



2001 Census Debriefing

2001 Data Issues

Discussant: Ian Williams
Policy & Research, WSP

10 April 2006

London



Usage of Census data

- WSP Policy & Research is a branch of a large consultancy firm
- We specialise in research, development and usage of forecasting models
 - Household, population and employment location
 - Regional economic development and freight transport
 - Passenger travel demand
- Data with **both** spatial detail **and** segmentation detail are crucial to much of our work



What would make our work more efficient?

- Data consistency across spatial units and across segments
 - Avoid months of avoidable work to recreate the original multi-dimensional consistent data in the form it was prior to adjustment and suppression
- E.g. we need to generate zonal tables of employed residents jointly segmented by
 - individual NS-SeC, full-/part-time, household size, car ownership, HRP NS-SeC
 - through combining 4 or more 2-dimensional tables
 - Consistent 10% data in 1991 was less problematic
 - SDC within database must be better



Negatives in 2001 Census

- Disclosure control procedures
 - appears to be bias in results for JTW tables
- Workplace statistics as published, presented an insufficient proportion of the data available
 - No employment by SIC below district level, even though data not published until late 2004!
 - Workplace data suppressed because numbers resident (!) in area were below threshold
 - In employment zones OAs should relate to spatial patterns of workplaces
 - No published data anywhere on car ownership pattern at the workplace end of journeys to work
 - Working away from usual home



Positives in 2001

- Adoption of newer classifications provides more homogeneous behaviour
 - NS-Sec, SOC, SIC
- SARs are of great use for research to complement the spatial tables - but
 - have even less geographic detail than 1991
 - 2+ months of intense bureaucracy to obtain HH SAR
- Availability improvements are a huge plus
 - sensible costing – unlike 1991 SWS
 - online access for all



The Future - 2011

- Published data should have a more reasonable balance between
 - Disclosure control
 - Information provision
- Prior constructive discussion on disclosure control methods to be adopted
- Better input from Government Departments on data publication needs
 - Workplace and journey to work data – DfT, ODPM
 - Journey to school data – DfT, DfES
- Full CSV files to be available to researchers
 - Supertable – right idea, wrong execution
 - Better web based system needed