Research Body Request

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| Research Body Request Prepared by: | Kathryn Adeseye/Rebecca Roden |
| Submitted on behalf of: | Office for National Statistics(TP-2020-1022 – Third Party Service) |
| Decision Details: | Approved – 14/10/2020 |
| Change Request Date: | 18/11/2020 |

# Summary of Requested Change: 18th November 2020

**Background:**

The below request was approved at Contract Committee on the 14th October 2020. As discussions have continued with Office of National Statistics (ONS), they have requested a minor revision to the Retention Period outlined in the document. For details please refer to Page 6: ‘Period of Retention’. The section has been highlighted in yellow within the document with tracked changes so members can easily identify the requested change. All remaining details remain as per the original request, this request is to approve or reject the changes requested by ONS.

**Details of Change Requested:**

The work carried out by ONS to complete the Census can last between 3 to 4 years. Previously ONS had requested a 3-year retention period, with a review conducted at 2 years to ensure the data was still required and if not, it would be removed in line with retention policies.

Due to the impacts from Covid 19 ONS have expressed that they are confident that the Census will take the full 4 years to complete. Xoserve have assessed the request to increase the retention period to 4 years and if approved will ensure that ONS conduct an additional review at 3 years. If the Census, then completes within the 3-year window the data can be removed. Dates of the production run have also been updated as these have now been refined with ONS as previously estimated within the document.

The above is in line with applicable retention policies, will be documented within the agreement with ONS and have been appropriately reviewed by security and legal teams as per the Research Bodies Process.

**Recommendation from Xoserve:**

To approve the additional request based on the above.

# Requesting Organisation Check

*Intended to confirm and assess the organisation requesting access to data as a Research Body.*

**Organisation Name Confirmed:**

**Office for National Statistics (ONS)**

Office for National Statistics is an executive agency (a government department that is treated, managed and budgeted separately from the government). Employees of ONS are classed as civil servants as the department is government funded in line with other government departments, however ONS is managed independently to ensure the production of independent statistics regardless of the government in power.

# Organisation Company Number / Unique Reference Number

As ONS are a recognised government department, they are not registered on Companies House.

**Office for National Statistics legal address is:**

Office for National Statistics

Segensworth Road

Fareham

Hampshire

PO15 5RR

ONS official website [link.](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

**Requesting Organisation Check – Acceptance Criteria met - Yes**

# Research Purpose Confirmed

*Intended to clarify the purpose of research and how the data can support the purpose being achieved*

**Intention of Research and how it will be achieved confirmed**

**Background to the Office for National Statistics request:**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for conducting the Census in England and Wales every 10 years. Although it is a legal obligation to respond to the Census, not every householder does so. With non-responders ONS send operatives to properties to remind residents of their legal obligation, in some scenarios these operatives can visit properties more than 10 times. These visits are expensive and can be ineffective in collating the missing Census information. The added complication of COVID 19 has introduced a significant risk that Census responses will be at an all-time low and increase the number of operatives needing to be sent.

**Specific Purpose of the Office for National Statistics request:**

The objective of the request is for ONS to get a view and confidence rating on:

* Whether a property is occupied
* Whether a property is potentially a second home and not occupied by the owner/tenant

Properties that are vacant or second homes are out of scope for the census but often ONS spend valuable resources, time and money on deployment to these properties. By being able to identify those which have a high confidence rating of being occupied enables ONS to be much more efficient in prioritising the properties they send agents to with the intention for the Census results to be of a better quality.

ONS are partnering with a number of companies to help their objective and are intending to be able to use data analysis to maximise the number of completed responses of the Census 2021.

**Check against “Agreed Objectives”**

*An “Agreed Objective” may include (but is not limited to) the following, but only where the Research Body can demonstrate to the DSC Contract Management Committee that their research will benefit consumers, government or society: promoting innovation; developing/delivering operational excellence; and/or developing/delivering efficiency in the UK energy industry.*

**Agreed Objective:**

The request outline conforms with:

* Government or Society

**How does ONS’s Research Body Request meet this Agreed Objective?**

The census helps to build a detailed snapshot of our society and is not only of use to the UK government. The benefit of the census is multifaceted and affects almost every aspect of our society, some examples:

* Local authorities and other public bodies use the census to develop local policies, plan and run services such as schools, health services, roads and libraries. The census is also used by local authorities to allocate public funds to where they are needed most;
* Businesses use the census to make decisions about which locations they may or may not want to invest in whilst voluntary organisations also use the census as evidence of their local community demographic when they apply for funding;
* Students and academics use the census to support research projects;

By supporting ONS in ensuring the highest completion rates possible this will support the quality of the of the final Census output.

**Agreed Service Delivery Period:**

The data will be provisioned to ONS during two key periods of the Census which are in November 2020 and March 2021.

**Research Purpose Confirmed – Acceptance Criteria met - Yes**

# Data Assessment

*Intended to assess the data the Research Body requires access to and confirm if the CDSP are the correct source of the required data*

# Data Items and Justification per Data Item

Xoserve have conducted a detailed workshop with ONS in ensuring capture of their requirements effectively to support the objective outlined. These have been validated with ONS.

If approved, Xoserve will provide the ONS with a number of agreed data items which are held within UK Link, as well as additional data which is calculated by Xoserve, both detailed below.

Please note the calculated data is not a direct data item within UK Link but calculated based on values and tables held and which Xoserve will generate and provide.

ONS will use the data items within UK Link alongside the additional calculated data to build a picture of a site to determine if it is occupied or potentially a second home.

The data provided by Xoserve will not be merged with any other data that ONS hold but will be used in conjunction with the data provided from other partners to support the Census activity.

The data being provided are detailed below:

Address and Postcode: Critical to establish the property and identification on whether it is potentially vacant or a second home.

Confidence Rating:In collaboration with ONS,the confidence rating has been produced by creating a number of rules to identify a Low, Medium or High probability of the property being occupied.

Within these rules we have taken into consideration several conditions such as ‘zero consumption’. It’s important that areas such as zero consumption are considered but not in isolation, this is because properties may simply not have been consuming gas during the period of the read so not an accurate indication on its own.

Additional Data Required: As it is not possible for Xoserve to provide more robust data on the identification of second home these data items have been identified to support ONS in the creation of their own analysis during the Census to make an assessment on whether a property is a second home.

* Last Read: The date of the latest read submitted (within the last 2 years), to support the confidence in the analysis, if the read was submitted recently the confidence level would be higher.
* Market Sector Code: Where the Market Sector Code is ‘I’ (Industrial), only the Market Sector Code and Address will be provided. This is because Industrial properties are out of scope for the census, this will help identifying properties that do not require a follow up call.
* Season: This supports the logic in calculating the confidence score. If the last 2 reads submitted were in the summer period of the same gas year, the consumption is likely to be extremely low.
* Gas Year: This supports the logic of calculating the confidence score. It allows us to identify which year the reading relates to. If the two latest reads were submitted from the summer season but from different gas years, we would expect there to be an increase in consumption as a winter season would have been included in the cumulative volume calculation.
* Smart or Non-Smart: This provides context to the date of the last read submission. Smart meters may submit more frequent readings than non-smart.
* Age of Read: By indication whether a read is 1, 3 or 6 months old enables as indication of how accurate the assessment is. The older the read the less accurate any analysis could be.
* Winter Read Increase: If we can provide an indication if gas consumption has increased during the winter period more than 5% it would support that the property is occupied, i.e. it’s not just heating being left on to ensure pipes don’t freeze as an example.

Data that will be provided to ONS if approved:

\**A calculated field is not a direct data item within UK Link but calculated based on values and tables held and which Xoserve will generate and provide to ONS.*

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| **Theme** | **Field Name** | **Description** | **\*Calculated Field or Direct Data Item From UKLink** |
| Address and Postcode | Building Number | Building number | Direct Data |
| Sub Building Name | Sub building name, Example: Flat 10 | Direct Data |
| Building Name | Building name | Direct Data |
| Principle Street | Street details | Direct Data |
| Additional Delivery Point | Trading names, residential house names where a building number is the official building identifier, e.g. "Rose Cottage, 7 Vicarage Gardens". | Direct Data |
| Post Town | Post town | Direct Data |
| Postcode | Postcode | Direct Data |
| Confidence Level | Confidence Level | A level of confidence indicator of occupancy, VALUES: H or M or L | Calculated |
| Additional Data Required | Last Read | The date the last read was submitted | Direct Data |
| FORMAT: YYYYMMDD |
| Market Sector Code | A code that specifies that the site is used for | Direct Data |
| domestic or industrial and commercial |
| purposes. VALUES: D or I |
| Season | A code that specifies the season the last read was taken VALUES: SUMMER or WINTER | Calculated |
| Gas Year | A date that specifies the Gas year the last read was taken | Calculated |
| FORMAT: YY/YY |
| Smart / Non-Smart | An indicator that specifies the meter type at the time the report was generated | Calculated |
| VALUE: S or N |
| Age of Read | An indicator that specifies the age of the last read received: within last month, 3 months, 6 months or no read received within last 6 months | Calculated |
| VALUE: 1 or 3 or 6 or N |
| Winter Read Increase | An indicator to specify an increase >=5% in gas usage when comparing current gas year winter read compared to previous gas year summer read | Calculated |
| VALUE: Y, N or NA if no read submitted in current winter |

## Dataset Sample Size (if known)

Dataset to include all properties in England and Wales, approximately 24 million records.

## Dataset Parameters (criteria)

The data set outlined will include all properties in England and Wales.

# Period of Research

**Research period for 2021 Census:** After the Census collection and due to the very large volumes of data that ONS must process, the final output is produced over a 3 to 4 -year period. No additional data will be required from Xoserve during this time other than the dates mentioned above (November 2020/March 2021) but the Research Period will continue for 4 years following the Census date.

**Suggested data retention by the ONS:** 4 years circa estimated: Week Commencing 23rd March 2021 to 23rd March 2025 the four years will start from the date the data is send to ONS.

**Reason for 4-year retention:** ONS would need to be able to hold the data provided from Xoserve as part of their Research project for a period of 4 years due to:

1. the ongoing requirement on ONS to respond to any challenges to the 2021 census;
2. the need to carry out quality checks to ensure that there are no occupied properties missing from the 2021 census;
3. the census analysis period which is carried out prior to the eventual publication of the 2021 census. The census analysis period involves making adjustments for households who do not respond. Previously ONS has relied on field officers’ judgement, but an independent source like Xoserve data can improve the adjustments process and the accuracy of final statistics.

# Dataset Processing Approach

The data will be sent at the timelines outlined and will be encrypted, password protected and sent through a secure transfer mechanism called Huddle this solution has been validated with the appropriate Architect and supported by the Security Assessment completed.

**Anonymisation Approach Agreed**

There will be no anonymisation of data provided to the ONS but the data will be secured by encryption and password protection.

Reason for this approach: The benefit of the data within this Research Body Request can only be realised if the data is not anonymised. This is because ONS needs to know which addresses the data they are receiving relates to to effectively deploy operatives.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out due to the inclusion of personal data (Address and Postcode).

**Dataset Assessment – Acceptance Criteria met - Yes**

# Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA)

*Where the disclosure of information includes the processing of personal data a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required to identify and mitigate risks.*

Xoserve will apply the below assessment to each Research Body request and if the answer is ‘yes’ to any of the questions, a full DPIA is required.

1. Will the project involve the collection of new information about individuals?

No

1. Will the project compel individuals to provide information about themselves?

No

1. Will information about individuals be disclosed to organisations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information?

Yes – ONS has not previously had access to data from Xoserve

1. Are you using information about individuals for a purpose it is not currently used for, or in a way it is not currently used?

Yes – data analysis to generate a ‘Confidence Level’ for probability of occupancy and the ‘Winter read increase’ goes outside the purposes which Xoserve currently uses the data held on UK Link.

1. Does the project involve you using new technology that might be perceived as being privacy intrusive? For example, the use of biometrics or facial recognition.

No

1. Will the project result in you making decisions or taking action against individuals in ways that can have a significant impact on them?

No

1. Is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? For example, health records, criminal records or other information that people would consider to be private.

No

1. Will the project require you to contact individuals in ways that they may find intrusive?

No

1. Will the disclosure of information utilise new technology for Xoserve?

No

1. Will the disclosure include information that identifies a vulnerable customer?

No

1. Will the disclosure release mass data to a party?

Yes – the data released will be for all properties in England and Wales the personal data within the data types sent will be address and postcode.

1. Will the disclosure include information that identifies an occurrence of theft of gas?

No

1. Will the disclosure require a fundamental change to Xoserve business?

No

The CDSP have completed a full DPIA based on the answers to the above questions.

**DPIA – Acceptance Criteria met - Yes**

**Contractual Approach Confirmed**

*Intended to confirm the contractual arrangements and funding for a Research Body request.*

CDSP expects each Research Body who is approved to access data will be required to sign an agreement in accordance with the CDSP Service Document – Third Party and Additional Services Policy.

The CDSP will assume that every Research Body request is a service that is chargeable to the requestor unless otherwise instructed by the CoMC.

Xoserve will put in place a contract between themselves and ONS to deliver this service.

**Contractual Approach Approved – Acceptance Criteria met - Yes**

# Recommendation

*CDSP recommendation based on the Research Body request being assessed against the agreed Framework*

**Recommendation - Approve**

# CoMC approval

*CoMC are made aware of the Research Body request and the CDSPs recommendation based on the agreed Framework and are asked to approve.*

**CoMC Decision – Approved 14th October 2020**

**CoMC Decision - TBC**

# Any Additional information

*\* The CDSP must provide additional information to justify the Research Body request recommendation.*

Based on interactions with ONS and the rationale for the request for data, Xoserve believes this meets the Research Body criteria as set out within UNC.