

An Introduction to FreeCEN For New Transcribers

Transcribing the England and Wales Census

FreeCEN2

Version 1 - February 2021

This Introduction to FreeCEN provides an overview of Transcribing for FreeCEN2. It is intended for use by new Transcribers and does not replace the FreeCEN Handbook. The Handbook is far more detailed and contains images. This Guide is an aid to help you start with your first FreeCEN Transcription. If you have a problem, consult the Handbook. If you cannot find the answer, ask your Coordinator.

Accessing CSVProc

To access CSVProc you will need to sign into your FreeCEN account.

1. To do this, go to <https://www.FreeCEN.org.uk/> . Above the 'Search Our Census Records' form you will see the main menu bar which includes 'Member'. Click on 'Member'. This will take you to a sign in form.
2. If you have previously logged in and ticked the 'Keep me logged in box' you will not see 'Member' as a menu item. It will have been replaced with 'Your Actions'. In that case skip step 3 and go straight to step 4.
3. Enter your Userid or email and your Password. If you do not want to sign in every time, put a tick in the 'Keep me logged in' box.
4. You will now see the 'Your Actions' screen.

Downloading a Blank Spreadsheet

Your Coordinator may send you a blank spreadsheet to use or may ask you to download one from the FreeCEN site.

1. Select CSV Batches.
2. Select Download Spreadsheet.

You will see a list of available spreadsheets.

3. Click on the spreadsheet that you need. It will download to your computer.

You will probably see a downloaded file at the bottom of your screen. Click on this and select Open and your blank spreadsheet will open on your screen. (Depending on your computer, browser and settings you could see a dialog box)

4. Click on this and select Open and your blank spreadsheet will open on your screen.
5. Save it with the name of your new piece using the Spreadsheet Naming guidelines below.

Spreadsheet Naming

The spreadsheet used as an input for CSVProc will have a two-part or three-part name.

- The National Archives year identifier (e.g. HO107 or RG9 or RG10).
- The piece number. This will be preceded by an underscore (_). *Please be aware that the "number is NOT an integer but the "number" assigned by the National Archives. It CAN be an alphanumeric e.g. 2345A..*
- The last part is optional. If used it will be a single letter preceded by an underscore (_). This is only used when a large piece is broken into smaller parts by the Coordinator. Each part can be individually transcribed, proofread, validated and published.

The file name will therefore look like this:

HO107_123.csv or HO107_1234_a.csv or RG9_2345.csv or RG10_2370_a.csv.

Column (Field) Types

There are several field types that are acceptable to CSVProc. You will find details of which type to use in the '**What Can Be Entered**' information in the Field Transcription Rules. Valid field types are:

- **Number** – Containing only the numbers 0 to 9 (e.g. 29).
- **Number and Suffix** - Containing only the numbers 0 to 9 followed by a letter (e.g. 29a).
- **Special Entry** – These will be defined for each relevant field in the field profile. CSVProc will test the field for the correct entry or pattern.
- **Narrow Text** – Narrow Text permits any word character (letter, number, underscore) plus , ' ,
- **Broad Text** - Broad Text permits any word character (letter, number, underscore) plus - () . , & ' ,

Do not use the / character or ? in a text field apart from the Notes field.

Field Transcription Rules

- For the FreeCEN2 database to be fully searchable we all need to record the census information in the same way. Use the following guidelines to provide consistency.

- If you find that entering (only) a hyphen in a cell does not work as expected, try using a Tab or Enter after the - . The entry of '-' (single-quote hyphen) will create an Error in some fields. This is because '-' is two characters and some fields are set to accept only one character, or because CSVProc is looking for – and '-' does not match.
- Whilst you are transcribing there will be occasions when you cannot read letters or words to transcribe them. In that case enter an underscore (_) or a series of underscores to indicate where the problem is. You will also need to set the appropriate query flag.
- If you are transcribing Shipping Returns use the shipping guidelines in the Handbook.

Enumeration District (ED) Information

If any change is made in one of the fields in this Section (except the location flag) then all the fields in the ED section must be re-entered. If this is not done CSVProc will report Errors.

Field name	enumeration_district
Column Contains	ED Number
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or number and suffix or special entry

Description and Rules Only enter the ED number once until it changes. If there is no identifiable ED number, use 0 (zero). If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered.

Special Categories – See the Handbook for details. Use one of the following numbers as the relevant suffix:

1. Barracks & Military Quarters
2. HM Ships, at Home
3. Workhouses & Pauper Schools
4. Hospitals (Sick, Convalescent, Incurables)
5. Lunatic Asylums
6. Prisons
7. Certified Reformatory & Industrial Schools
8. Merchant Vessels & Lighthouses
9. Schools

Field name	civil_parish
Column Contains	Civil Parish
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text
Description and Rules	Only enter it once at the beginning of an ED until it changes. If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered. A blank or – (hyphen) is not an acceptable entry.

Field name	ecclesiastical_parish
Column Contains	Ecclesiastical Parish
Year/s Used	1851 – 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text
Description and Rules	Only enter this information once at the beginning of the ED unless it changes. If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered. If nothing is entered enter a – (hyphen) at the start of each ED. The Ecclesiastical Parish is not recorded in the 1841 census.

Field name	where_census_taken
Column Contains	Where Census Taken
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text
Description and Rules	The place where the census was taken can be the name of the Island, Borough or Burgh, Municipal Borough, City, Town, Village, Hamlet or Tything. There are various options for the enumerator to record this information but only one was usually used for each place that the census was taken, depending on the circumstances. In 1841 it may have been recorded as a County Corporate. If more than one option is provided enter only the smallest in size. Only enter this information once at the beginning of the ED unless it changes. If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered. A blank or – (hyphen) is not an acceptable entry.

Field name	ward
Column Contains	Ward
Year/s Used	1861 – 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text
Description and Rules	If nothing is entered, enter a – (hyphen) at the start of each ED. Only enter this information once at the beginning of the ED unless it changes. If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered. In 1861 the information was often blank.

Field name	parliamentary_constituency
Column Contains	Parliamentary Constituency
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text
Description and Rules	Only enter this information once at the beginning of the ED unless it changes. If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered. The information may have been recorded as Parliamentary District. It was often left blank in the earlier censuses. In this case enter a – (hyphen) at the start of each ED.

Field name	sanitary_district
Column Contains	Sanitary District
Year/s Used	1871 – 1891
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text
Description and Rules	Only enter this information once at the beginning of the ED unless it changes. If the content of any of the fields in this Section changes it will also need to be re-entered. In 1871 it was called the Local Board of Commissioners and in 1881 and 1891 it was called the Urban or Rural Sanitary District. If the information has not been recorded enter a – (hyphen) at the start of each ED.

Field name	location_flag
Column Contains	ED Query Flag
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	x or X or blank
Description and Rules	If the Transcriber or Proofreader has doubts about an ED entry being 'as is' they should enter a flag here.

Household Information

Field name	folio_number
Column Contains	Folio Number
Year/s Used	1841 – 1901
What Can Be Entered	Number
Description and Rules	Only enter this number each time that it changes. If a Folio Number is missing from its normal position DO NOT type zero. Leave it out unless you can work it out from the page numbers.

Field name	page_number
Column Contains	Page number
Year/s Used	1841 - 1901
What Can Be Entered	Number
Description and Rules	Only enter this number each time that it changes.

Field name	schedule_number
Column Contains	Schedule number
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Number and a suffix
Description and Rules	Please refer to Handbook.

Field name	uninhabited_flag
Column Contains	Unoccupied
Year/s Used	1841 - 1901
What Can Be Entered	u, b, n, v or blank
Description and Rules	This is used where a schedule has no family attached to it: Where the enumerator has not entered a schedule number, enter a schedule number of 0 (zero). Please refer to Handbook for more details.

Field name	house_number
Column Contains	House Number
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or number plus suffix or fraction or blank
Description and Rules	Only enter this once for each schedule and on the same row as the schedule number. If no house number has been recorded leave this field blank. See Handbook for detailed information.

Field name	house_or_street_name
Column Contains	Address
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or blank
Description and Rules	Only enter this information once for each schedule and on the same row as the schedule number. If there is no address recorded leave this field blank.

Field name	rooms
Column Contains	No. Rooms
Year/s Used	1891 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or blank
Description and Rules	Only enter this once for each schedule on the same row as the schedule number. If there is nothing recorded leave it blank.

Field name	address_flag
Column Contains	Address Query
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	x or X or blank
Description and Rules	If the Transcriber or Proofreader has doubts about a household entry being 'as is' they should enter a flag here.

Individual Information

Field name	surname
Column Contains	Surname
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text
Description and Rules	Enter this for each person in the family. It should be entered 'as is' even if it is known to be wrong. Enter a - (hyphen) if no surname is enumerated. See Handbook for detailed information.

Field name	forenames
Column Contains	Forenames
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text
Description and Rules	Enter this for each person in the family. Forenames should be entered 'as is' even if they are known to be wrong. Enter a – (hyphen) if no forename is enumerated. Infant is an acceptable forename. See Handbook for detailed information.

Field name	name_flag
Column Contains	Name Query
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	x or X or blank
Description and Rules	If the Transcriber or Proofreader has doubts about a name entry being 'as is' they should enter a flag here.

Field name	relationship
Column Contains	Relationship
Year/s Used	1851 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text or blank
Description and Rules	Enter the relationship to the head in full in this column. Where no relationship is recorded leave the field blank. Do NOT make assumptions.

Field name	marital_status
Column Contains	Marital Status
Year/s Used	1851 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	m, s, u, w, d, - or blank
Description and Rules	Enter a single letter m, s, u, w or d (Married, Single, Unmarried, Widowed or Divorced) or blank.

Field name	sex
Column Contains	Sex
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	m, f or -
Description and Rules	If the age columns are empty, then enter - (hyphen). Do not make assumptions. A blank is not an acceptable entry.

Field name	age
Column Contains	Age
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Up to three numerals and one letter (y, m, w or d) or Complex age (see Handbook)
Description and Rules	You MUST enter a number for each person. Zero is not acceptable. If the age is blank then enter 999 without entering a query flag (<i>Enter 999 not 999y</i>). Standard Rules for Age are listed in the Handbook.

Field name	years_married
Column Contains	Years Married
Year/s Used	1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or Complex number or blank
Description and Rules	Enter the value as shown in the census. Enter it only once for each married couple next to the female member of the family, usually enumerated as wife. Where no information is recorded leave the field blank. Standard Rules for Years Married are listed in the Handbook.

Field name	children_born_alive
Column Contains	Children Born Alive
Year/s Used	1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or blank
Description and Rules	The value should appear next to a female member of the family, usually enumerated as wife.

Field name	children_living
Column Contains	No. Living
Year/s Used	1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or blank
Description and Rules	The value should appear next to a female member of the family

Field name	children_deceased
Column Contains	No. Deceased
Year/s Used	1911
What Can Be Entered	Number or blank
Description and Rules	The value should appear next to a female member of the family, usually enumerated as wife.

Field name	individual_flag
Column Contains	Individual Query
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	x or X or blank
Description and Rules	If the Transcriber or Proofreader has doubts about any of the individual information being 'as is' they should enter a flag here.

Employment Information

Field name	occupation
Column Contains	Occupation
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or blank
Description and Rules	Transcribe the occupation exactly as enumerated in the census. Do not correct spellings. In 1841 there were standard abbreviations for particular occupations. These abbreviations should be expanded to their full meanings. A table of 1841 abbreviations can be found in the Handbook.

Field name	industry
Column Contains	Industry
Year/s Used	1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or blank
Description and Rules	Transcribe the industry exactly as shown in the census. This information was often left blank.

Field name	occupation_category
Column Contains	Employment Status
Year/s Used	1891 – 1911
What Can Be Entered	e, r, n or blank
Description and Rules	1891 enter r for "employeeR"; e for "employeeE"; n only when marked as "Not employer/employee". If a person is marked for both "employeeR" and "employeeE" enter r. 1901 the census changes to Employer, Worker or Own Account. Enter r for EmployeeR; e for Worker; and n for Own Account.

Field name	at_home
Column Contains	At Home
Year/s Used	1901 – 1911
What Can Be Entered	h or blank
Description and Rules	Enter an h in this column. Where no information is recorded leave the field blank.

Field name	occupation_flag
Column Contains	Occupation Query
Year/s Used	all censuses
What Can Be Entered	x or X or blank
Description and Rules	If the Transcriber or Proofreader has doubts about any of the occupation information being 'as is' they should enter a flag here.

Birth Information

Field name	verbatim_birth_County
Column Contains	Chapman Code (CHP)
Year/s Used	All censuses
What Can Be Entered	Valid Chapman Code
Description and Rules	Enter the County as a Chapman Code

Field name	verbatim_birth_place
Column Contains	POB
Year/s Used	1851 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or – (hyphen)
Description and Rules	Enter the Place of Birth that is written on the Census Page including any misspellings. If you believe it to be incorrectly spelt or the County to be incorrect you can enter your suggestion in the birth_County and birth_place columns (<i>Note: both columns must be completed. There is no need to enter a flag</i>). Sometimes a place of birth is entered as a smaller place followed or preceded by the name of a larger nearby place. Always show the name of the larger place first. It is extremely important that you follow the larger to smaller rule. '-' cannot be entered as a hyphen. A - must be used. See Handbook for detailed information.

Field name	nationality
Column Contains	Nationality Details
Year/s Used	1851 – 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text or blank
Description and Rules	Information such as 'Naturalised' or 'British Subject' is entered here. Enter the information 'as is'. Where no information is recorded leave the field blank. From 1851 to 1901 notes such as 'British Subject' were added to the census by the enumerator, usually in the margin. Enter these notes in this column.

Field name	birth_county
Column Contains	Alternative Chapman Code
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Valid Chapman Code or blank
Description and Rules	The Transcriber and / or Proofreader and / or the Validator can put their own choice of Chapman Code in this column. A table of Chapman Codes can be found in the Handbook.

Field name	birth_place
Column Contains	Alternative Place of Birth
Year/s Used	1851 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Narrow Text or hyphen (-) or blank
Description and Rules	The Transcriber and / or Proofreader and / or the Validator can put their own choice of Place of Birth in this column. Follow the larger to smaller guideline. '-' cannot be entered as a hyphen.

Field name	place_birth_flag
Column Contains	POB Query
Year/s Used	all censuses
What Can Be Entered	x or X or blank
Description and Rules	If the Transcriber or Proofreader has doubts about any of the place of birth information being 'as is' they should enter a flag here. Do not enter a flag if you have entered an alternative in the birth_county and birth_place columns. It will automatically be displayed at Validation.

Miscellaneous Information

Field name	disability
Column Contains	Disability
Year/s Used	1851 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or blank
Description and Rules	Enter the disability as enumerated. Where no information is recorded leave the field blank.

Field name	disability_notes
Column Contains	Disability Notes
Year/s Used	1911 only
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or blank
Description and Rules	Enter the information as enumerated. Where no information is recorded leave the field blank.

Field name	language
Column Contains	Language
Year/s Used	Wales 1891 – 1911 and Isle of Man
What Can Be Entered	Up to 2 letters or blank
Description and Rules	Enter the appropriate letter or letters for the language spoken here. Leave this entry blank if it has not been filled in on the census. Use a code from the list below:

E	English	M	Manx
G	Gaelic	ME	Manx and English
GE	Gaelic and English	W	Welsh
I	Irish	WE	Welsh and English
IE	Irish and English		

If you are using the England and Wales spreadsheet for a County that is not in Wales or the Isle of Man leave this column blank.

Notes

Field name	notes
Column Contains	Notes
Year/s Used	1841 - 1911
What Can Be Entered	Broad Text or blank
Description and Rules	Enter any messages that you need to explain a query flag here. This is the only text field in which a / can be used, so that entries such as 1/2 can be made. This is the only text field in which a ? can be used

Testing a Spreadsheet

1. Select 'CSV Batches' from 'Your Actions'
2. Select Upload New File
3. Select Choose file and locate the File on your computer.
4. Select the type of report
5. Select Upload

You will receive a report by email.

See Handbook for more detail.

If you have previously tested the same Spreadsheet you must Reload it. See Handbook for details.

A Transcription will be ready to hand to your Coordinator when it has been tested and all Error Reports have been resolved.