

2011 Census – Output Consultation  
Room 4200W  
Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Segensworth Road  
Titchfield  
Fareham  
Hampshire PO15 5RR

Sent via email to: [CensusOutputConsultation@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CensusOutputConsultation@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

28<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Dear Sirs,

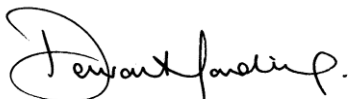
**Re: 2011 Census Geography Consultation**

We are writing on behalf of The Market Research Society (MRS) and the MRS Census and Geodemographics Group (CGG) regarding the 2011 Census Geography consultation. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation.

Our response to the consultation is concentrated on one particular area – exact or best fit estimates for wards – as at this stage this issue is of the most particular concern to the research sector. It should be noted that we are interested in all issues covered in the 2011 Census Geography consultation, and would wish to be involved in any of the broader discussions not just the topic which is covered in this response.

The response to the consultation plus background information about MRS and the CGG are detailed in Appendix A attached to this letter. We confirm that no parts of this response are confidential and any responses can be attributed to MRS and CGG.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debrah Harding'.A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Barry Leventhal'.

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**MRS Census & Geodemographics Groups (CGG)**  
**c/o MRS**

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## Appendix A

### Response from The Market Research Society (MRS) and the MRS Census and Geodemographics Group –

### 2011 Census Geography Consultation

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#### About The Market Research Society and the Census and Geodemographics Group

The Market Research Society (MRS) is the world's largest association representing providers and users of market, social, and opinion research. The UK is the second largest market in the world for these research services. Full details about MRS and its activities are available at: <http://www.mrs.org.uk>

Geodemographics can be defined broadly as 'the analysis of people by where they live', and involves analysing demographic data within small geographical areas to serve a wide range of clients in the public and private sectors. The annual turnover of geodemographic activities in the UK has been estimated at £200m. The Census and Geodemographics Group (CGG) is an MRS advisory board, founded in 1989 to represent the interests of this important activity. The CGG has specialists in market research, retail site location, market and database analysis, as well as census distributors and academic researchers.

The CGG is involved with Census developments through representation on the ONS Business and Professional Interests Advisory Group, and with wider matters through membership of the Statistics User Forum as well as through an extensive network of contact in the market research industry

#### Responses to 2011 Census Geography Consultation Points

##### Consultation Point 3: Exact or best fit estimates for wards?

***MRS and CGG wish to reiterate their strong preference for the production of ward estimates, and all other geography's for that matter, based upon the process of best fit estimates to the census output areas.***

*This methodology provides a robust and consistent scaling of the data across different scales of data aggregation and removes a significant source of dangers of inadvertent disclosure due to geography slicing.*

*At a micro-level, some wards built from best fit methods will have a low level of variability, however there is no particular reason to assume that this variability has any inherent bias, even an individual ward might well balance accidental inclusion with compensating exclusion, these compensating behaviours help to minimise any effects. Alternatively, if wards are built in exact fashion, then all local authority geographies that can be constructed from wards as well as output areas will have two potential methods of construction, this will lead to unnecessary uncertainty when making comparisons, and also comparing with non-ward based geography's.*