



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Fiona Hyslop MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and
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Scottish Government

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BY E-MAIL

27 June 2019

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Census 2021

The Committee has recently received correspondence from National Records of Scotland (NRS) regarding the process of question development for the 2021 Census. Furthermore, the Committee is aware of concerns that have been raised regarding a response from NRS to a Freedom of Information request relating to the consultation process on the development of questions on sex, gender identity and transgender status / history. Specifically, concerns have been raised that the question development process for these questions was completed before 1 October 2018. I am also aware that, in recent correspondence from NRS to the Committee, NRS consulted with the following groups in 2019 as follows—

- DSD Families
- Equality Network
- For Women Scotland
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Murray Blackburn Mackenzie
- PAMS – Population and Migration Statistics User Group
- Scottish Trans Alliance
- Stonewall Scotland, and
- Scottish Women

In addition, I am aware that these questions were considered at three 2021 Question and Outputs events which were open to the public in 2018. The Committee would

welcome information on how these events were publicised. Given the concerns that have been raised regarding these questions and in the interests of transparency with regard to the question development process, the Committee would welcome a response to the following questions—

- Could you confirm whether or not the consultation process on the trans-gender status / history question has now finished, and if so, what the time-scale was for that question development process?
- When was the current question on transgender status / history tested? Are there any plans for further testing of this question, and if so, what will this consist of?
- Who has been consulted on the current wording of the trans-gender status / history question, including individuals and / or organisations?
- Which individuals and / or organisations have had sight of the current wording of the trans-gender status / history question?
- Which individuals and / or organisations were consulted on the trans-gender status / history question following the publication of the Committee's Stage One report on the Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill published on 7 February 2019?
- What impact did the consultations held in 2019 have on the proposed wording of the trans-gender status / history question. In other words, what changes to the trans-gender status / history question, if any, resulted from these consultations?

The Committee would also welcome a list of all meetings held with individuals and / or organisations with regard to the sex, gender identity and / or trans-gender status / history questions in the last 12 months. The Committee would also welcome clarity on the process for testing of the sex question. Specifically, what will this involve and when will this process be complete?

The Committee understands, and would like confirmation, that NRS intends to test options for the sex question over the summer. The Committee would welcome clarification of what methods of recruitment are intended to be used to encourage people from the trans-gender community to participate in the testing process and, in particular, what the role of stakeholders will be in this process. The Committee would also welcome your understanding of how the results arising from such a question could be understood to be representative of the wider population given current data limitations with regard to the size of the trans population in Scotland.

Lastly, the Committee would welcome a timescale for when you will be able to inform the Committee what you propose to ask with regard to the sex question in the 2021 Census and on what basis you intend to define sex.

The Committee would welcome a response to these questions by Monday 19 August. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan McAlpine', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joan McAlpine
Convener
Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee