

*These notes refer to the Census (Amendment) Act 2000  
(c.24) which received Royal Assent on 28th July 2000*

# **CENSUS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2000**

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### *The requirement for information on religion*

9. The Government proposed in the White Paper that a question on religion should be included in the 2001 Census in England and Wales. The topic will be new to the census in England and Wales, and responses to the question will help provide information which will supplement the output from the ethnic group question by identifying ethnic minority sub-groups, particularly those originating from the Indian sub-continent. In turn, this will provide baseline figures against which the Government can monitor possible racial disadvantage and social exclusion within particular minority groups.
10. The Act extends only to England and Wales. The census is a devolved matter in Scotland where a corresponding piece of legislation – the Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2000 has also been passed by the Scottish Parliament. There is separate census legislation covering Northern Ireland that already provides for a question on religion there.
11. The proposed question is:

**What is your religion?**

This question is voluntary.

*Tick one box only*

- None
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Any other religion, *please write in*

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In Wales the words “Church in Wales” will be substituted for the words “Church of England” within the Christian category.

12. The proposal to include such a question in the Census has the endorsement of a wide range of organisations, and in particular has the support of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Inner Cities Religious Council, and the Home Secretary’s Race Relations forum.