The 2001 Census was held on 29th April 2001, and the first results were released in February 2003. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is making the information available in batches, beginning with the least detailed information. Most of the information should have been released by the end of 2003.

ONS is making the 2001 Census results available without charge to all users. ONS are also proposing that all the information will be available on the Neighbourhood Statistics website at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk, but there appears to be delays in getting the information onto the site and the data is not always in a very convenient format for Bristol users. The results are also being released to registered users (of which Bristol City Council is one) on CD and/or DVD, and this allows us to have access to the data as soon as it is released and to process it into more useful products for local users.

Although Census information is supplied free to users it remains Crown Copyright, and a copyright statement and acknowledgement of the source of the material must be quoted if you publish the data. Users also agree not to use the data to attempt to derive information relating specifically to an identified person or household, or to claim that such information has been obtained or derived. Provided these conditions are adhered to our agreement with ONS allows employees of Bristol City Council to re-use or publish Census data without further referral to ONS. Users not employed by the Council, if they wish to re-use or publish the data, will need to either obtain a click-use licence from ONS using the link at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/op16.asp or register with us by returning the document ‘Census Data - Conditions of Supply’. This document also gives more detail of the copyright conditions and definitions of ‘re-use’ and ‘publish’.

Census Geography is largely based on administrative boundaries, with information produced at Unitary Authority, Local Authority District and County level. Tables are also produced at the Local Authority ward level and at the National level. The lowest unit of data availability for Census information is the Output Area, which is a geography devised specifically for the presentation of the information at a small area level. Output Areas are defined on the basis of postcode, shape and homogeneity in terms of housing tenure and dwelling type. In Bristol there are 1297 Output Areas with an average of 125 households or just under 300 people. Output Area boundaries are available as digitised boundaries for Bristol City Council GIS users. Output Areas can be aggregated to form other, non-standard geographies, but rounding measures introduced by ONS (see below) are likely to compromise this process.

ONS produces Census output in a number of formats, with the amount of detail differing according to the geography for which the data is supplied. At ward level and above Standard Tables comprise two sections. The Standard Tables themselves are detailed cross-tabulations of different variables amounting to some 130 tables in all. Secondly Theme Tables bring together information from the Standard Tables relating to sub-groups of the population such as ‘All Dependent Children’. At Census Output Area level Census Area Statistics comprise a reduced set of tables based on the Standard Tables but with less detail to avoid the release of confidential data, and a similarly reduced set of Theme Tables. At all levels Univariate Tables are single variable tables which allow for greater detail without the danger of compromising confidentiality, and Key Statistics comprise a selection of key indicators available in both number and percentage form. For convenience the Census Area Statistics are also produced at ward level and above. Origin and destination matrices are also planned, which will plot the movements of people due to
migration and journey to work, but these have not been given such a high priority for production by ONS.

The main results of the Census will be followed by commentaries on important topics in the form of Multi-Source Topic Reports. These will draw on new information from the 2001 Census and incorporate information from other sources such as surveys and administrative records. The reports aim to paint an accessible and comprehensive picture of the subject area. ONS will publish a web-based summary for each topic late in 2003 with the more detailed reports following later. Reports being prepared include People and Places; Families; Ethnicity and Identity; Religion; the Labour Market; Health; Older People; Rural Areas: and Young People and Children.

On the Bristol City Council website, we have tried to make the most useful Census information available in easily accessible formats. For Bristol and for individual wards we have reworked the Census ‘Key Statistics’ data into 2001 Census Information Sheets, which makes it easy to gain access to a wide variety of information for a particular area. These can be found on the Ward Finder page - www.bristol-city.gov.uk/wardfinder. We have also made the Key Statistics data available arranged by subject, together with Bristol totals, which makes it easier to compare one area with another. The website also contains the Census ‘Theme Tables’ for Bristol on topics like ‘Students and School children’ and ‘Pensioner Households’. These can all be found on the Research and Monitoring web page - www.bristol-city.gov.uk/statistics. Tables on the web are in PDF format, but can be supplied in Excel format on request. The information on our website is intended to answer the queries of the general user, and it is not intended to make more detailed tables available on the web or to make data available at Output Area level.

Cells in Census tables have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Although ONS has not released details of how this has been carried out it appears to result in figures below 4 being rounded to 3 or 0. This may result in some confusing statistics where numbers are very small. Totals in tables are the sum of cell values and, therefore, totals may vary from table to table as a result of random adjustment. The advice is to source figures for larger areas separately, to minimise the effect of small count adjustment, rather than to rely on summing figures for smaller areas. This will result in more accurate totals, but the sub-groups may not sum to the totals sourced from elsewhere. Great caution must be exercised when using tables or extracts from tables where most cells are 3 or 0. For more information on this, and about other issues surrounding Census data, see the note ‘Issues to be Aware of when Analysing 2001 Census data’.

The ONS Census website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001 contains a wealth of information about the Census process and links to the Census results themselves. By putting information on our own website we are hoping to save people time, and to provide a more tailored product for Bristol users. Please look at the other Census related documents on our website, including the ‘Glossary’ of Census terms and definitions which will help you to understand the tables and figures taken from them. If you have any comments or queries about the Census data please get in touch with us. The Research and Monitoring Group in the Strategic and Citywide Policy team (DETL) holds the 2001 Census data and its related software on behalf of the Authority, and we will try to help if you have specific requests for Census information not available on the website.

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