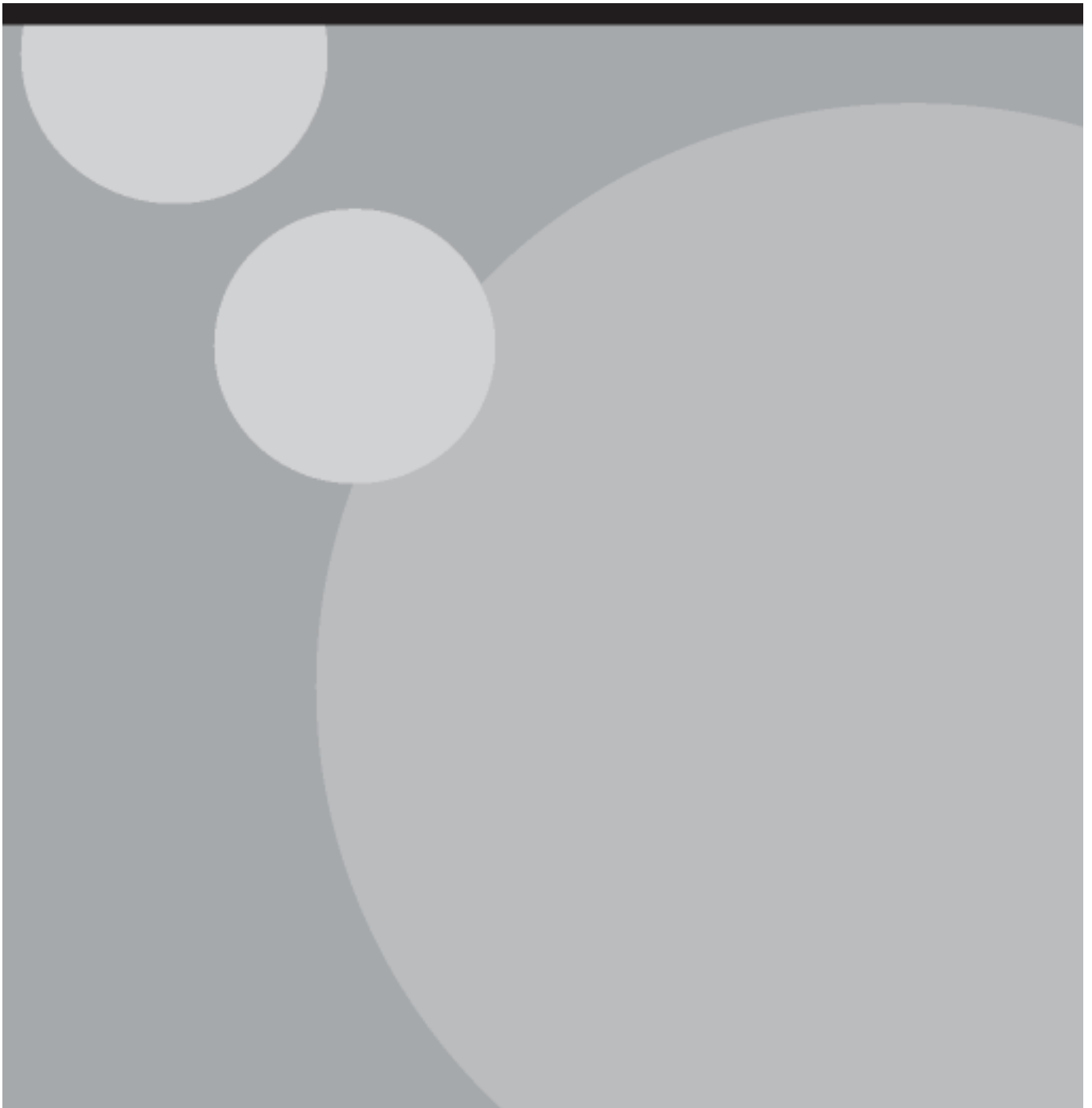




# Consultation on the future of the Citizenship Survey

## Summary of responses



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## Summary of responses

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## Summary

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) conducted a technical consultation on the future of the Citizenship Survey from 1 November to 30 November 2010, outlining the intention to stop future surveys. The consultation was conducted according to the Code of Practice on Consultation. As a technical consultation on statistical outputs, it was targeted at users and open for four weeks rather than the formal 12 week public consultation period. Sixty-one submissions were received from the consultation exercise, indicating a broad level of concern about discontinuation from current users.

As part of the current drive to deliver cost savings across government and to reduce the fiscal deficit, research budgets are being closely scrutinised to identify where savings can be made. Following the Department's consideration of the consultation responses received, the decision has been made not to commission future Citizenship Surveys in the context of the 40 per cent reduction in the Department's administration budget:

- Future Citizenship Surveys will not be commissioned in order to achieve substantial savings (approximately £4m per survey year); continuing with expenditure on a central survey cannot be justified in the fiscal climate.
- The Department is of the view that priority data from this survey can be dropped, collected less frequently, or collected via other means. There are a range of existing surveys where relevant questions may be placed. In addition, we would expect other providers, who have a priority need for the data of this type, to take steps to provide it themselves in the academic or external market.
- 2010-11 Citizenship Survey fieldwork will conclude as expected on 31 March 2011, and the associated contract will naturally expire. Reports will be published in the months afterwards following analysis of the 2010-11 data. These will be pre-announced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

# 1. Background

As part of the current drive to deliver cost savings across government and to reduce the fiscal deficit, research budgets are being closely scrutinised to identify where savings can be made. In this context, the Department was concerned about the cost of the Survey (approximately £4m per survey year). The Department therefore consulted on the intention to discontinue future Citizenship Surveys, and in doing so, sought to identify the uses of the Survey data, the implications of stopping the Survey, and options for alternative information sources<sup>1</sup>. The consultation ran from 1 November to 30 November 2010.

The consultation was conducted according to the Code of Practice on Consultation. As a technical consultation on statistical outputs targeted at users, it was open for four weeks rather than the formal 12 week public consultation period.

In order to understand the implications of stopping the survey, responses to the following questions were sought:

## 1. What are your current uses of the Citizenship Survey?

- a. the topic areas you find most useful.
- b. the analysis you need to undertake.
- c. the purpose for which you currently use Citizenship Survey data.
- d. the current frequency of the Survey and your need for time series.
- e. what geographic level analysis you require.
- f. which sample boosts you utilise and require (if any).
- g. which outputs you find most useful, and why.
- h. what level of precision you require for these estimates.

## 2. What are the implications of stopping the Citizenship Survey?

## 3. What are the alternatives to the Citizenship Survey?

- a. What other sources of data on topics that the Survey covers do you, or could you, use instead?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/futurecitizenshipsurvey>

- b. Would data of a less stringent quality (e.g. collected through quota sampling) be of good enough quality for your purposes?
- c. In the absence of the Citizenship Survey, how could DCLG help with access to other sources of similar data?

**4. What are your views on the questionnaire content?**

**5. Do you have any other comments?**

This document summarises the consultation responses and the Department for Communities and Local Government's response to these.

## 2. Outcome of consultation

In total, 61 written responses were received, predominantly from current users across different organisation types: central government (at official rather than ministerial level), voluntary and other organisations, academics and local authorities.

Type of organisation	No. of responses
Central government departments	12
National Statistician	1
Local government	10
Voluntary and other organisations	18
Researchers/ academics	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

A full list of responding organisations is shown in Annex A. The majority of responses were from academic researchers, and voluntary and other organisations. As a technical consultation, respondents were primarily existing users of the survey data and outputs, which are produced as National Statistics and free of charge.

A summary of responses is outlined below, collated under four core themes: overall appetite for continuing/ discontinuing the survey; data usage; alternative data sources; and ways of reducing the cost of the Survey. Each theme summary is followed by the Department for Communities and Local Government's response.

### Theme 1: Overall appetite for continuing/ discontinuing

Although respondents were not asked directly for their views on the proposals to stop the survey, the vast majority of current users expressed concerns about its discontinuation. This view was particularly strongly articulated by other government departments, voluntary organisations and academics. Only five respondents were not concerned about stopping the survey; these were all from local government respondents who had not previously used the Survey.

Respondents have used the Citizenship Survey for a variety of uses. The main concern expressed in terms of stopping the survey was the reduction in evidence available on the Big Society. Other topics that respondents reported needing evidence on included: cohesion and integration, extremism, equalities, localism, fairness in the criminal justice system, the impacts of immigration, identity, discrimination, understanding neighbourhoods and communities, and well-being.



Departmental response: The Citizenship Survey is complex and expensive to run, with the 2010-11 Survey costing just over £4m. As part of the current drive to deliver cost savings across government and to reduce the fiscal deficit, research budgets are being closely scrutinised to identify where savings can be made. In this climate, the department has therefore concluded that, going forward, the survey results are not of sufficient importance to users to allow the survey to continue.

## Theme 2: Data usage

The data has and will be used for a wide variety of purposes including: monitoring the impacts of policies (e.g. Big Society / Equalities Act/ Well-being agenda) and events such as the Olympics, public accountability, exploring the impacts of the recession, developing and evaluating strategies, planning services, responding to enquiries from members of parliament, used as evidence for funding, monitoring changes in and differences between particular population groups, targeting policies, reporting, multilevel modelling to understand issues in further depth (e.g. identity and belonging), aligning priorities and approaches with evidence, equality impact assessments, monitoring prevalence of problems (e.g. racism, integration), understanding the complex interplay between various social attitudes and demographic characteristics.

**Departmental response:** The Department is moving away from costly top-down monitoring and measurement of policies and does not believe that the costs of the survey can be justified for these purposes.

## Theme 3: Alternative data sources

Many respondents were concerned about the lack of alternative data sources available (especially now the Place Survey has been discontinued), and there were concerns about many of these sources. These concerns included, the coverage of topic areas (Big Society, equalities, integration and extremism), the quality of some sources (e.g. opinion polling), the regularity of data available, maintaining a long term evidence base (many sources are outside of government control) and the lack of comparability in using local sources of evidence. Overall, the Citizenship Survey was viewed to be the best source of comparable data.

If the Survey is to be discontinued, respondents would support adding some Citizenship Survey questions to other reliable data sources (such as the Labour Force Survey, British Social Attitudes Survey, or National Survey of Volunteering and Charitable Giving). However, one government department raised concerns about Citizenship Survey questions being added to one of their surveys, already operating at capacity. Respondents would also welcome DCLG disseminating other relevant data and statistics on topics covered by the Citizenship Survey.

**Departmental response:** As set out above, the Department is of the view that the costs of such activities cannot be justified in the current fiscal climate and would expect other providers who have a priority need for data of this type to take steps to provide it themselves, in the academic or external market.

#### Theme 4: Ways of reducing the cost of the survey

Whilst many respondents realised that there were financial implications to continuing with the survey, they said that cuts to the survey would be acceptable (e.g. in length and regularity) if the survey could continue in some form. There were also suggestions that alternative arrangements for the management and funding of the survey could be explored further, for example, another government department could own the survey (such as the Office for National Statistics), partnership arrangements could be set up with DCLG, or contributions sought from outside of government. The research community could also be engaged in reporting, which would also save money.

**Departmental response:** While the many suggestions to reduce costs are welcome, they do not address the Department's views that continuing expenditure on an expensive central survey of this kind does not fulfil a priority analytical need nor, consequently, represent value for money.

The individual submissions are published alongside this summary report. One respondent requested confidentiality of response and so that submission has not been published.

### 3. Next steps

The 2010-11 Citizenship Survey fieldwork will conclude as expected on 31 March 2011 and the associated contract will naturally expire. Results will be published in the months afterwards, following analysis of the 2010-11 data.

These will be pre-announced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Any queries on the consultation responses and next steps should be made to:

**Public enquiries:**

[Citizenship.Survey@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Citizenship.Survey@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

0303 444 1337

**Press enquiries:**

[Press.office@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Press.office@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

0303 444 1201

# Annex A

## List of respondents

Name of organisation	Type of organisation
1. Association of Research Observatories	Voluntary and other organisations
2. Belake CIC	Voluntary and other organisations
3. Calderdale Council	Local government
4. Chartered Institute of Housing	Voluntary and other organisations
5. Chichester District Council	Local government
6. Department for Business Innovation and Skills, including the Low Pay Commission	Central government
7. Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Evidence and Analysis Unit	Central government
8. Department for Education, Research and Analysis	Central government
9. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Rural Statistics	Central government
10. Department of Health, policy colleagues	Central government
11. Dorset County Council	Local government
12. Government Equalities Office, Evidence and Equality at Work Team	Central government
13. HM Treasury, Analysts and colleagues	Central government
14. Home Office Analysts	Central government
15. House of Commons Library	Central government
16. Local Borough Camden	Local government
17. London Civic Forum	Voluntary and other organisations
18. London School of Economics X 2	Researchers/ academics

19. Luton (private individual)	Local government
20. Manchester University X 3	Researchers/ academics
21. Mentoring and Befriending Foundation	Voluntary and other organisations
22. Ministry of Justice	Central government
23. NatCen	Researchers/ academics
24. National Church Institutions	Voluntary and other organisations
25. National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)	Voluntary and other organisations
26. National Statistician	National Statistician
27. National Trust	Voluntary and other organisations
28. New Policy Institute	Voluntary and other organisations
29. Northampton Borough Council	Local government
30. Office for Civil Society	Central government
31. Oxford University X 3	Researchers/ academics
32. Researcher (private individual)	Researchers/ academics
33. Royal Association for Disability Rights (RADAR)	Voluntary and other organisations
34. Royal Statistical Society	Voluntary and other organisations
35. Ruahine Training and Consultancy	Voluntary and other organisations
36. Samaritans	Voluntary and other organisations
37. Sheffield University	Researchers/ academics
38. Suffolk Coastal District Council	Local government
39. Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils (joint response)	Local government
40. Tendring District Council	Local government
41. Tewkesbury Borough Council	Local government
42. University College London	Researchers/ academics
43. University of Birmingham	Researchers/ academics

44. University of Edinburgh	Researchers/ academics
45. University of Glasgow	Researchers/ academics
46. University of Kent	Researchers/ academics
47. University of Plymouth	Researchers/ academics
48. University of Southampton X 2	Researchers/ academics
49. University of Surrey	Researchers/ academics
50. V Volunteering	Voluntary and other organisations
51. Volunteer Centre Broxbourne and East Herts	Voluntary and other organisations
52. Volunteering England and the Institute of Volunteering Research (joint response)	Voluntary and other organisations
53. Waltherton and Elgin Community Homes	Voluntary and other organisations
54. Welsh Assembly Government	Central government
55. Yorkshire and Humber Forum	Voluntary and other organisations

Note that some organisations submitted more than one response.