

Preparations for a census in 2031

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July 2025



Census: One of the most important UK data assets

A whole population census to help inform how decision makers see, serve and support society

Why the census still matters

- The breadth of users and critical uses.
- Unmatched scale, granularity, and accuracy.
- Its enabling role in billions of pounds of spending decisions.
- Alternatives not yet fully mature.



Traditional uses

- Policy Evidence and Insight
- Service Planning
- Household Statistics
- Equality and Inclusion

Emerging uses

- Risk and Resilience Planning
- Enabling advanced data linkage
- Feeding AI models & digital twins



[Strong Foundations](#)

[Kickstarting Economic Growth](#)

[An NHS Fit for the Future](#)

[Safer Streets](#)

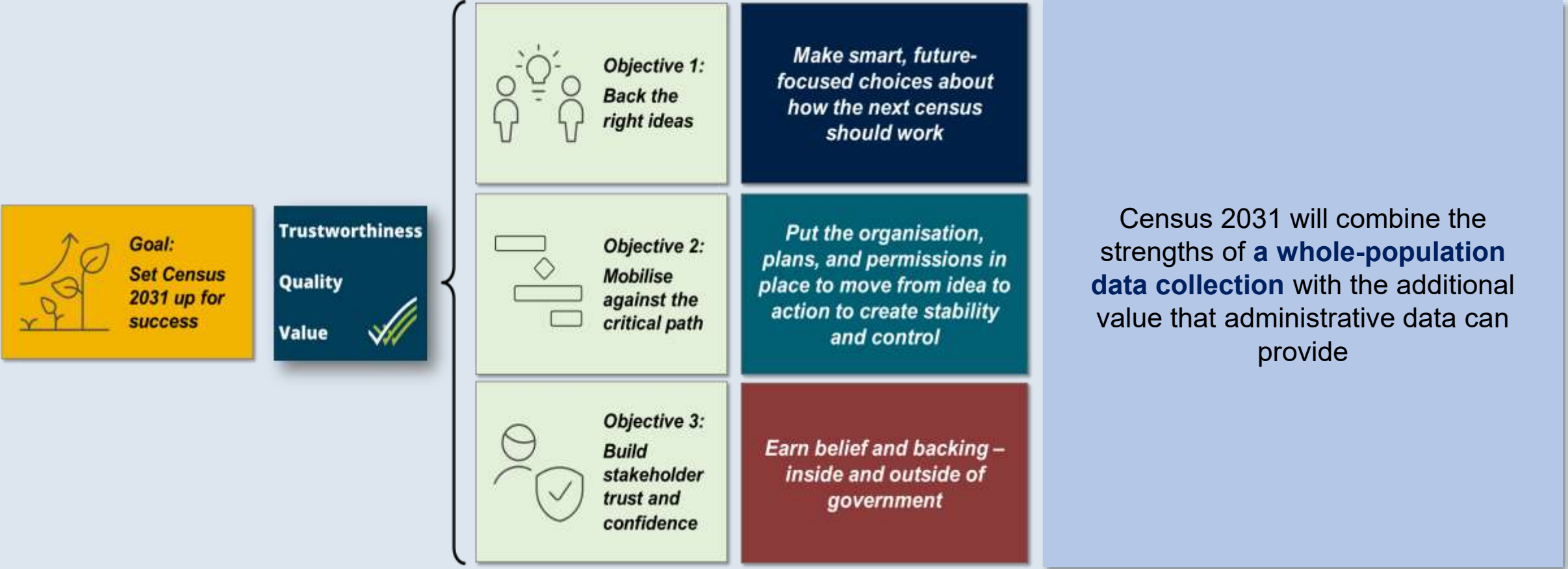
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Laying strong foundations for a census in 2031

The Census Taskforce



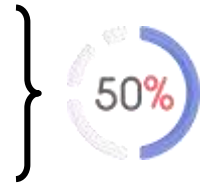
Keeping what worked, changing what holds us back, adapting to what's changed

Census 2021: Proven performance, quality and value

- ✓ Very **modern digital design** and **cloud** architecture, whole operation **digitally enabled**, powered by **data analytics**, **individual forms**, early **AI used for coding** data from paper forms, **admin data** used for QA and coverage adjustments
- ✓ 97% response rate under pressure, 90% online
- ✓ Paper use down 85%, Field size down 30%
- ✓ Faster, richer outputs for users

Known limitations that demand a smarter resilient design

- ⚠ Societal change and people's willingness to take part
- ⚠ Sensitive to fluid populations and complex living arrangements
- ⚠ Field model and recruitment is a real issue
- ⚠ Paper introduces constraints and is costly
- ⚠ Digital-by-default brings new vulnerabilities: digital exclusion, AI & quantum threats



Census 2031 Roadmap: From User Needs to National Impact



Stakeholder engagement

Sustained and effective engagement throughout life of the programme is key

- Seeking to achieve genuine and valuable engagement to achieve a common goal- a successful census in 2031
- Wide range of stakeholders with a range of interests
- Build on the approaches that worked well for Census 2021

Starting now...

- Sharing early preparations
- Creating opportunities to test assumptions, consider trade-offs and seek opportunities to genuinely innovate
- Gather views on topics that users need

Takeaways from this presentation

1

Census 2031 is a **critical national data asset** to meet the needs of users.

2

We have recommended a **whole population data collection building on a proven platform** using the very successful 2021 design.

3

We have established a **census taskforce** to lay strong foundations for 2031.

4

We are taking a **disciplined approach to innovation** focused on outcomes using admin data, AI, automation, and advanced logistics.

5

Importance of engagement with users throughout the process.

6

Critical milestones include **topic consultation** and the **Census Design Validation Test Apr 2027**.

The decision to hold a census **rests with the Government**.

Thank you

Contact us

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21 July 2025

