



## Testing the next census in West Dorset

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will be carrying out a census test in West Dorset this year. This is an important part of their preparations for the 2021 Census.

West Dorset District Council is one of 7 local authorities across England and Wales chosen to take part in the test on 9 April 2017.

### How the test will work

ONS will send a letter to randomly-selected households in West Dorset 3 weeks before the test. It'll contain a unique access code that will allow them to fill in their questionnaire online.

### Why the test matters to you

It's crucial ONS tests key elements to make sure everything will work as it should on census day. By taking part in the test, you'll help make this happen.

The 2021 Census will be mainly online, so ONS needs to ensure systems are working as they should.

ONS will also be testing new questions – including one on sexual identity – to find out whether they affect people's responses.

### Why ONS has chosen West Dorset

Firstly, 94% of the area is rural. They've chosen the 7 local authorities to include a mix of rural and urban areas.

It has communal establishments like hotels and bed and breakfasts, lots of second homes, significant recent housing development and high migration turnover. These can all be challenging factors when carrying out a census.

In terms of population, West Dorset has lots of residents over 65. It also has lower reliable outdoor mobile coverage, different levels of broadband coverage and areas where fewer people choose to have broadband. Testing

in this area will help to show ONS how and if people will be able to complete the online questionnaire.

### **What you need to do**

Simple. When the time comes, just answer a few questions about yourself and the people in your household on test day, 9 April 2017. It should only take about 10 minutes of your time.

Whatever you tell the census test will be in strictest confidence. Your information will only be used by ONS to assess questions and systems ahead of 2021.

### **If you need help**

You may see census officers during April and May to offer help and encourage residents who haven't responded to take part in the test.

For more information visit [www.ons.gov.uk/census](http://www.ons.gov.uk/census)