

# News story: Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Bill

The [Census \(Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties\) Bill](#) has been published today, having been introduced in the House of Lords yesterday.

The Bill will amend the [Census Act 1920](#) and the [Census Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1969](#) to remove the penalty for not responding to new census questions on sexual orientation and gender identity.

This means that the 2021 Census in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland, may include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity, which can be answered on a voluntary basis.

This Bill delivers on the proposals set out in the December 2018 White Paper, [Help Shape our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales](#), which sets out the UK Statistics Authority's recommendations that these new questions be included in the 2021 Census in England and Wales, on a voluntary basis.