**Scotland's Census 2031: Topic Consultation**

**Response from the Jewish Council of Scotland**
**(formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities)**

## Background information

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. The Council advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture, and community, by providing information and assistance to educational, health, and welfare organisations, representing the Jewish community in Scotland to Government and other statutory and official bodies, and liaising with Ministers, MSPs, Churches, Trades Unions, and others on matters affecting the Jewish community. The Council also provides a support network for the smaller communities and for individuals and families who live outwith any Jewish community or are not connected with any Jewish communities, and assists organisations within the Scottish Jewish community to comply with various regulatory requirements. The Council also promotes dialogue and understanding between the Jewish community and other communities in Scotland, and works in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders to promote equality, good relations, and understanding among community groups.

In preparing this response we have consulted widely among organisations and individuals in the Scottish Jewish Community with relevant expertise, and this response also reflects the views of all branches of Judaism that have communities in Scotland.

---

## 2022 Census

1. **Have you used any outputs from the 2022 Census?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

### Your use of the 2022 Census outputs

**The 2022 Census covered topics on each of the following areas. For each topic area, please indicate whether or not you use outputs from this topic and if you do use the outputs, complete the additional information.**



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

**2. Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion**

☒ Yes, I currently use this data

☐ No, I do not use this data

**What do you use this topic information for? Tick all that apply**

☒ **Allocating resources**

☒ **Planning services**

☒ **Delivering services**

☐ **Targeting investment**

☒ **Developing policies**

☒ **Monitoring policy impact**

☒ **Research**

☐ **Equality monitoring**

☐ **Other purposes – please specify**

**Please give detailed examples of how you use the outputs for this topic.**

**Ethnic Group**

Many people who do not practice Judaism as a religion nevertheless consider themselves to be Jewish by ethnicity or culture. For the first time, the 2022 census prominently suggested "Jewish" as an example above the "other ethnicity" write-in section. This innovation has provided us with additional very useful information. 1,466 people who did not identify as Jewish by religion responded that they are Jewish by ethnicity, revealing an increase of more than 25% in the total number of people who identify as Jewish.

Even though they do not identify as Jewish in religious terms, many of these people do prefer to use culturally specific communal welfare and social facilities where available, especially at times of particular vulnerability, when they may be seeking familiarity and structure perhaps because of illness, when they have been the victim of antisemitic activity, or when there has been a death in the family. Full and accurate statistics are therefore required to enable effective planning of service provision, and the additional data provided by the new format question has enabled the Jewish community to plan with a greater level of confidence.

**National Identity**

Information about national identity is also valuable, since it enables us to understand the number of Jewish people who also identify as Israeli, and therefore to provide them with appropriate support. This has been particularly important since the 7 October 2023 Hamas pogrom in Israel, as very greatly increased hostility towards Israel and Israelis has caused many to tell us that they no longer feel safe in Scotland. Many seek to hide their identity, for example, by telling their children not to speak Hebrew in public, or answering that they are Turkish or Italian if asked, for example, about their accent.



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

**Country of birth**

Information about "country of birth" alone would not be an entirely satisfactory alternative to data about "national identity", since it includes some people who were only incidentally born in Israel (such as children of temporary residents) and excludes people who were born in Arab countries, Russia, and Eastern Europe, whose families subsequently found refuge in Israel.[1]

In conjunction with data about age, religion, and ethnicity, information about "country of birth" is, however, an aid to identifying the number of Holocaust survivors living in Scotland, which enables welfare organisations in the Jewish community to plan appropriate service provision and support.

**What benefits do these topic outputs create for you or your organisation? Please give detailed examples.**

These topic outputs enable the Jewish community to plan and deliver services and resources much more effectively than would otherwise be possible.

As already explained above, this is because many people who identify as ethnically Jewish prefer to use culturally specific services even though they do not practice Judaism as a religion, and, the more especially because of the current increase in antisemitism, many Jewish and Israeli people tend to hide their identity to avoid becoming targets.

Ethnicity is a complex area. Many people do not regard themselves as having a single identity, and the fullest possible detail is required in order to provide the most effective service provision. For example, what is culturally appropriate for someone of Jewish/Polish ethnicity may differ in some respects from what is appropriate for someone of Jewish/Egyptian ethnicity. Although we recognise that responses would undoubtedly be more difficult to code and analyse, we therefore urge that the 2031 census should ask for as much detail as possible. This could either be by means of a write-in answer, or a rubric advising people to "tick as many as apply" of a long list of possible ethnicities that also includes a box for "other" that permits the respondent to write in any additional ethnicity or ethnicities.

## 3. UK armed forces veterans

☐ Yes, I currently use this data

☒ No, I do not use this data

[1] For a detailed discussion of this issue, see the following research papers by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research:

Britain's Israeli diaspora: A demographic portrait (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, November 2015) https://www.jpr.org.uk/reports/britains-israeli-diaspora-demographic-portrait

Israelis abroad: Transformation of the Jewish Diaspora? (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, March 2025) https://www.jpr.org.uk/reports/israelis-abroad-transformation-jewish-diaspora



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

4. **Sexual orientation and trans status or history**

☐ Yes, I currently use this data

☒ No, I do not use this data

5. **Demography and migration**

☒ Yes, I currently use this data

☐ No, I do not use this data

**What do you use this topic information for? Tick all that apply**

☒ **Allocating resources**

☒ **Planning services**

☒ **Delivering services**

☐ **Targeting investment**

☒ **Developing policies**

☒ **Monitoring policy impact**

☒ **Research**

☐ **Equality monitoring**

☐ **Other purposes – please specify**

**Please give detailed examples of how you use the outputs for this topic.**

Many older members of the Jewish community, especially Holocaust survivors, have told us that they are reluctant to identify themselves as Jewish in any official documents, and one younger person told us she had not answered the religion question, and had not identified herself as Jewish by ethnicity "because that's how they'd know where to find you".

Nevertheless, these data do give us some insight into the age structure of the Jewish community. Those answering the Census question were, on average, much older than the wider Scottish population: 26.6% were over 65 compared to 20.0% of all people, and only 9.2% were under 16 compared to 16.38% of all people.

An understanding of this difficult demography is vital to the Jewish community's ability to plan and deliver effective and appropriate culturally specific services at both ends of the age spectrum.

The need to provide relevant culturally specific services for our aging community is challenging for the community, but awareness of the issue does enable us to plan and implement services as effectively as possible. This is particularly important due to the reluctance of some elderly Jewish people to engage with local authorities, because they are not comfortable discussing issues relating to their faith with people who have no relevant cultural understanding.

Many elderly people who may have lived very happily in an area with few other Jewish people while married and bringing up their children, have told us that they acutely feel the absence of other Jewish people once their children have left, the more especially



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

if they have been widowed. Although this isolation may be more severe for those living in rural areas and outwith any settled Jewish community, it is by no means confined to them. Many younger people from the larger Jewish communities also leave Scotland when they go to university, and the majority do not return but subsequently settle in larger Jewish communities such as London, Manchester, or Israel. The reality of this exodus is that children are unable to provide their elderly parents with day-to-day support, and grandchildren grow up far from their grandparents, sometimes speaking a different language.

Smaller Jewish communities are often unable to provide activities and services for older people because their membership is too scattered to make this a realistic proposition, so resources must be provided centrally by organisations based in the largest of Scotland's Jewish communities, in East Renfrewshire, such as Jewish Care Scotland. Census data enables these organisations to understand the demography and geographical spread of the Scotland-wide Jewish community, and thus to provide more effective services and resources.

At the other end of the spectrum, centrally-based organisations catering for younger Jewish people, are similarly enabled to plan more effectively so as to include those living in the smaller Jewish communities, or outwith any of the settled communities, who are less likely to be in touch with community organisations, and are, therefore, more likely to suffer isolation.

**What benefits do these topic outputs create for you or your organisation? Please give detailed examples.**

As already explained in question 2 above, these outputs similarly enable the Jewish community to plan and deliver services and resources much more effectively than would otherwise be possible.

**6. Housing**

☐ Yes, I currently use this data

☒ No, I do not use this data

**7. Education, labour market and travel to work**

☐ Yes, I currently use this data

☒ No, I do not use this data

**8. Health, disability and unpaid care**

☐ Yes, I currently use this data

☒ No, I do not use this data

**9. At what geographical level do you use the 2022 Census outputs? (tick all that apply)**

☒ **All of Scotland**



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

- ☒ **Local authority**
- ☐ **Census locality**
- ☐ **Census settlement**
- ☐ **Civil Parish**
- ☐ **Data zone**
- ☐ **Electoral ward**
- ☒ **Health board area**
- ☐ **Integration authority**
- ☐ **Intermediate zone**
- ☐ **Island group**
- ☐ **National park**
- ☒ **Scottish Parliamentary constituency**
- ☒ **Scottish Parliamentary region**
- ☐ **UK Parliamentary constituency 2005**
- ☒ **UK Parliamentary constituency 2024**
- ☐ **Output area**

**Multivariate outputs**

**Multivariate outputs refer to statistical tables, datasets, or analyses that present data on two or more census variables simultaneously for the same population group or geographical area. Instead of showing a single characteristic (like age or sex) in isolation, multivariate outputs allow users to examine the relationships between different characteristics. This provides a much richer and nuanced understanding of the population.**

10. **What benefit do the multivariate outputs give you or your organisation? Please give a detailed answer.**

Multivariate outputs are vital to the Jewish community in order to know not only how many people in Scotland identify as Jewish, whether by religion or ethnicity, or both – which, while interesting, is of little practical benefit – but also data such as the geographical, age, and gender distribution of the community throughout the country. In particular, multi-variant outputs are useful in identifying internal migration. For example, while Glasgow and East Renfrewshire still constitute the largest Jewish community in Scotland, the 2022 census revealed a significant reduction in numbers with a corresponding increase in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and in rural areas, while different areas also show significant changes in age profile since 2011. Without this type of information, we would be unable to plan strategically, to ensure that culturally specific services and resources are available to the maximum number of people who may wish to access them.



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

## UK comparability

**11. How important is it for you to be able to compare census outputs across the UK?**

- ☐ **Very important**
- ☒ **Important**
- ☐ **Moderately important**
- ☐ **Slightly important**
- ☐ **Not important**

**Please explain your answer or provide more information.**

Due to the small numbers in the UK as a whole, many organisations providing support to, for example, Holocaust survivors, and Israelis, work on a cross-border basis. An understanding of the relative size, and, where possible, of the distribution of these communities, assists these organisations to plan appropriate service provision.

## Need for continuity with previous census

**12.** How important is the need for continuity with previous census outputs for your work?

- ☐ **Very important**
- ☐ **Important**
- ☒ **Moderately important**
- ☐ **Slightly important**
- ☐ **Not important**

**Please explain your answer or provide more information.**

It is obviously useful to be able to observe long-term patterns of change, but there is no point in collecting unintelligible data, and, whilst longitudinal comparability is useful, it is more important that the 2031 classifications should be meaningful than that they should be unduly constrained by comparability with the figures from previous censuses.

## 2031 Census

**13. Should National Records of Scotland add topics to the 2031 Census that were not included in the 2022 Census?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438

## Your requirements from the 2031 Census

**14. What additional topics should be included in the 2031 Census?**

**You are welcome to suggest topics that have not been considered in this paper. Please specify the topic and give detailed reasons why NRS should include this topic in the census.**

We ticked "yes" to question 13 only because there is no other way to access questions 14 and 15. We do not, in fact, require the inclusion of any additional topics in the 2031 census. However, given the numbers who responded to the write-in prompt for "Jewish" in the 2022 "ethnicity" question, and in view of the significant benefits of this data as detailed above, we would urge the inclusion of a tick-box for "Jewish" in the 2031 "ethnicity" question. Failing this, however, as a minimum we emphasise the importance continuing the explicit write-in prompt.

In addition, we would urge more detailed analysis so that multivariate data about those who identified as Jewish by ethnicity is as easily accessible to the community as is data relating to those who identified as Jewish by religion rather than being subsumed in the listings for "other ethnic group". This would be easier to produce if, as suggested above, the 2031 census were to include a tick-box for "Jewish" in the "ethnicity" question.

**15. At what geographical level do you require this information? (tick all that apply)**

- ☒ **All of Scotland**
- ☒ **Local authority**
- ☐ **Census locality**
- ☐ **Census settlement**
- ☐ **Civil Parish**
- ☐ **Data zone**
- ☐ **Electoral ward**
- ☒ **Health board area**
- ☐ **Integration authority**
- ☐ **Intermediate zone**
- ☐ **Island group**
- ☐ **National park**
- ☒ **Scottish Parliamentary constituency**
- ☒ **Scottish Parliamentary region**
- ☐ **UK Parliamentary constituency 2005**
- ☒ **UK Parliamentary constituency 2024**
- ☐ **Output area**



222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE
T: 0141–638 6411 • scojec@scojec.org • www.scojec.org

The Jewish Council of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC))
is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC029438