



Submission to Stats NZ on 2023 Census

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The disability question in the 2023 Census is aligned with the Washington Group Short Set question (WGSS). IHC is critical of the use of the WGSS questions as they are far less likely to accurately identify people with intellectual disability, learning disability or neuro-diversity.

The 2013 disability question is preferable to the narrow WGSS aligned question proposed for 2023, as it included extra descriptors that were more likely to capture intellectually disabled people.

These extra fields were addressed by adding 'difficulties with learning' and 'difficulties mixing with others/socialising' to the remembering/concentrating and communicating questions respectively. Exclusion of these additional terms will exclude many intellectually disabled and neurodiverse people from being included with the disabled population.

It would also be useful to re-introduce the generic disability question for those that have a diagnosed disability but may not recognise themselves in the other questions.

The disability question in the 2023 Census is like to feed into the 2023 Disability Survey. It is critically important that intellectually disabled people are accurately reflected in that survey. Intellectually disabled people are frequently included in statistics with people with physical disability, although people with intellectual disability have significantly different (usually worse) outcomes.

Prevalence data is also extremely important for intellectually disabled people, especially young people, as it can show the government the actual level of needed early intervention. Early intervention can lead to an intellectually disabled person living a full life to their full potential. Prevalence data is critical for organisations, such as IHC, to monitor whether the government has an accurate understanding of the level of need within the intellectual disability community.