

## **A Guide to carrying out Equality Monitoring in Nottinghamshire**

### **Contents**

- 1. What is Equality Monitoring?**
- 2. Why is Equality Monitoring important?**
- 3. What should I monitor?**
- 4. What wording and categories should I use?**
- 5. How to ask?**
- 6. Analysing and using your information**
- 7. Common questions and concerns about equality monitoring**
- 8. Useful Contacts**

### **1. What is Equality Monitoring?**

All services are familiar with the idea of monitoring performance – measuring how well the service is performing against agreed objectives and targets. Equality monitoring is simply checking whether the service is performing well for all customers.

### **2. Why is Equality Monitoring Important?**

- ✓ We want to ensure that our services are delivered fairly. It helps us to identify any disadvantage associated with age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation and plan improvements to our policies and services in relation to people with these protected characteristics. Without monitoring, it is hard to know whether policies and services are being delivered fairly or meeting the diverse needs people have.
- ✓ Equality monitoring helps us to meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 – by helping us to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- ✓ It provides us with the evidence we need when carrying out equality impact assessments and consulting with the public ie we gain an understanding of how any changes to our policies and services might affect people who have protected characteristics. This makes sure that we provide good quality services to all citizens and ultimately it protects us from costly judicial review.
- ✓ It allows members of the public to know how well we are providing services to different sections of the community – enabling them to challenge us where necessary – and also builds community confidence in the Council that we try to act fairly at all times.
- ✓ It is important in helping the Council to deliver its Equality Policy and achieve its equality objectives as outlined in the Council's Equality Plan.

### 3. What should I monitor?

The Council recognises that equality monitoring is essential for effective policymaking and service delivery. It will monitor all of the 'protected characteristics' defined in the Equality Act 2010 in the most cost-effective and efficient way. They are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment (Transgender)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation

Sometimes, however, it is not necessary, practical or useful to monitor all the protected characteristics every time. The service should adopt a common-sense attitude and monitor what would be useful to know in order to identify any adverse impacts, eliminate discrimination and improve access to the service by people with diverse needs. Sometimes it is not appropriate to monitor all the protected characteristics for the following reasons:

- Evidence that the characteristic does not influence a group's ability to access services or benefit from policies.
- The need to protect people's privacy and avoid putting them at risk from hate crimes eg if the target audience is small and individuals might be identified.

### 4. What wording and categories should I use?

The Council has adopted the following equality monitoring questions and categories that should be used whenever we are carrying out equality monitoring or reporting on equality performance.

#### Age

What is your age?

0-15	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55	<input type="checkbox"/>
16-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 65	<input type="checkbox"/>
36-45	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### Disability

**Do you consider yourself to be disabled?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify the type of impairment.

Mobility	
Hearing	
Vision	
Learning	
Mental Health	

Communication	
Other (please specify)	

**Gender**

Are you?

Male ☐

Female ☐

(Please see later section if you want to monitor gender re-assignment.)

**Race**

What is your ethnic origin?

White	British	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Gypsy or Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Any other white background – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Mixed	White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Any other mixed background – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Asian/Asian British	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Any other Asian background – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Black/Black British	Black/Black British	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	African	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Any other Black background – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other Ethnic groups	Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Any other ethnic group – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Monitoring Religion and Belief (including non belief), Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment**

In many cases, services may need to extend their monitoring to capture data in relation to religion and belief and sexual orientation to provide culturally appropriate services or services which recognise the rights and relationships of gay, lesbian and bisexual people. To build confidence with staff and customers over monitoring in these two areas, you need to be clear about why you are asking for the information, how it will be used and be able to reassure customers that the information is kept confidential. Always include the answer option “prefer not to say”.

## Religion and Belief

What is your religion?

Christian	<input type="text"/>
Hindu	<input type="text"/>
Jewish	<input type="text"/>
Muslim	<input type="text"/>
Buddhist	<input type="text"/>
Sikh	<input type="text"/>
No religion	<input type="text"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>
Other – please state	<input type="text"/>

## Sexual Orientation

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/Straight	<input type="text"/>
Lesbian or Gay Woman	<input type="text"/>
Gay Man	<input type="text"/>
Bisexual	<input type="text"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>

## Gender Reassignment

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

Yes ☐ No ☐

## 5. How to ask?

We should always explain to customers why we are asking for any equality monitoring information – and if we cannot explain why then we shouldn't ask.

We should include a commitment to only use the information for the purpose stated and to explain that the questions are voluntary but that the more information is given, then the more helpful the results will be.

So, for example, before asking customers on a survey to provide equality monitoring information, we should include a paragraph that reads something like:

“The Council is committed to ensuring that all of its services are delivered fairly. Please answer the following questions about yourself to help us assess whether all sections of the community are equally satisfied with our service. We will use the information for no other purpose. The questions in this section are voluntary but the more information you provide, then the more we can learn about customers' views of our services.”

When asking customers face to face, don't be tempted to say, “I'm sorry I need to ask this” or “It says on the form I have to ask this, I don't know what they are going to do with it.” Staff carrying out this task on your behalf should be briefed on how to answer questions related to equality monitoring that send a positive message about why the Council monitors by protected characteristics and how the information helps to improve services to everyone.

## **6. Analysing and Using your Information**

The aim of equality monitoring is to reveal where services or policies might not be meeting people's needs. Therefore it is essential that the data collected is analysed and the results compared to actual targets set and any baseline data. It can then be used in day to day business to:

- Inform future service/business planning
- Provide evidence for equality impact assessments
- Demonstrate that the Council is fulfilling its legal duties to prevent discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where monitoring raises serious concerns, it should be reported to the relevant Head of Service/Committee and, if appropriate, the Equality Team for consideration at the Council's Corporate Equality Group.

## **7. Common questions and concerns about equality monitoring**

**“We haven't got space on the consultation form to do equality monitoring of respondents.”**

The important thing to consider is why you are carrying out the consultation in the first place and what it would be useful to know. The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to find out how changes to a service or policy will affect people who have protected characteristics and to put in place measures which will minimise or eliminate any discrimination and promote equal opportunities. If you know that your proposals might affect people with particular protected characteristics then you should be collecting relevant information to inform any decisions that will be made. If you don't do this, you could be criticised for not consulting properly and not taking into account the possible effects of your proposals on people with protected characteristics. This could ultimately lead to a judicial review. Therefore if your proposals will have an impact on people with protected characteristics, you need to make room on your form to ask relevant questions and/or monitor respondents by their protected characteristics.

**“We just haven't got the time”**

Collecting equality data is easy, just add the extra questions to any existing form. It doesn't take long to answer a few extra questions as part of a survey. However, the time it takes for customers does need to be proportionate to the type of service being monitored. For example, it may not be suitable to ask a customer for monitoring information every time they telephone to request a service or to report something. In these situations, where transactions with customers are short, the best thing to do is to ask for the information the first time and if possible to use existing customer databases after that to analyse how often a customer uses the service and how happy they are with them.

**“Customers will object to being asked”**

Relatively few people actually object to being asked and even fewer object if they understand why you are asking and what the information is used for.

**“We think that our proposals to change the service will affect everyone equally irrespective of whether they have a protected characteristic or not. Do we still need to carry out equality monitoring?”**

If evidence and/or experience is telling you that your proposals to change the service will not affect people with protected characteristics any differently than people without a protected characteristic, then you could ask a general question so that the public has the opportunity to raise any concerns that you might not have thought about. In this instance, the following general question could be used:

‘The Council is committed to ensuring that its services are delivered fairly and that it is complying with its public sector duties within the Equality Act 2010. If you have any concerns relating to protected characteristics ie age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, please detail them below.’

**“We have been sent a different list of statutory equality monitoring questions to use by an external agency (eg Ofsted). Do we use those or the Council’s?”**

Use the statutory questions and the Council’s. Some of the external inspection agencies have been slow to catch up with the legislation. Your experience will tell you which categories are appropriate to monitor. It is important that a protected characteristic is not excluded simply because it does not appear on a form from an external agency.

**“We cannot rely on the information because not enough people answered the questions”**

Sometimes only a very small number of people take part or the community itself may be more difficult to contact or just not be part of the current customer base. However, whilst the level of response and the numbers of people responding is important in helping to provide evidence, you can still learn a lot from analysing responses where a small number of people are involved – and this may help you to identify issues or things which need further investigation using other research methods – such as face to face consultation or more detailed research using focus groups or community groups to help you to reach a larger audience.

## **7. Useful Contacts**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Tel No</b>	<b>Area of Expertise</b>
Maggie Else	0115 977 4438	Equality
Karen Moss	0115 977 4860	Equality
Margaret Radford	0115 977 3187	Equality
Angela Smeeton	0115 977 2937	Consultation
Mandy Steel	0115 977 4898	Human Resources