February 7, 2011

**The census is coming**

The census is just weeks away and now – for the first time – everyone in Cheshire East can fill it in online.

The census, which collects information about the population, takes place every 10 years. This year, it will take place on Sunday, March 27.

Liam O’Connor, Cheshire area manager for the 2011 Census, said: “In 2011, for the first time in its 210 year history – everyone can go online to complete their census in just a few clicks. It’s safe, secure and completely confidential.

“The traditional paper method of completing the census is also available.

“The information received from the census goes towards the planning and funding of future local services, such as schools, hospitals, roads and emergency services.

“The census will arrive, in the post, in March – those who wish to fill theirs in online simply have to key-in a code, which will be on the front page of their paper form.”

Filling in a census is a legal requirement for everyone living in the UK – not filling one in can result in a fine.

The census takes, on average, 10 minutes per person to complete and less online, with most questions completed by simply clicking or ticking a box.

There is help available to those who have a visual or hearing impairment or whose first language is not English. There is also a large-print format of the census.

Cheshire East Councillor David Brown, Cabinet member with responsibility for performance and capacity, said: “The census is vital in order to establish the current population, potential growth and, for this authority, identify what services we may need to provide in the future. This is about working together to improve community life.

“This year’s census will be a milestone in its history – the very first time everyone, young and old, can get onto the internet and fill in their Census at their own convenience.”

Cheshire East Council Chief Executive Erika Wenzel added: “Lots of hard work has gone into ensuring this year’s census runs as smoothly as possible here in Cheshire East. Local people are involved too – approximately 200, temporary jobs have been created by the census. Plus, the results of the census will impact directly on what grants we receive from the government. This will, in turn, allow us to provide essential services to benefit the community for many years to come.”

Frequently asked questions

**Who is responsible for the census?**

The Office of National Statistics (ONS).

**Why is the census taking place on the March 27?**

Ideally, everyone should complete their census on this date. However, if this is not possible, residents are asked to remember where they were or where they will be on this date and fill in their census accordingly. The idea is to get an exact ‘snapshot’ of the population on that day.

**When should it be completed?**

Residents should return their completed questionnaire, either by post or online, before the April 6, 2011.

**What happens if it is not completed?**

Those who do not complete their form, by April 6, will be contacted by one of the census team and asked to complete it. The census team will offer help and support. Not completing a census questionnaire can result in a fine of up to £1,000.

**Is the census questionnaire secure?**

All census information, whether online or on paper, is securely protected. Personal census information is kept confidential for 100 years

**Where will the census be processed?**

Manchester

**What help and support is available?**

If anyone has questions or is having difficulty completing the questionnaire, there is plenty of support available:

* Online help at www.census.gov.uk
* Census helpline (available from March 4) is 0300 0201 101 – please note that this number does not connect the caller to Cheshire East Council
* Support material is available in 58 languages
* Text relay (for people with a hearing impairment) 18001 or 0300 0201 160
* Materials in large print and Braille formats from www.census.gov.uk
* The online census has been designed to be accessible for anyone requiring video and audio assistance.
* More information is available at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/census

**To arrange an interview or further information please contact:**

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