Ringing Census 2026

Enumerator Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Census?

The Census aims to estimate the number of ringers and to improve understanding of the ringing community. It is part of the wider Ringing 2030 programme and will provide a baseline for future planning, recruitment and development initiatives.

2. How will the survey be distributed?

The Census team will distribute the survey links centrally via the Census website, social media and association/Central Council communication channels. Enumerators should help publicise the Census and may forward or resend the links, but their priority after Census Week is following up their allocated towers.

3. Are the surveys to be completed during Census Week or afterwards?

The surveys should reflect what happened during Census Week. The individual survey cannot be completed in advance, but tower contacts may start the tower survey, save it and return later. Partial information can still be submitted if a respondent does not complete every question.

4. Will there be standard wording or promotional material for towers?

Guidance materials, templates and briefing information are being developed so that consistent messages can be shared across associations and towers.

5. What surveys are being conducted?

There are two surveys:

- An individual survey for ringers.
- A tower survey for towers with four or more bells.

Together these will help build a picture of ringing activity and participation across the country.

6. What is an Enumerator?

Enumerators are volunteers who will help maximise responses from a selected list of towers. They will encourage participation, follow up non-responders and record outcomes to help ensure that the Census results are as representative as possible.

7. What is the “Hot List”?

The Hot List is a group of approximately 500 towers selected for follow-up. Responses from these towers are particularly important to the statistical methodology being used to estimate the size and characteristics of the ringing community.

8. Why is it important for towers outside the Hot List to participate?

Every completed survey improves the quality of the Census. Even towers that are not part of the Hot List contribute valuable information about the scale, diversity and activity of the ringing community.

9. How many towers will I be allocated?

The intention is that each enumerator will be allocated approximately three to four towers, usually in an area where they have local knowledge or connections.

10. When will I receive my tower allocations?

Tower allocations are expected to be issued roughly one month before Census Week.

11. What if a tower is overseas or not local to me?

You are not expected to visit distant towers in person. Use email, telephone and local contacts where possible. Allocations will be matched locally where practical, but some may fall outside your usual area. Record any difficulties encountered and seek help where needed.

12. Will towers know in advance the survey is coming?

Awareness activity is already taking place through newsletters, meetings and local communications. Further reminders and support materials will be provided before Census Week.

13. Can I help additional towers if I finish my allocated list?

Your first priority is your allocated towers. You are encouraged to promote the Census generally before and during Census Week, but do not give any selected tower special treatment before allocations are revealed. Wider targeted follow-up should be coordinated with the Census team to avoid duplicated chasing and protect the methodology.

14. When is Census Week?

Census Week is planned for 16-22 November.

15. What will I be expected to do?

Enumerators will:

- Make initial contact with allocated towers before Census Week.
- Encourage completion of the survey.

- Follow up towers that have not responded.
- Record outcomes for every allocated tower.
- Use local knowledge and contacts to identify appropriate contacts where necessary.

16. How much time should this take?

The expectation is that participation should require only a modest commitment, with surveys taking around ten minutes to complete and follow-up activity focused on a relatively small number of towers.

17. What should I do if I cannot find a tower contact?

You may use local knowledge, association contacts, church websites, clergy contacts and publicly available resources such as Crockford's Directory or A Church Near You where appropriate. . Not all websites are up to date, so multiple approaches may be needed. If difficulties persist, seek support from the Census team.

18. What if the tower captain does not use email or online forms?

Enumerators may offer practical assistance, including acting as a scribe and entering information on behalf of the tower representative where appropriate.

19. What if the tower captain is too busy to complete the survey?

Offer assistance, suggest that another suitable person completes the survey, and gather whatever information is available. The aim is to help the tower participate, not to create additional work for volunteers.

20. What if a tower does not respond at all?

Record all attempts to make contact and any information you are able to establish. Responses from non-participating towers are still useful for understanding the wider ringing community and supporting the Census methodology.

21. Should inactive towers be recorded?

Yes. Outcomes should be recorded for all allocated towers, including those that are inactive or where no ringing currently takes place.

22. What if I find conflicting information?

Do not make assumptions. Check multiple sources, distinguish between confirmed facts and assumptions, note where information came from and seek support if the situation remains unclear.

23. Are there any safeguarding considerations?

Yes. Enumerators should avoid direct contact with individuals under 18 and should follow the guidance provided in the Enumerator Pack.

24. How will confidentiality be protected?

The Census team has emphasised confidentiality throughout the process. Data sharing and reporting arrangements will incorporate appropriate data protection measures and enumerators should only use information for Census purposes.

25. Will I be able to see which of my towers have completed the survey?

Enumerators will have access to regularly updated completion information for allocated towers. For a Golden Ticket tower, this will show how many individuals have responded, not their names. The information will also help avoid duplicated chasing of towers already allocated to another enumerator.

26. When do survey responses close?

The current target is 6 December, although the final deadline is still to be confirmed by the Central Census Team.

27. Will the survey ask what methods or compositions were rung?

No. The survey is not expected to ask for that level of detail.

28. How will the Census deal with ringers who belong to more than one band or towers that share ringers?

The statistical methodology has been designed to take account of shared bands, ringers attending multiple towers and similar complexities. These issues have already been considered in the survey design and analysis approach.

29. What if a tower organises an extra event during Census Week to increase attendance?

Do not organise special activity simply because it is Census Week. Everyone who is a ringer can complete the individual survey whether or not they rang that week, and the methodology records actual Census Week activity. Enumerators should promote the Census generally without giving selected towers special treatment.

30. Can a ringer complete the individual survey if they did not ring during Census Week?

Yes. The aim is for every ringer to complete the individual survey. Not ringing during Census Week is itself useful information; the survey also asks about bands and wider ringing.

31. What should a tower record if visitors rang during Census Week?

The tower survey records how many people rang at the tower during Census Week and how many of those were visitors. It does not require the names of a visiting band. Individual ringers can separately record all towers at which they rang.

32. What if there was no regular ringing, but a visiting band rang during Census Week?

Record what actually happened during Census Week, including visiting ringing. A tower can therefore have no regular/own-band ringing but still record visitors who rang there during the week.

33. What if a tower is inactive, unringable, duplicated or incorrectly listed?

If Dove identifies a tower as unringable, it is outside the active ringing follow-up. For inactive towers, establish and record whether the inactivity is temporary or permanent where possible. If a tower is duplicated or appears incorrectly in the list, report it to the Census team; the tower lists are based on Dove.

34. What if one band rings at several towers, or practices rotate between towers?

That is covered by the survey design. The tower survey asks about the band and Census Week activity, while individuals can record the bands they belong to and the towers where they rang. A tower not ringing in Census Week can still be represented through information about its band or other regular activity.

35. Can tower contacts prepare the survey in advance or save it part-way through?

Yes. A tower contact can start the survey, save it and return later. If they decide not to complete every question, the information already entered can still be submitted and may be useful.

36. Why can’t enumerators choose the towers they already know?

The follow-up towers need to form an unbiased, representative sample. Allowing enumerators to choose familiar towers would favour well-connected towers and could undermine the statistical adjustment for people and towers that do not respond without prompting.

37. Why are allocated and Golden Ticket towers not revealed before Census Week?

They are deliberately revealed after Census Week so that selected towers are not treated differently beforehand. Knowing that a tower was selected could change behaviour during the week and make the sample less representative. General Census promotion before and during the week is encouraged.

38. How will I know whether all the ringers at my Golden Ticket tower have responded if responses are anonymous?

You will be given a count of individual responses associated with the tower, not respondents’ names. Work with the tower contact to encourage broad participation,

while respecting anyone who chooses not to take part and avoiding pressure on individuals.

39. What is the difference between promoting the Census and chasing an allocated tower?

Before and during Census Week, act as an ambassador: share the general publicity and links widely and encourage everyone to participate. From 30 November, use your allocation information to follow up specific selected towers that require support. Do not identify or give special treatment to a selected tower before then.

40. What information should I record when I cannot get a straightforward answer about a tower?

Record the facts you have established, who provided them, how certain the information is, the contact attempts made, and any conflicting evidence. If sources disagree, investigate further rather than assuming that one is correct, and escalate unresolved cases to the Census team.

41. Is there support available for Enumerators?

Yes. In addition to Gemma and the central help desk, briefing sessions, FAQs, templates and peer support channels are available. The FAQ will continue to be expanded as new questions arise.

42. Is there an Enumerator WhatsApp group?

Yes. A temporary WhatsApp group is available to provide peer support and facilitate discussion between enumerators during the Census period. The group has been configured so that phone numbers are not generally visible unless participants are already in one another's contacts. However, volunteers should review WhatsApp's own privacy settings and make their own decisions about participation.

43. Who do I contact if I need help?

Contact the Census support team through Gemma, who is acting as the central help desk for enumerator queries and follow-up support. The wider core team can be contacted via survey@cccbr.org.uk