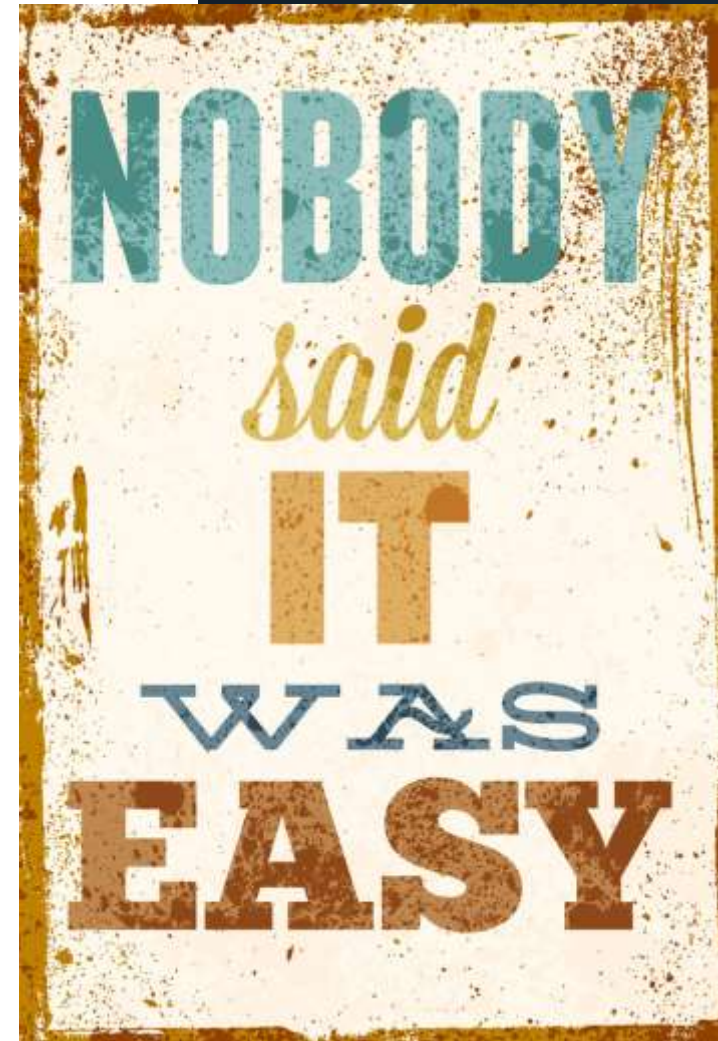
# Today's demographic system

- Good longitudinal data
- Survey data, which could be stronger
- Gender and Generations Survey
- A good Census base (but not quite fully aligned and taken in an unusual period)
- Increasing use of administrative data



# Today's demographic system - challenges

- Survey response
- Devolution makes UK data more complex
- Geography
- Timeliness
- More complex society
- Definitions
- Gaps
- High quality data linkage



<https://create.vista.com/unlimited/stock-vectors/70504215/stock-vector-typography-illustration-with-grunge-effects/> created by LarysaRay

# Some useful references

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- Migration Statistics Improvement Programme Reports, Final Report 2013 <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20151014045945/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/migration-statistics-improvement-programme-reports/final-report/index.html>
- Linking our Lives blog UCL <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/linking-our-lives/about-our-blog/> and podcast
- UK Gender and Generations Survey [https://www.cpc.ac.uk/research\\_programme/generations\\_and\\_gender\\_survey/#Current](https://www.cpc.ac.uk/research_programme/generations_and_gender_survey/#Current)
- The adequacy of UK-wide comparable statistics and data (June 2025) <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/the-adequacy-of-uk-wide-comparable-statistics-and-data/>

