

Beyond 2011 Public Attitudes Research: Report on 2012 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

April 2014

Background

The Office for National Statistics has taken a fresh look at options for the production of population and small area socio-demographic statistics for England and Wales. The Beyond 2011 Programme carried out research on the options and has recommended the best way forward to meet future user needs.

Improvements in technology and administrative data sources offer opportunities to either modernise the existing census process, or to develop an alternative by re-using existing data already held within government. Since methods for taking the traditional census are already relatively well understood most of the research focussed on how surveys can be supplemented by better re-use of administrative data already collected from the public.

The final recommendation made in 2014, balanced user needs, cost, benefit, statistical quality, and the public acceptability of all the options. The recommendation is for a predominantly online census in 2021 supplemented by use of administrative and survey data. This has implications for population-based statistics in England and Wales and, potentially, for the statistical system as a whole.

About this paper

This paper provides the results from a module of questions run on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey in 2012. The research was carried out to explore public attitudes towards census-taking and the sharing and holding of personal information for statistical purposes. It was designed to assess public understanding and gather information on views about how the Government collects, holds and shares socio-demographic information. The research built upon a previous survey module run in 2009 and focus groups carried out in 2010.

This document is one of a series of papers being published providing details of the public acceptability research undertaken by the Beyond 2011 Programme.

For more information

- Data Sharing between Government Departments: Report on Public Acceptability (November 2009)
- Beyond 2011 Programme Public Attitudes Research: Report on 2010 Focus Group Research
- Beyond 2011 Programme Public Attitudes Research: Report on 2012 Focus Group Research
- Beyond 2011 Programme Public Attitudes Research: Report on 2013 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey
- Beyond 2011 Programme Public Attitudes Research: Report on 2013 Cognitive Testing by Independent Social Research Limited

1	Executive Summary	2
2	Introduction	3
3	Methodology.....	4
4	Results.....	5
4.1	Census.....	5
4.1.1	Understanding of the purpose of a census	5
4.1.2	Census questions.....	6
4.2	Data sharing.....	7
4.2.1	Obtaining data from other organisations.....	7
4.2.2	Benefits to the public.....	7
4.3	Holding personal information.....	8
4.3.1	Purpose.....	8
4.3.2	Knowledge of the current situation	9
4.3.3	Attitudes towards holding personal data	10
4.4	Attitudes towards ONS	11
4.5	Comparison with the 2009 research	11
5	Conclusions	13
	Appendix A: Questions from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.....	14
	Appendix B: Frequency Tables.....	19
	Appendix C: Tabular comparison between results from 2009 and 2012.....	24

1 Executive Summary

- In February 2012 the Beyond 2011 Programme commissioned a study seeking the public's views on census-taking and the sharing and holding of personal information for statistical purposes. The research was designed to assess public understanding and gather information on views about how government collects, holds and shares socio-demographic information.
- The study consisted of a module of twelve questions run on the ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. The key areas covered in this report are the public's views and understanding of the Census, and on the sharing and holding of administrative data, as well as a comparison with the findings of similar research carried out in 2009.
- Overall, the reasons for census-taking are widely understood by the public, with 90 per cent knowing that the census is used to determine the make-up of the population and 88 per cent knowing that it is used to assess population changes (see Figure 1). However, a significant proportion hold misconceptions about its purpose, thinking that it is used to keep track of people and increase government control of the public (48 per cent and 36 per cent respectively) (see Figure 2).
- The majority of people are happy to provide potentially sensitive personal information on a census (73 per cent) although 17 per cent object to giving information about their income and 12 per cent do not want to provide information on their sexual orientation (see Figure 3).
- People are more likely to agree with ONS obtaining personal data from other government departments than from non-governmental organisations (51 per cent and 37 per cent respectively) (see Figure 4). The public benefits of data sharing are not widely understood; while 54 per cent of the public think that data sharing could lead to improved data quality, twenty per cent do not demonstrate any understanding of the potential benefits (see figure 5).
- Support for the holding of personal information in a database used for statistical purposes is high, with 59 per cent of the public supporting the concept and 19 per cent neither agreeing nor disagreeing (see Figure 8). A large majority believe that personal details such as name, address, date of birth and sex should be held on a central database (see Figure 10) and forty five per cent think that it would reduce government costs and help to deliver services more effectively (see Figure 6).
- Fifteen per cent of the public are opposed to the creation of a database for statistical purposes, raising concerns over personal privacy, data security and unauthorised access, as well as general objections to the amount of data being shared (see Figures 8 and 9). A majority of people are opposed to income data being held on such a database (65 per cent) (see Figure 10).
- The public demonstrate most support for personal information being collected by ONS via a census or surveys (66 and 56 per cent respectively). The use of information from other organisations is significantly less popular, being a preference of 21 per cent of the public (see Figure 11). Only four per cent of people would prefer ONS to solely use information shared by other government and non-government organisations.
- Comparison with the 2009 research shows that public views on some of the key issues have shifted. People are less well informed with respect to current data sharing arrangements and, whilst support for a database has remained broadly at the same level (64 per cent in 2009 and 59 per cent in 2012), there is significantly more backing for a range of personal information being held now than in 2009 (see Figure 12). A tabular comparison between the 2009 research and this study can be found at Appendix C.

2 Introduction

Every ten years, for over 200 years, each household in England and Wales has been required to respond to the census. The statistics it provides underpin the allocation of billions of pounds of public spending each year and are fundamental to decision making, policy formulation and outcome monitoring across government, the commercial sector and the wider community.

The Beyond 2011 Programme in the Office for National Statistics has reviewed requirements for population statistics and how they might best be met in future. Improvements in technology and in government data sources offer opportunities to either modernise the existing census process, or to develop an alternative census method that re-uses existing data already held within government.

A number of approaches were considered, and each approach was assessed against a published set of evaluation criteria including statistical quality, cost, technical and legal feasibility, public acceptability and public burden. After this work and a consultation carried out in autumn 2013, the following recommendation was made:

- for a predominantly online census in 2021 supplemented by the further use of administrative and survey data.

Public acceptability was identified as an important issue when considering making increased use of individuals' personal administrative data within the population statistics system. Since 2009 ONS has undertaken research designed to develop a comprehensive understanding of public attitudes relating to the re-use of administrative data for research and statistical purposes.

3 Methodology

A module of questions was run on the ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey¹. There were twelve questions of which five were repeated from the previous 2009 study. Full details of the questions asked can be found at Appendix A.

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey conducted 1,060 face-to-face interviews with adult individuals living in private households in Great Britain during the month of February 2012. This included 62 individuals residing in Wales and 80 residing in Scotland. The overall response rate for the survey was 59 per cent.

In all cases the proportions cited in the report are derived from weighted data² and, when reference is made to relationships the findings are statistically significant³. The bar charts displaying the 2012 results are presented with 95 per cent confidence intervals around the proportions.

¹ The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, previously the Omnibus Survey, is a regular multi-purpose survey.

² The survey data are weighted to correct for: i) the unequal probability of selection due to interviewing one adult per household; and, ii) for non-response bias by being calibrated to ONS population totals.

³ Relationships were tested for statistical significance using the Chi-square test for independence

4 Results

This section of the report presents the results of the research under sub-sections focusing on the following key areas:

- Census (4.1)
- ONS sharing administrative data (4.2)
- ONS holding personal data in a database (4.3)
- Preferences for personal data collection by ONS and the level of trust in the organisation (4.4)

The final sub-section (4.5) presents a comparison with the 2009 research.

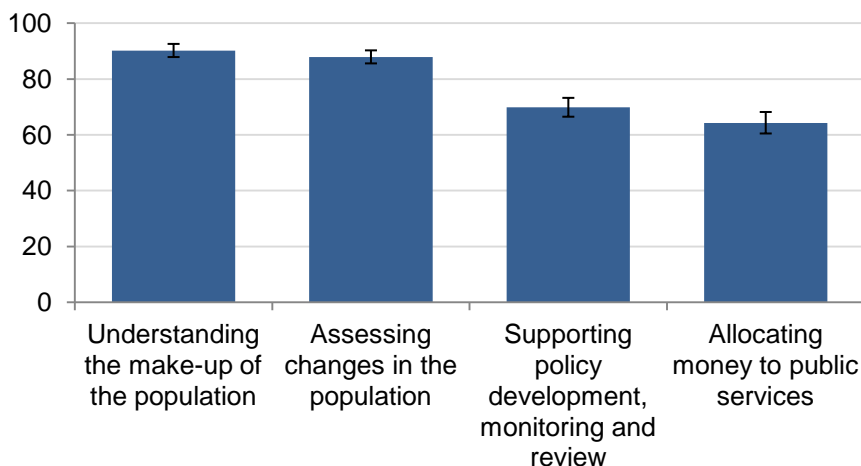
4.1 Census

4.1.1 Understanding of the purpose of a census

The broad demographic aims of the census are widely recognised by the public (see Figure 1); 90 per cent understand that the census is used to determine the make-up of the population and 88 per cent understand that it is used to assess population changes. A majority are also aware that the population data produced are used to support policy development, monitoring and review and to allocate money to public service providers (70 and 64 per cent respectively). However, the level of understanding varies between different groups: overall, men are more likely than women to understand the purpose of the census, as are individuals in higher NS-SEC groups and with a higher educational level.

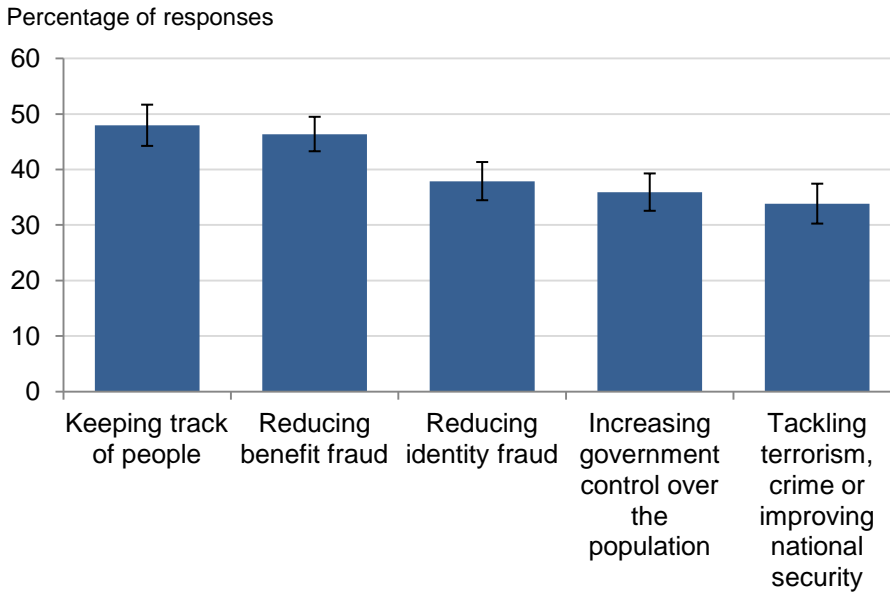
Figure 1 – Perceived uses for the census

Percentage of responses



Despite showing a general understanding of the census, a significant proportion of the public also hold misconceptions about its purpose (see Figure 2). For example, 36 per cent think that it is used to increase government control over the population and 48 per cent believe that it is used to keep track of people. Respondents in lower NS-SEC groupings and with qualifications below degree level are more likely to hold these views.

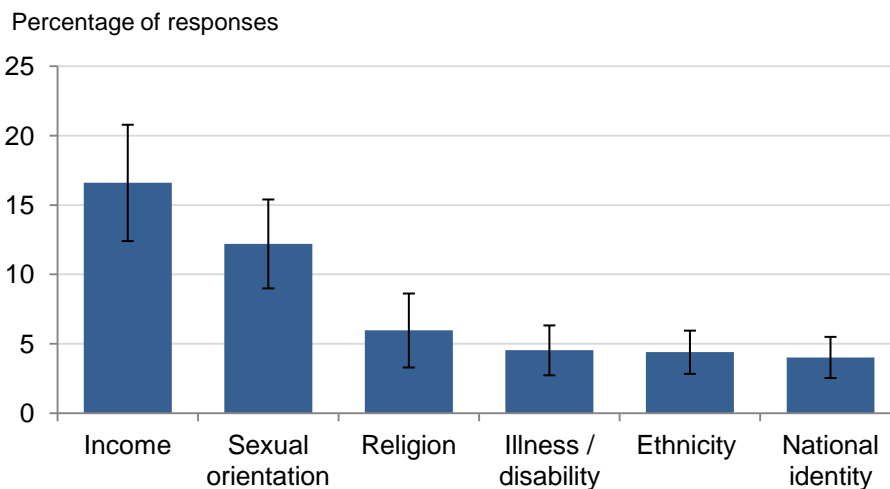
Figure 2 – Perceived uses for the census



4.1.2 Census questions

The Beyond 2011 Public Consultation on User Requirements (ONS, 2012) highlighted demands for socio-demographic information that may be considered sensitive such as income, sexual orientation, religion, illness/disability and ethnicity. This study has demonstrated that most people (73 per cent) would be happy to provide information on these topics. However, there are some objections most notably in relation to the provision of information on either income or sexual orientation, as some people feel that these details are personal and private (78 per cent), although there are also concerns about the security of the information and whether it might be used against them. Figure 3 shows the proportion of the public who object to providing information on specific topics.

Figure 3 – Socio-demographic information the public prefer not to provide to a census



4.2 Data sharing

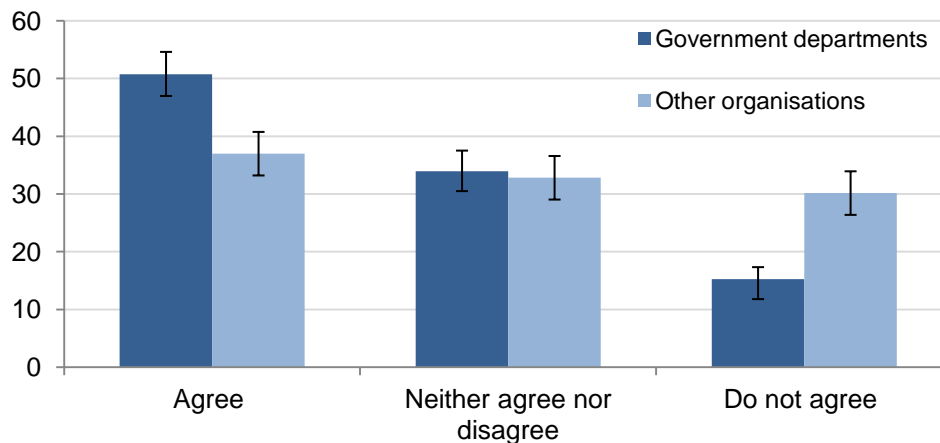
4.2.1 Obtaining data from other organisations

As shown in Figure 4 below, just over half (51 per cent) of the public agree with the idea of ONS being able to access information on individuals held by other government departments. However, they are less likely to agree to ONS being able to access information held by other agencies, businesses or organisations such as doctor's surgeries, supermarkets or local councils (37 per cent). Those who disagree with data sharing, with either government or other types of organisation, are largely concerned about privacy issues (80 per cent), although a minority are also worried about the wrong information being held by other organisations (27 per cent) or that the information may be used against them (17 per cent).

Women are more likely than men to disagree with data sharing or to neither agree nor disagree, and people in younger age groups are more positive towards data sharing than people in older age groups. It is possible to identify differences between social groups and by level of educational attainment, with people in higher NS-SEC groupings and with a higher level of educational attainment being more likely to agree with the idea.

Figure 4: Level of agreement for data sharing with government departments and other organisations

Percentage of responses

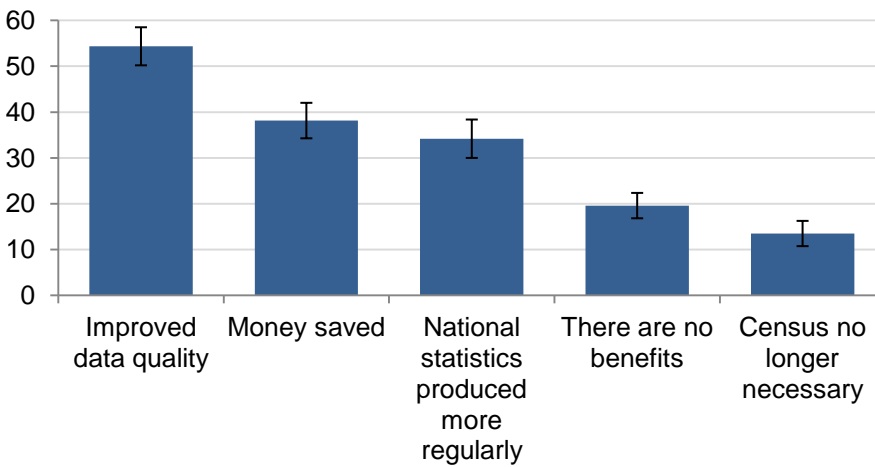


4.2.2 Benefits to the public

Over half of the public believe that data sharing would lead to improved data quality (54 per cent), while 38 per cent believe that it could lead to financial savings and 34 per cent to more frequent production of national statistics. Thirteen per cent consider that data sharing would remove the requirement for a further census and view this positively.

Figure 5: Perceived public benefits of data sharing

Percentage of responses



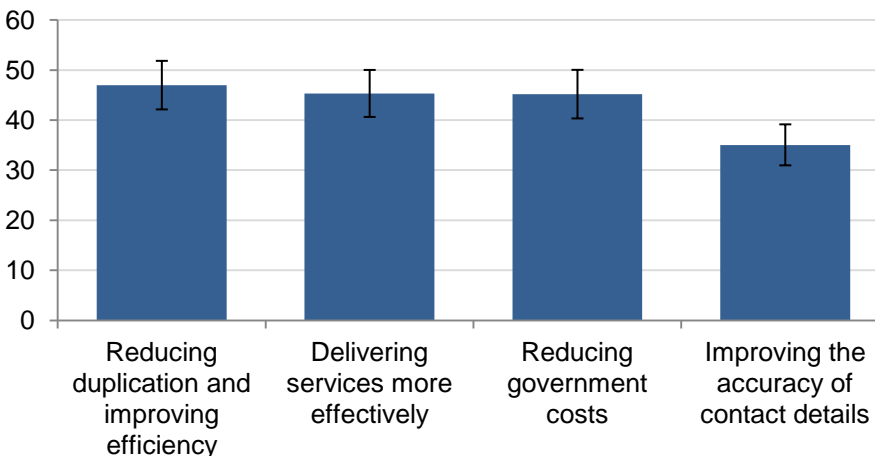
4.3 Holding personal information

4.3.1 Purpose

As shown in Figure 6, the reasons for holding personal information in a central database are recognised by between 40 and 50 per cent of the respondents, with people understanding that it could be used to reduce duplication and improve efficiency, deliver services more effectively and cut government costs. Also, 35 per cent of the public believe that it would improve the accuracy of contact details.

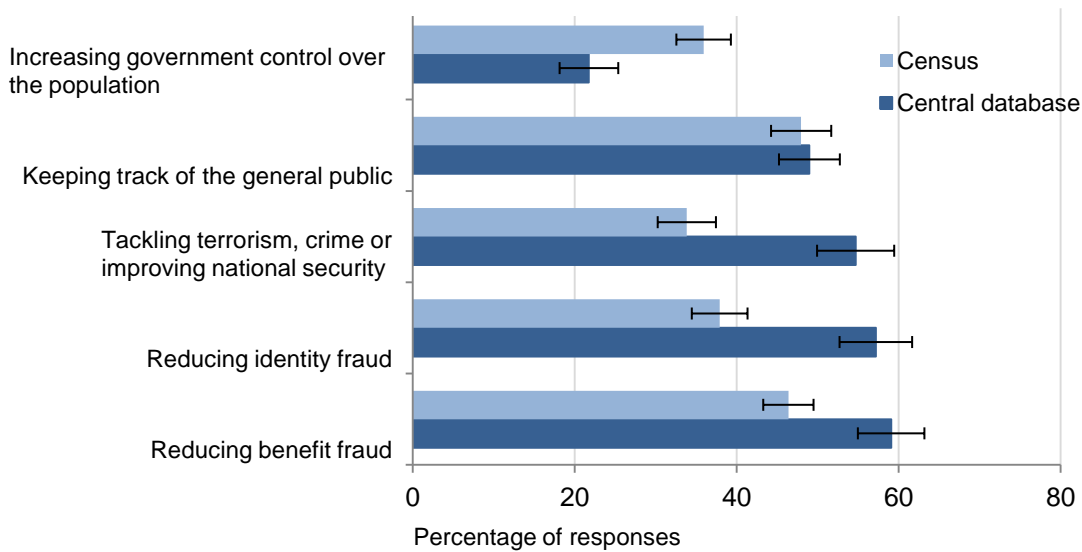
Figure 6: Perceived uses of a central database

Percentage of responses



ONS would only use such a database for statistical or analytical purposes. However, a large proportion of the public think that it would be used for operational purposes, such as in reducing identity and benefit fraud. As Figure 7 shows, these views are more commonly expressed about a central database than the census, although people are less likely to think that a central database would be used to increase government control over the population.

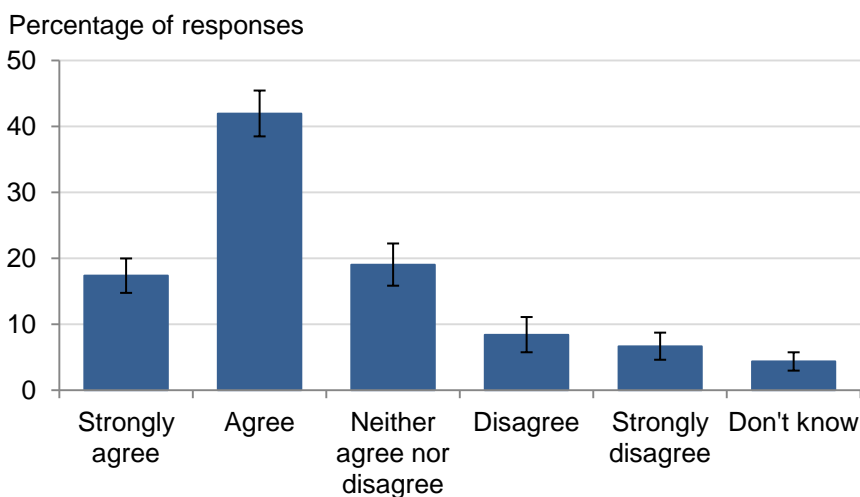
Figure 7: Perceived uses of a central database



4.3.2 Knowledge of the current situation

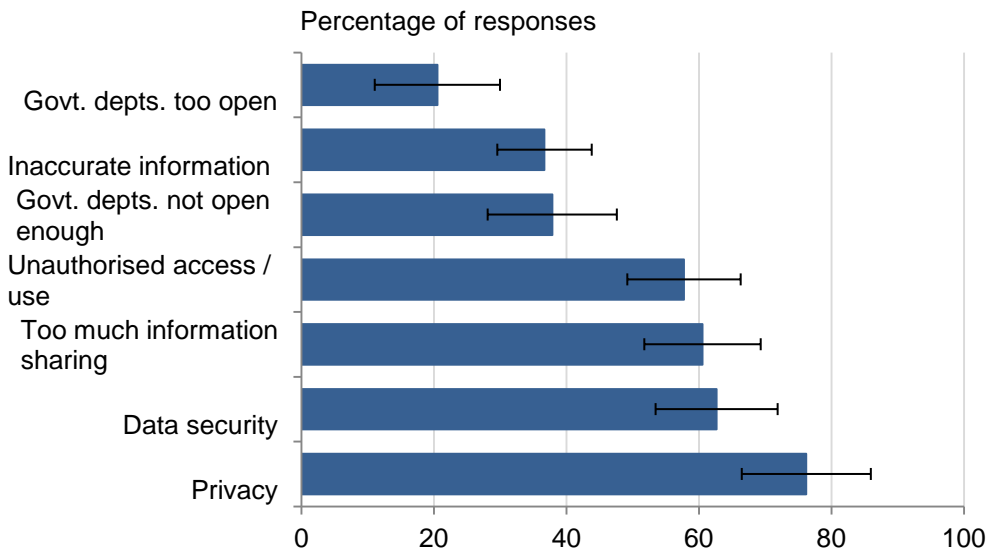
Forty per cent of the public think that the government already has a central database containing details of all people living in England and Wales. People are more likely to hold this view if they have no formal qualifications than if they are more highly educated. A significantly higher proportion of the public (54 per cent) who are better educated understand that there is no central database, but there are separate databases held by individual public organisations. As Figure 8 shows, support for, or ambivalence towards, the creation of a central database is high, with only 15 per cent of the public actively disagreeing with the concept.

Figure 8: Level of agreement with the creation of a central database



Men are less likely to disagree than women, and those aged 25 to 44 age group are more likely to strongly agree than any other age group. Older respondents (those over 55) are, more likely than the younger age groups to disagree or strongly disagree. The most common reasons for disagreeing with the creation of a central database are issues of privacy and data security as well as specific data sharing concerns and worries about unauthorised access to, or use of, stored personal information (see Figure 9).

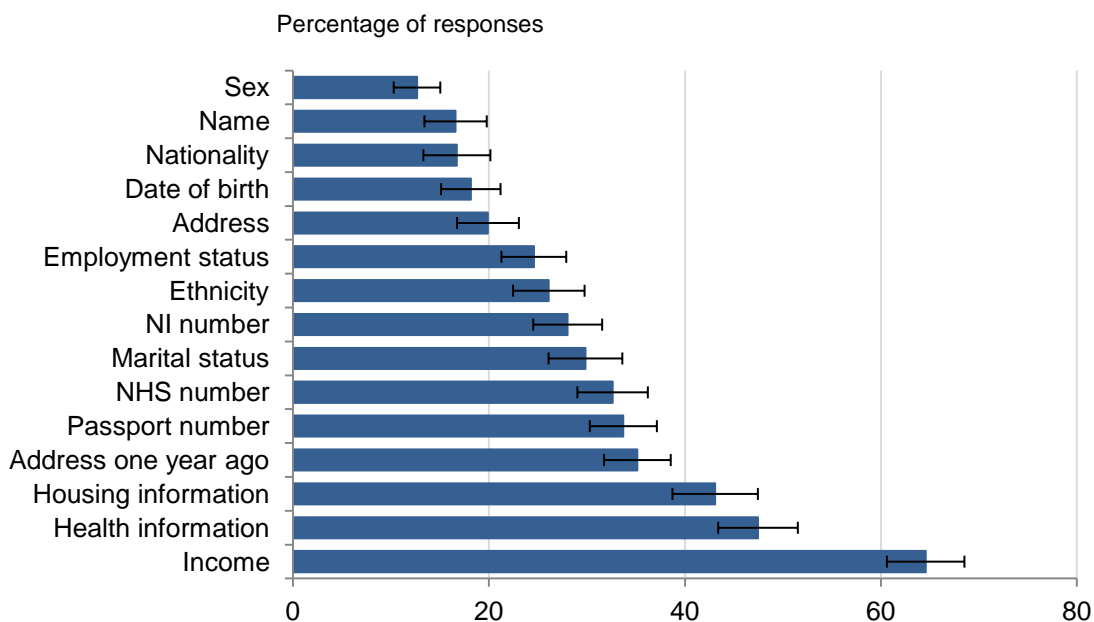
Figure 9: Reasons for disagreeing with the creation of a central database



4.3.3 Attitudes towards holding personal data

With the exception of income data, the majority of respondents do not object to personal information being held on a central database (see Figure 10). Less than 20 per cent object to the holding of basic information such as name, address, sex, nationality and date of birth. There is more opposition to holding identification numbers (National Insurance number, NHS number and passport number), but objectors are in a minority. However, 65 per cent of the public do not think that income data should be held on a central database and almost half (47 per cent) do not think that health information should be stored, although this view may be differ depending on the type of health information.

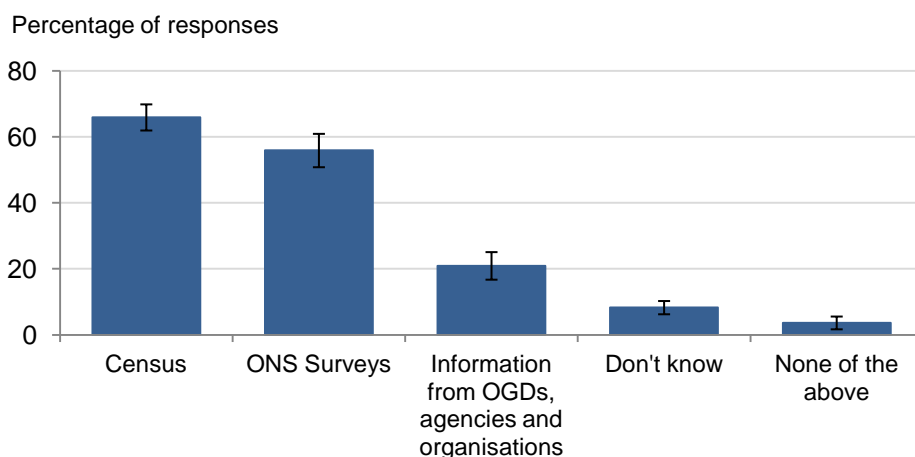
Figure 10: Personal information the public do not support being held on a central database



4.4 Attitudes towards ONS

The method of data collection which is most popular with the public is a census (66 per cent), followed by ONS surveys (56 per cent). The use of information from other government departments, agencies and organisations is significantly less popular, being a preference of only 21 per cent of the public. Twelve per cent of the public are happy for ONS to use any of the three methods while 26 per cent are happy for ONS to use either the census or surveys (see Figure 11). Only four per cent of the public would prefer ONS to rely solely on from other government departments, agencies and organisations.

Figure 11: Preferences for methods used by ONS to collect personal information



Public confidence in ONS is high, with 78 per cent stating that they think the organisation adequately protects the confidentiality of the personal information it collects. Only 6 per cent of the public do not agree with this.

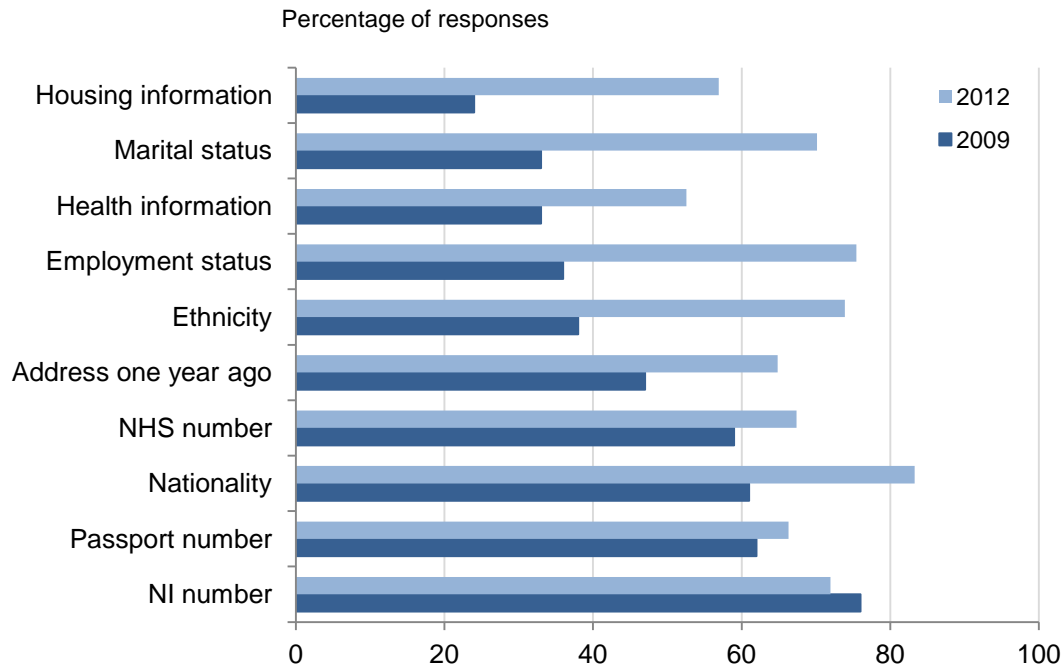
4.5 Comparison with the 2009 research

As discussed in Section 3. Methodology, questions relating to a central database were asked in a previous study commissioned by Beyond 2011 in 2009. The rationale for repeating these questions was to ascertain whether, and to what extent, views may have changed⁴.

In the 2009 study a lower proportion of the public thought that the government had a central database: 24 per cent compared to 40 per cent in 2012. Despite this, the level of support for the creation of a central database is broadly similar, with a minority (18 per cent in 2009 and 15 per cent in 2012) actively disagreeing with the idea. However, views about what personal information should be held on a database differ considerably between the two studies, particularly in relation to housing information (whether people own or rent their home), ethnicity, marital status and employment status (see Figure 12 below). These apparent changes need further investigation.

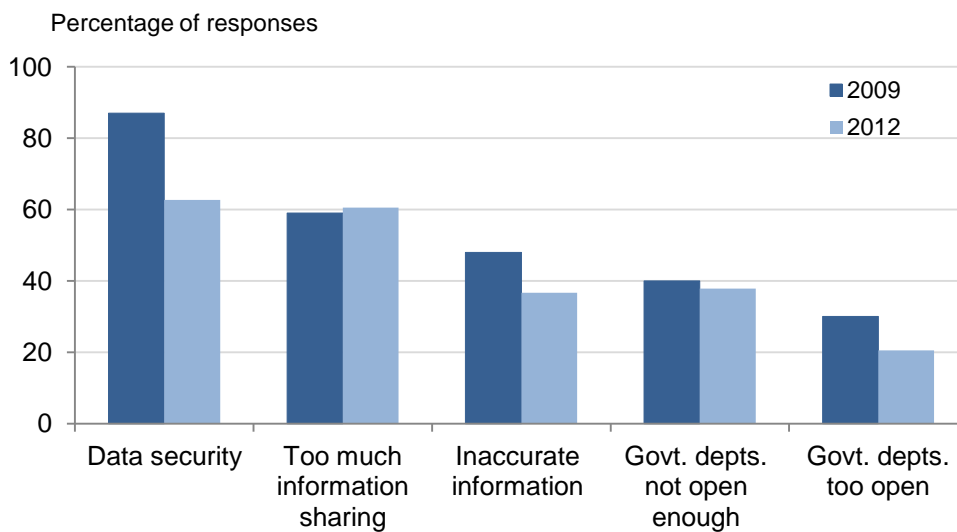
⁴ A tabular comparison between the 2009 and 2012 results can be found at Appendix C

Figure 12: Personal information the public support being held on a central database



The reasons reported for people disagreeing with the creation of a central database are broadly similar (see Figure 13); with the main difference being an apparent decrease in the level of concern over data security since 2009.

Figure 13: Reasons for disagreeing with the creation of a central database in 2009 and 2012



5 Conclusions

The study shows that, overall, the public is aware of the census and supportive of data sharing and the holding of personal information in a database for statistical purposes. The views expressed towards a central database corroborate the 2009 research findings.

Public awareness of the census and its purpose is high and widespread, although negative misconceptions are held by some sections of the population. Despite this, the majority of the public are happy to provide a range of potentially sensitive personal information via the census, such as income and sexual identity.

A minority of the public oppose data sharing between ONS and other organisations, although there is less concern about data sharing with other government departments than with other types of organisations, such as local councils and doctor's surgeries. However, attitudes towards data sharing are largely positive or ambivalent, and the potential societal benefits are recognised by a significant minority.

Almost half of the public recognise the potential uses for a central database and a majority are either supportive or ambivalent, but suspicion towards how such a database might be used is more widespread than towards the census. However, with the exception of income data, the majority of the public do not object to a range of their personal information being held. Those opposed to the creation of a central database cite concerns about privacy, data security and unauthorised access to, and use of, stored personal data.

The results of the research conducted by Beyond 2011 to date suggest that the public may be willing to accept a system that draws upon administrative data to produce population and socio-demographic statistics. Further detailed research is now required in order to substantiate the results, and to explore public understanding of specific issues. In particular, it will be important to examine the views of those who are more concerned, more negative or less well informed about the issues.

Appendix A: Questions from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Introduction

I now want to ask you some questions on behalf of the Office for National Statistics about the ways in which information about you is collected and held.

As you may already know, the census in England and Wales is carried out every 10 years by the Office for National Statistics. It counts the population and collects other information on individuals and households, such as educational qualifications and household size.

The census is used to gather much of the statistical information required by the government.

However, alternative ways to collect this information are being looked at and we are interested in finding out what people think.

Section A: Census

I'm going to start with some questions about the census.

Question 1

Please state whether or not you think the census is used in the following ways:

- a. To understand the make-up of the population
- b. To keep track of people
- c. To help the government allocate money to local authorities
- d. To increase government control over the population
- e. To support policy development, monitoring and review
- f. To help the government allocate money to the health service
- g. To reduce benefit fraud
- h. To assess changes in the population
- i. To tackle terrorism, crime or to improve national security
- j. To help the government allocate money to education providers
- k. To reduce identity fraud
- l. Are there any other purposes that you think the census is being used for (please specify)

Question 2a

The census collects information on a range of topics. Are there any topics you would prefer not to provide information on?

(Code all that apply)

- (1) Income
- (2) Religion
- (3) Sexual orientation
- (4) Nature of any illness/disability
- (5) Ethnicity
- (6) National identity
- (7) Other (please specify)
- (8) I would provide information on any of these topics

Question 2b

Please tell me why you are not willing to give information about these topics?
(Do not prompt. Probe fully. Code all that apply)

- (1) Information is personal and private
- (2) Concern about the security of the information held
- (3) Respondent cannot see why the information is needed
- (4) Respondent worried it might go against them in some way
- (5) Other (Please specify)

Section B: Data sharing

The next questions are about information collected and held by other government departments.

Question 3a

Other government departments hold information that is similar to census data.

Which of the following statements best describes your views on the Office for National Statistics being able to access information from other government departments?

- (1) I agree with the idea of the Office for National Statistics being able to access information held by other government departments
- (2) I neither agree nor disagree
- (3) I do not agree with the idea of the Office for National Statistics being able to access information held by other government departments

Question 3b

Please tell me why you do not agree with the Office for National Statistics having access to information from other government departments?

(Do not prompt. Probe fully. Code all that apply)

- (1) Concerns about privacy
- (2) The wrong information might be held by the other government department
- (3) The information might be used against them
- (4) Other (Please specify)

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about information collected and held by other agencies and organisations. This information may consist of details you have previously provided such as name, address and date of birth to agencies and organisations such as your doctor's surgery, supermarkets or your local council.

Question 4a

Which of the following statements best describes your views on the Office for National Statistics being able to access information from other agencies, businesses or organisations?

- (1) I agree with the idea of the Office for National Statistics accessing information from other agencies, businesses or organisations
- (2) I neither agree nor disagree
- (3) I do not agree with the idea of the Office for National Statistics accessing information from other agencies, businesses or organisations

Question 4b

Please tell me why you do not agree with the Office for National Statistics having access to this information?

(Do not prompt. Probe fully. Code all that apply)

- (1) Concerns about privacy
- (2) The wrong information might be held by other agencies, businesses or organisations
- (3) The information might be used against them
- (4) Other (Please specify)

Question 5

In which of the following ways do you think the public would benefit from the Office for National Statistics having access to information from other agencies, businesses or organisations?

(Code all that apply)

- (1) Improved data quality
- (2) Money would be saved
- (3) The census would no longer be necessary
- (4) National statistics could be produced more regularly
- (5) There are no benefits
- (6) Other (please specify)

Section C: Central database⁵

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about a central database containing details about people living in England and Wales.

Question 6

Which one of these statements do you believe to be true?

- (1) The government has a central database containing details of all people living in England and Wales
- (2) The government does not have a central database but there are separate databases containing peoples' details that are held by individual public organisations, such as the National Health Service and the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Authority
- (3) The government does not have a central database and there are no separate databases containing peoples' details held by individual public organisations

⁵ This section repeats the questions asked in the 2009 study

Question 7

Please state whether you think each of the following pieces of information should be held on a central database:

- a. Names of individuals
- b. Address details
- c. Date of birth
- d. Whether you are male or female
- e. National insurance number
- f. NHS patient number
- g. Health information
- h. Passport number
- i. Ethnicity
- j. Marital status
- k. Nationality
- l. Your address one year ago
- m. Employment status
- n. Income
- o. Housing information .e.g. whether you own or rent your home
- p. Other (please specify)

Question 8

At the moment, there is no central database. What do you think would be the purpose of creating such a database?

(Code all that apply)

- (1) To keep track of the general public
- (2) To keep track of asylum seekers/refugees/immigrants
- (3) To reduce benefit fraud
- (4) To reduce identity fraud
- (5) To improve the accuracy of contact details
- (6) To reduce duplication and improve efficiency across government
- (7) To tackle terrorism/crime/improve national security
- (8) To deliver services more effectively
- (9) To reduce government costs
- (10) To increase control over the population
- (11) Other (Please specify)
- (12) None - there is no purpose
- (13) Don't know

Question 9

To what extent would you agree to the creation of a central database of all English and Welsh citizens?

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Neither agree nor disagree
- (4) Disagree
- (5) Strongly disagree
- (6) Don't know

Question 10

What are the reasons why you disagree with the creation of a central database?

Code all that apply

- (1) Inaccurate information being held
- (2) Too much information being shared
- (3) Concerns about privacy
- (4) Government departments not being open enough about what information they hold on citizens
- (5) Government departments being too open about what information they hold on citizens
- (6) Concerns about data security
- (7) Unauthorised access or use of personal information
- (8) Other (please specify)

Section D

To end this section, I have some questions about your preferences and about confidentiality.

Question 11

In which way would you prefer the Office for National Statistics to collect information about you?

Code all that apply

- (1) Census
- (2) Office for National Statistics Surveys
- (3) Information from other government departments, agencies and organisations only
- (4) None of the above
- (5) Don't know

Question 12a

Do you think the Office for National Statistics adequately protects the confidentiality of the information it collects?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Why do you think the Office for National Statistics does not adequately protect the confidentiality of the information it collects?

Appendix B: Frequency Tables

Percentage of responses: by uses for the Census (Question 1)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Understanding the make-up of the population	90	5	5
Assessing changes in the population	88	6	6
Supporting policy development, monitoring and review	70	13	17
Allocating money to local authorities	64	23	13
Allocating money to the health service	63	26	11
Allocating money to education providers	66	23	11
Keeping track of the general public	48	42	10
Reducing benefit fraud	46	39	14
Reducing identity fraud	38	48	14
Increasing government control over the population	36	53	11
Tackling terrorism, crime or improving national security	34	51	15
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1038		
<i>Weighted base (000s)⁶</i>	47, 879		

Percentage of responses: by information the public prefer not to provide (Question 2a)

Income	17
Religion	6
Sexual orientation	12
Nature of illness/disability	5
Ethnicity	4
National identity	4
Other	1
I would provide information on any of these topics	74
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1035
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	47, 775

⁶ Weighted to population totals

Percentage of responses: by views on data sharing with other government departments (Question 3a)

Agree	51
Neither agree nor disagree	34
Disagree	15
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1033
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	47, 735

Percentage of responses: by reasons for disagreeing with data sharing with other government departments (Question 3b)

Concerns about privacy	78
Wrong information might be held by the OGD	26
Information might be used against them	18
Other	17
<i>Unweighted base</i>	153
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	7205

Percentage of responses: by views on data sharing with other agencies, businesses or organisations (Question 4a)

Agree	37
Neither agree nor disagree	33
Disagree	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1033
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	47, 676

Percentage of responses: by reasons for disagreeing with data sharing with other agencies, businesses or organisations (Question 4b)

Concerns about privacy	80
Wrong information might be held by the other organisation	29
Information might be used against them	17
Other	15
<i>Unweighted base</i>	317
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	14, 346

Percentage of responses: by perceived benefits to the public of data sharing (Question 5)

Improved data quality	54
Money would be saved	38
The Census would no longer be necessary	13
National Statistics could be produced more regularly	34
There are no benefits	20
Other	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	317
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	14, 346

Percentage of responses: by awareness of government databases (Question 6)

The government has a central database	40
The government does not have a central database, but there are separate databases	54
The government does not have a central database or separate databases	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	999
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	46, 354

Percentage of responses: by agreement with personal information to be held on a central database (Question 7)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Names of individuals	80	17	3
Address details	75	20	5
Date of birth	78	18	4
Sex	84	13	3
National Insurance Number	67	28	5
NHS Patient Number	60	33	7
Health information	46	48	6
Passport number	62	34	4
Ethnicity	69	26	5
Marital status	66	30	4
Nationality	81	17	2
Address one year ago	59	35	6
Employment status	71	25	4
Income	31	65	4
Housing information	51	43	6
Other	18	71	11
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1033		
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	47, 687		

**Percentage of responses: by perceived purpose for a central database
(Question 8)**

To keep track of the general public	49
To keep track of asylum seekers/refugees/immigrants	58
To reduce benefit fraud	59
To reduce identity fraud	57
To improve the accuracy of contact details	35
To reduce duplication and improve efficiency	47
To tackle terrorism/crime/improve national security	55
To deliver services more effectively	45
To reduce government costs	45
To increase control over the population	22
Other	1
None- there is no purpose	5
Don't know	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1035</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>47, 787</i>

**Percentage of responses: by support for the creation of a central database
(Question 9)**

Strongly agree	17
Agree	42
Neither agree nor disagree	19
Disagree	7
Strongly disagree	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1055</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>48, 913</i>

**Percentage of responses: by reasons for disagreeing with the creation of a
central database (Question 10)**

Inaccurate information being held	37
Too much information being shared	61
Concerns about privacy	76
Government departments not being open enough	38
Government departments being too open	20
Concerns about data security	63
Unauthorised access or use of personal information	58
Other	10
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>7370</i>

**Percentage of responses: by preferences for ONS data collection
(Question 11)**

Census	66
ONS surveys	56
Information from other government departments, agencies and organisations	21
None of the above	4
Don't know	8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1035</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>47, 778</i>

**Percentage of responses: by trust in the confidentiality of personal
information collected and held by ONS (Question 12a)**

Yes	78
No	6
Don't know	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>877</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>41, 082</i>

Appendix C: Tabular comparison between results from 2009 and 2012

Percentage of responses: by awareness of government databases (Question 6)

	2009⁷	2012
The government has a central database	24	40
The government does not have a central database, but there are separate databases	59	54
The government does not have a central database or separate databases	3	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	955	999
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	46, 999	46, 354

Percentage of responses: by acceptability of personal information held on a central database (Question 7)

	2009	2012
National insurance number	76	67
NHS patient number	59	60
Health information	33	46
Passport number	62	62
Ethnicity	38	69
Marital status	33	66
Nationality	61	81
Address one year ago	47	59
Employment status	36	71
Housing information	24	51
Other	4	18
<i>Unweighted base</i>	955	1033
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	46, 999	47, 687

⁷ The 2009 figures do not total 100 per cent because there was an additional category in the question responses ('don't know')

**Percentage of responses: by perceived purpose for a central database
(Question 8)**

	2009	2012
To keep track of the general public	56	49
To keep track of asylum seekers/refugees/immigrants	62	58
To reduce benefit fraud	67	59
To reduce identity fraud	57	57
To improve the accuracy of contact details	26	35
To reduce duplication and improve efficiency	35	47
To tackle terrorism/crime/improve national security	66	55
To deliver services more effectively	34	45
To reduce government costs	29	45
To increase control over the population	30	22
Other	1	1
None- there is no purpose	1	5
Don't know	4	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>955</i>	<i>1035</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>46, 999</i>	<i>47, 787</i>

**Percentage of responses: by support for the creation of a central database
(Question 9)**

	2009	2012
Strongly agree	28	17
Agree	36	42
Neither agree nor disagree	13	19
Disagree	10	7
Strongly disagree	8	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>955</i>	<i>1055</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>46, 999</i>	<i>48, 913</i>

**Percentage of responses: by reasons for disagreeing with the creation of a
central database (Question 10)**

	2009	2012
Inaccurate information being held	48	37
Too much information being shared	59	61
Government departments not being open enough	40	38
Government departments being too open	30	20
Concerns about data security	87	63
Other	7	10
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>133</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	<i>8109</i>	<i>7370</i>
