



WHEN IS THE CENSUS AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

27 March 2011 is Census Day. Information is collected every 10 years on a standard census form about every man, woman and child in Britain.

The information gathered will provide the government and local councils with an understanding about the communities they serve, including the Irish community, enabling them to make better and more informed decisions about how future public money should be spent.

Just one person, or a group of people, making an incomplete return on their census form could mean thousands of pounds being spent elsewhere and not on your area's future budgets where the need may be greater.

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IF A PARENT OR GRANDPARENT
WAS BORN IN IRELAND TICK THE
IRISH ETHNICITY BOX...



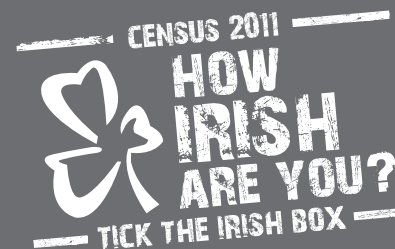
Federation of
Irish Societies



HOW
IRISH ARE
YOU?

ANY IRISH
ROOTS?

CELEBRATE
YOUR IRISHNESS
TICK THE IRISH
ETHNICITY BOX



HOW DOES BEING IRISH OR OF IRISH DESCENT RELATE TO THE CENSUS?

We are asking people who are Irish or have Irish roots to tick the Irish ethnicity box.

Remember: *you can still tick the Irish ethnicity box if you hold a British Passport.*

Why tick the Irish ethnicity box?

Well, first and foremost, it's great to be Irish, or have Irish roots.

The Irish in Britain have made, and continue to make, an enormous contribution to society. They are leaders in the arts, education, health, voluntary and charity work, British business, and have representatives in Westminster. The Irish have so much to be proud about, and so much to celebrate.

So if you're Irish, or have Irish roots, you can make this count for something in the Census by ticking the Irish ethnicity box.

Okay, so now I understand that it's great to be Irish, but are there any other important reasons why I should consider ticking the box?

Yes. Below are a few facts about some of the health issues that pertain to the Irish community in Britain.

a) 1st and 2nd generation (those born in Ireland or whose parents (one or more) were born in Ireland) Irish people have the highest levels of cancer of any ethnic group in Britain

b) One in five Irish people carry a gene which can cause Haemochromatosis – a liver disease which can lead to diabetes, arthritis or heart problems

c) The Irish die younger than other groups and this rate persists even into the third generation of the Irish living in Britain

So, even if you were born here, or you have Irish heritage, you are more likely to be affected by these issues. It is important for the NHS to know how many people of Irish descent there are in Britain in order to deal with these problems.

So if you are of Irish descent, you can help raise the profile of these issues, and help other Irish people by ticking the Irish ethnicity box.

This will provide successive governments with a clear mandate that the issues above matter to a large section of the British population and need to be tackled.

How do I know if I'm eligible to tick the box?

This is a question you have to answer for yourself and depends on your attitudes towards your ethnicity. Every person in the world is a member of an ethnic group. Ethnicity relates to your own sense of cultural values, often through a shared heritage, which can be very different to Nationality (or National Identity in the Census).

Example:

Samantha was born in London. Both her grandparents were born in Ireland. Although she travels on a British passport, Samantha intends to tick the Irish ethnicity box. To see the what this question looks like please see Figure 1.

Fig 1

16 What is your ethnic group?
Choose one section from A to E, then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background

A White

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background, write in

So nationality and ethnicity aren't the same thing?

No, they are not the same thing. We often think of our nationality as being defined by what passport we hold, which is correct but it can also be related to factors such as local or regional attachments – possibly where you grew up. Ethnicity, on the other hand, relates more to your sense of heritage and ancestry rather than where you grew up.

There'll be a question covering nationality in the Census separate from the ethnicity question. You might be British, carry a British passport but you can still tick the Irish ethnicity box.

What do I do if I am of mixed race or mixed heritage?

Perhaps this question is best answered with an example.

Example:

Lucy's mother was born in Ireland, her father is Turkish. She travels on a British passport. She wishes to record her Irish and Turkish heritages, so Lucy will tick the 'Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background' and write in Irish and Turkish in the write-in box provided.

So, if you are not white and/or consider yourself of mixed ethnicity and want to register your Irish ethnicity you can do this by ticking the 'Any other' box (in Section B of the Ethnic Group question) and writing in both ethnicities, e.g. Irish and English. To see what this question looks like in the Census, please see Figure 2.

Fig 2

B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

C Asian / Asian British

- Indian

What can I do to get more involved with the Irish community?

The Federation of Irish Societies (FIS) is the national representative body for Irish cultural and community organisations in Britain.

We have a huge community of members who are active and enjoy getting involved with Irish culture and community. If you want to join us please go to: www.irishnetworkbritain.org to find out how.