



Enumerator (Tower Census Support Role)

2026 Bellringing Census

Purpose of the Role

The 2026 Bellringing Census aims to produce the most accurate picture of bellringing for many years. In particular, it seeks to estimate the total number of people who ring bells and to understand the characteristics of the ringing community, focused on a specific Census Week.

The census gathers information in two complementary ways:

- Individual Ringer Survey – completed by all ringers, including details of their ringing during Census Week
- Tower Headcount Survey – completed once for each participating tower, recording how many people rang there during Census Week and key information about the tower and its band.

Together, these surveys allow the census team to estimate the total number of bellringers and assess how representative the individual responses are.

To maximise the accuracy of these estimates, we have a “target list” of around 500 towers, with the aim of accounting for every single one. The results from these towers will provide an important benchmark against which the wider census data can be interpreted. Getting the full picture from this hot list will let us quantify precisely the patterns of completion and non-completion, and so arrive at a really good estimate of the true total number of ringers and rung towers.

The Enumerator’s role is to ensure that every tower allocated to them is fully accounted for. Wherever possible, this means securing a completed Tower Headcount Survey. Where this is not possible, it means establishing the status of the tower and recording what has been found.

A tower with no active band is an important census finding, not missing data.

The Role

Each Enumerator will be allocated a group of towers from the hot list.

Their first point of contact will normally be the Tower Captain or nominated tower contact. If contact cannot be established, they may also seek information from local clergy or the local ringing association.

Enumerators are responsible for:

- establishing how they’ll make contact with each allocated tower

- encouraging completion of the Tower Headcount Survey after the census week
- answering straightforward questions and providing practical support
- following up towers that have not responded
- establishing the status of towers where a return cannot be obtained
- recording outcomes accurately
- referring difficult questions or uncertainties to the central census team

Enumerators work with tower contacts rather than individual ringers and should not seek to influence survey responses.

Accounting for Every Tower

The aim is that every allocated tower has a known outcome.

This may be a completed Tower Headcount Survey, or confirmation that the tower:

- has no active band
- is temporarily or permanently inactive
- is active but unable or unwilling to complete the survey
- has been incorrectly or duplicatively listed
- has another clearly documented status

Where there is no active band or nobody able to complete the Tower Headcount Survey, the Enumerator will complete a simplified return recording what has been established, how the information was obtained and any uncertainty.

Persistence is important. Non-responding, struggling and inactive towers are particularly valuable to the census because leaving them unknown could distort the national estimates.

Supporting Data Quality

Enumerators should encourage complete and accurate returns, flag obvious inconsistencies or uncertainties and keep the central census team informed of any significant issues or barriers.

They should remain neutral throughout and avoid suggesting how questions should be answered.

The timing of contact matters to the quality of our data. The surveys measure what naturally happened during the Census Week, so no tower in the target group should know it will be followed up until after that week has ended. If they do, they may behave differently (e.g. ringing more enthusiastically, chasing absent members to attend) and that changes the very thing we're trying to measure. Detailed guidance on when and how to make contact will be provided, but the principle is straightforward: awareness of the census is fine (every tower gets the same advance notice); knowledge of being individually followed up (i.e. being on our target list) is not, until the Census Week is over.

What Success Looks Like

The key measure of success is simple:

Every allocated tower is accounted for.

Ideally this will mean a completed Tower Headcount Survey. Where that is not possible, there should be enough reliable information to understand the tower's status and why a return was not obtained.

The aim is to reduce unknowns to an absolute minimum.

Skills and Qualities

Enumerators should be active within the ringing community and be:

- friendly, approachable and diplomatic
- organised and dependable
- persistent without being intrusive
- able to explain information clearly and impartially
- comfortable using email and basic digital tools

Experience as a Tower Captain, Secretary or Association officer, and familiarity with local ringing networks, would be helpful but is not essential.

Time Commitment: Most activity will take place during the second half of November 2026. The role will involve initial contact with allocated towers, follow-up where necessary and brief progress reporting to the central census team.

Support Provided: Enumerators will receive an online briefing, an Enumerator Handbook, email templates, suggested telephone scripts, FAQs and access to the central census team for advice and escalation.

Principles of the Role

Enumerators act as ambassadors for the Bellringing Census. They should be courteous, supportive and professional; respect confidentiality; treat every tower with equal importance; and encourage participation without applying undue pressure.

Enumerators do not make direct contact with individual ringers under 18. Any contact concerning a young ringer should be through the Tower Captain, nominated adult, parent or guardian. Any safeguarding concern should be reported immediately to the central census team.

Census Task Force, CCCBR

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BELLRINGING