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New Census will ask you: Male, female ...or neither?

By **Rachel Watson**
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SCOTS will be able to identify as gender neutral for the first time in an official census.

It will allow people who see themselves as neither male nor female to choose a non-binary option. The new poll will also include a question on sexual orientation.

SNP ministers have been testing pilot questions but the final wording has still to be decided for the latest ten-year round-up of population statistics.

However, it is thought people will be asked if they identify as female, male or other – then asked to fill out a blank box with their preferred term.

The move has sparked a backlash from critics who claim it is an irrational response

to campaign groups and has no 'biological' evidence to support it.

They fear it could sow confusion among young children over their identities, as ministers have yet to decide whether an

age limit should apply.

Yesterday, the Scottish Government published its Plans for Scotland's Census 2021, outlining the proposed questions and how the National Records of Scotland survey will be conducted.

The gender topic asks people to list the term they use or a description they find comfortable.

Census questions have long been compulsory, including ones on gender. And there is no suggestion that this will change.

People can currently only identify as male or female, but LGBTI campaigners lobbied for reform.

The document explains the changes as 'reflecting Government policy on equality' for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people.

However, the Rev David Robertson, former moderator of the **Free Church of Scotland**, said: 'The Scottish Government has contin-



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ued to give in to the current gender madness based upon unproven and unscientific philosophy.

'It is a fundamental of human nature that we are either male or female.

'There are a tiny group who are intersex – which is an exception – but exceptions make bad rules.

'There is no scientific evidence for this bizarre view and it is disappointing that the Scottish Government is giving in to this

agenda.' Ministers believe that the question on sexual orientation will help them to structure services better for LGBTI people – a point challenged by Mr Robertson

who asked: 'Why are they asking the question on sexual orientation?'

He added: 'We are not so bothered about the census itself but what it indicates – that "queer theory" is now official policy and will be indoctrinated into our

children as truth. This is an ideology which harms children and will mean the end of women's rights.'

Scottish Trans Alliance decried the changes as a 'really positive' step. A spokesman said: 'Both of these [questions] enable much better data to be collected.

'It is important with the sex question that everybody feels comfortable to answer, to be true to themselves.'

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: 'By asking questions which reflect a modern, inclusive Scotland, these proposals ensure that the census will continue to be a vital source of information for decades to come.'

'Ministers giving in to gender madness'

'New question is a positive step'