



everyone counts 2014
Growing the church for all

Everyone Counts 2014: Information for churches

In October 2014, churches across England will be asked to take part in a congregational survey, with a particular focus on aspects of diversity. This will fulfil the principles set out by the General Synod in 2003, for on-going monitoring of diversity and minority backgrounds. Synod requested *regular* and *reliable* monitoring: with the last audit in 2007, we are now due to carry out a new survey to maintain regularly collected and relevant information. Cooperation and participation throughout the dioceses, deaneries and parishes will be essential for ensuring reliable findings. This document provides information about the project for churches, to help explain what is planned and how the survey will work. There is an additional document answering frequently asked questions about the coordinator role, for people taking responsibility for the practical tasks of circulating and collecting surveys in their own church, also available on the Research and Statistics website for Everyone Counts 2014.

The survey: what it asks

The congregation survey is called Everyone Counts 2014.

The short survey asks questions about demographics and church participation (frequency and roles). Completing the survey involves selecting the category that fits you best, from a list of options (e.g. age group, frequency of attendance). A pilot survey indicated that the survey takes about 3 minutes to complete. Questions and categories are based on those used in the government Census, and so are familiar and well-tested. Using Census categories also means that comparisons can be made between our congregations and their wider community.

There has already been a period of consultation with experts in disability, ethnicity, diversity and inclusion to support the development of the survey. A process of piloting and checking the survey is in place to make sure that the questions are sensitive and appropriate, and that potential findings can be meaningful and relevant. A summary of what might emerge from the findings is included at the end of this document.

The survey has been developed into two distinct formats. Each church will complete EITHER a paper copy or an electronic version of the survey. Whether a church takes part by paper or electronically is randomly allocated.

The survey: pen and paper format

The paper copy will look like a traditional pen-and-paper survey. It will be just one side of A4 paper, with instructions provided on the other side of the page. The page, with multiple-choice boxes and spaces for 'other' categories, is being typeset by a specialist company so that the answers can be automatically scanned after they have been returned by each church (rather than manually typed in by a data entry clerk). This saves a lot of time and money, but does require people to mark clearly within the box of their choice. Any surveys that cannot be scanned will be manually checked and entered where possible, although this increases the time and cost.

Each church will have to estimate how many copies they might need, and arrange to have enough copies made. The coordinator will have to physically store the surveys until they can be returned by post. Postage costs will be paid for by the project, in the form of a pre-paid return label provided to each selected church. The coordinator will have to collate the paper copies, put them in a suitable envelope, label the envelope correctly and send them by post to submit their data.

As the process of filling out and return forms is fairly straightforward and familiar, it is anticipated that the training for this mode will be quite brief, in a written format with a checklist to remind the coordinator of each step. This will be sent to nominated coordinators from the beginning of September.

A larger number of churches will be sampled to take part in this format, to make sure that we have the minimum amount of data required to produce satisfactory statistical information.

The survey: electronic format

The electronic format asks identical questions to the pen and paper survey, but uses an 'app' to collect the data. The app can be downloaded to phones and tablets

working on iOS (iphone, ipad) and Android (LG, HTC, Samsung, Sony, Motorola, Nexus and some others) systems. The electronic survey can also be accessed through a website. This means that a laptop with an internet connection can be used to complete the survey (however, it won't work on a laptop or PC if you lose the internet connection). The company that is being used to develop the app has been specifically instructed to make this as easy to use as possible.

On phones and tablets, answers are selected by touching the screen. Each survey is saved to the app, and the user can then upload them. There is no limit to how many devices have the app downloaded for each church, and no limit to how many responses can be made on each device. So, it could technically work with everyone in the congregation answering for themselves on their own smartphone; or it could work with fewer devices being passed around and each used by several people, with the coordinator uploading responses collectively.

On a laptop, the data is entered directly to an online form. Similarly, there are no limits on how many can be submitted from the same laptop. There is also no restriction on using a mix of devices for the same church.

The coordinator in this format will have an additional role in planning which devices to use and/or share, and how to arrange uploading the data.

If a church is allocated to the electronic format, they cannot provide any pen-and-paper surveys.

It is a bit experimental to see if this kind of data collection can work across all levels of skill, technological access and interest. Allocation to this format is random. It is really important to emphasise that we are not testing the people here – we are testing the technology, to see if it is good enough for routine use. ('Good enough' means that people can use it, with a reasonable level of support and under normal circumstances.)

Additional training and guidance will be provided to coordinators in churches allocated to this mode. There will be specific written and interactive training available during September, as well as opportunities for support once the system is 'live' in October.

Coordinators in this format will be invited to provide feedback at the end of the survey, separately, to let us know what worked, what didn't and their impressions of whether the data was accurately recorded. This is very important for informing future decisions about how data will be routinely collected.

If any churches want to take part in the survey but have not been selected then they will be invited to use the electronic format. They will be provided with the same

guidance and training, and the same access to the app, in parallel to the main data collection. However, their data will be analysed separately.

Selection of churches

Not all churches will be invited to take part. About 1 in 6 churches have been selected. The details of which churches have been selected and for which mode is initially sent to the champion in each Diocese. The champion has an opportunity to review the list and request for any churches to be replaced, for example if the church community has recently experienced a trauma or is going through a period of substantial upheaval. In some instances, the Incumbent has requested to waive their participation, and raised this with the Champion. Champions can also ask for further churches to be invited to take part, to increase the participation in their diocese.

Churches will be invited to take part from across all dioceses, except Europe, to represent large and small congregations (based on Statistics for Mission returns), areas with high and low ethnic diversity (based on Census 2011 data), and the range of geographies across the dioceses (based on Defra classifications reconfigured to the parish level). This means that a church is selected to take part to represent its own kind of community, not to represent everyone everywhere.

To select which churches have been invited, firstly all churches have been classified into 'cubes' (having been classified on size, community and geography). Then, a small proportion of each cube is selected, so if there are a lot of churches in a particular type of area more of those will be invited to take part. This stage is random, so that every church in a particular 'cube' has the same chance of being selected. The sampling process means that when all of the surveys are compiled the findings for each diocese will be broadly in proportion to the types of communities and churches within their boundaries. Similarly, the project is designed so that the final results from every diocese together will be representative of our congregations.

Allocation to pen and paper or electronic format is also random and not based on a preference for one mode over another.

Selected churches will be first contacted by the champion in their Diocese (usually, there may however be exceptions to this if a Diocese requests support with the administration on contacting churches from the central project team). The church is then invited to nominate at least one coordinator, who should be registered by the end of August 2014. From September, there will be training and further information sent to coordinators, with opportunities for practicing using the survey and support for any problems or queries.

And then what?

Surveys will be returned centrally and treated confidentially. Responses will be aggregated and analysed as proportions. This will be very important in protecting the privacy of people in smaller congregations. Data from the surveys can be analysed to examine three key themes for growth:

Who are our neighbours and what does this mean for growing the church, outreach and Mission?;

What has changed since the previous survey in 2007 and what does this mean for anticipating change in the future?; and

What particular areas need additional support for growing, including and caring for the people in our churches, particularly when considering representation in church roles, accessibility and pastoral priorities in response to health and disability issues?

Churches and dioceses can also use the information to explore their own questions about who they are and what this means for growth, Mission and support. Findings will be returned to each church that has taken part, in a similar format to the 'Spotlights', providing summary information about the diversity profile of their congregation, local community and Diocese. Churches that opted to take part, but were not 'selected' for the main analysis will also receive their own profile findings, but may not be included in diocesan averages. Dioceses will also be sent an equivalent report. A full report will be returned to the Archbishops' Council.

The analysis will also provide feedback on the relative success of using the different modes. Additional comments are also invited to help contextualise findings and extend the conversation on growth and diversity within the Church.

If you have any questions about Everyone Counts 2014, please contact Sarah via everyone.counts2014@churchofengland.org