

QUESTION NO 22

**By Councillor Laidlaw for answer by
the Convener of the Education,
Children and Families Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 17 March
2022**

Question (1) The Census or the Census?

In school and council communications for parents and children relating to the Health & Wellbeing Census, it is often referred to as “the Census”.

However, this is an optional survey and not an official “Census” where there is a legal obligation to participate.

There is obvious risk of causing confusion as this is running concurrently with the once-in-a-decade real Census.

- a) Has the council liaised with the Scottish Government team managing the real Census to ask for their approval to refer to this survey as “the Census”?
- b) Was it a conscious decision to run the two exercises concurrently?

Answer (1)

Question (2) Health & Wellbeing Census Data processing

The Health and Wellbeing survey responses are being cross linked with other personal information held against a child's Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) such as free school meal status, exclusion, attendance and absence.

- a) Please can you confirm all other categories of data that are linked with a child's SCN?
- b) Is this data being merged and analysed in the SmartSurvey platform?
- c) Please explain fully how long data will be stored and in what format and whether this will be linked with the SCN:
 - i) At school level
 - ii) At local authority level?
 - iii) At Scottish Government level?
- d) When will the SCN link be permanently deleted at each level?
 - i) At school level
 - ii) At local authority level?
 - iii) At Scottish Government level?

Answer (2)

Question (3) Health & Wellbeing Census Disclosure Scotland

Some IT support workers and other staff within the council and external supplier, SmartSurvey, may be able to identify vulnerable children and have access to an unprecedented range of personal data for each individual. They will be working in a position of trust, even if they shouldn't have direct contact. Although they would be committing an offence, staff would have the data to be able to email a child directly or would be in a position where they could provide that data to others.

Do all internal and external staff with direct or indirect access to this data, including IT support workers, have a PVG Disclosure Record?

Answer (3)

Question (4) Health & Wellbeing Census Validation

We are led to believe that several of the census questions have been adopted from several different established surveys. Conventionally these individual surveys have been developed after a rigorous validation process for a specific purpose. Therefore, the set of questions posed in the census is a new survey; one in which questions can be removed, changed or added reflecting local authority preferences.

Has the census been subjected to an independent validation process to ensure it fulfils the task in the least restrictive manner?

Answer (4)

Question (5) Health & Wellbeing Census Ethics

Has CEC and/or Scottish Government put its chosen question sets for the Health & Wellbeing Census through an ethical review process, that considers all questions in the full context in which they are asked?

Answer (5)

Question (6) Health & Wellbeing Census future intentions

This “census” has chosen to link all responses to a child’s Scottish Candidate Number, rather than work on an anonymous basis. We are now led to believe it is the intention to repeat the census every four years.

- a) Is it the intention to repeat the HWBC survey in future years with the same responders - how is this possible if the original linking mechanism (SCN) will be deleted?
- b) Is it the intention to cross link additional data from participants in future years?
- c) If additional data will be cross linked, what could this include, eg exam results?

Answer (6)

Question (7) Health & Wellbeing Census Timescales

This census has been planned by the Scottish Government for four years.

CEC completed the initial Data Protection Impact Assessment nearly six months ago in September 2021.

When members of the public, including parents submit information requests or complaints to the council, they have to wait 20 working days for a response.

Why have parents across the city only been given 10 days’ notice of this census taking place in their schools?

Answer (7)

Question (8) Health & Wellbeing Census latest statistics

How many schools

- a) Have begun data collection?
- b) Have completed their involvement in the surveys?
- c) How many opt outs have been received in total in Edinburgh?
- d) How many of these were from parents?
- e) How many of these were from children on the day?

Answer (8)

Question (9) Health & Wellbeing Census Opt-out process

Different schools are using different processes to manage opt outs.

- a) Please outline all the different opt-out processes being used by schools in Edinburgh. Eg paper forms, ParentPay lunch booking/school trips system
- b) Please provide the numbers of schools using each one.

Answer (9)

Question (10) School email addresses for children

The HWBC census has raised concerns about the use of a child's Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) as their email address and the visibility of a city-wide directory of children's names, schools and SCNs. Other councils do not use SCN in children's email addresses.

- a) Why was SCN chosen as a basis for children's email addresses?
- b) What risk assessments were carried out in relation to this?
- c) Were parents advised that there would be city-wide visibility of their children's information and that it would be easy for children/adults at other schools to contact their children directly or indeed, any adult from any external email address?

Answer (10)