

Guidance on Equality Monitoring

1. Why should I carry out equality monitoring?

- ✓ It helps us to identify and assess any disadvantage associated with protected characteristics (see list below) and plan improvements to our policies and services. Without monitoring, it is hard to know whether policies and services are being delivered fairly or meeting the diverse needs people have.
- ✓ It helps us check that any consultation exercise has reached a representative section of the community so that all views are fairly represented.
- ✓ It helps the Council demonstrate it is complying with its Public Sector Equality Duty – to prevent discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not.

2. Do I need to monitor all the protected characteristics?

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to demonstrate that we have given due regard to the needs of people with protected characteristics. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment/Identity
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation

Officers should adopt a common-sense attitude, assess their particular service area and monitor those protected characteristics that are appropriate to deliver their service fairly.

If you are organising a consultation exercise, consider whether your proposal is likely to have an impact on people with specific protected characteristics for example,

- If your consultation is about schools catering, it might be important to monitor respondents by religion so that you can understand different dietary needs.
- If your consultation is about changes to parking in a town centre, it might be important to monitor respondents by age and disability to understand issues about accessibility.
- If you are consulting the population of Nottinghamshire on general satisfaction of our services, it might be appropriate to monitor respondents by all the protected characteristics to check that you are reaching all sections of the community.

3. How should I ask people for their equality data?

Assuming that you have considered the reasons why you are doing equality monitoring and know what you will do with the information once you have collected it, you now need to consider what questions you want to ask.

Wherever possible, ask equality questions in the main part of the questionnaire so that the customer can see their relevance to the subject matter, for example when consulting on changes to passenger transport, questions about age and disability were put into the main body of the form to find out information relating to mobility and access and did not ask separate equality monitoring questions at the end.

Sometimes however it is appropriate to ask equality monitoring questions at the end of the consultation form and in these circumstances, you could use the following statement to explain why you are asking for the information:

“The Council is committed to delivering its services fairly. So that we can check that what we are providing is fair and effective, we would be grateful if you could answer the questions below. The more information you provide in this section, the more we can learn about customers’ views of our services.”

You might also like to consider using the following statement provided by Stonewall, the charity which represents the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people:

Why we’re asking

When you sign up to our services, or give us feedback, we might ask some extra questions about you. This includes a couple of questions about your sexual orientation and gender identity. Here’s why you should let us know:

WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE	YOUR INFORMATION IS SAFE	HELP US IMPROVE OUR SERVICES
We ask questions to collect overall statistical information – not to pinpoint individuals. It helps us understand who is and isn’t accessing our services, and how satisfied different groups of people are.	There are strict laws to make sure your information is stored safely and responsibly. Your answers are confidential and we’ll always tell you how they’re going to be used before we ask.	By learning more about the people we serve, we can tailor our services to meet your needs. In the past, we’ve used this information to <i>[insert example from your service]</i> .



[insert service logo]

If you are unable to incorporate equality questions in the main part of the questionnaire, then the following questions can be used as appropriate:

Age

What is your age?

Under 16		46-55	
16-25		56-65	
26-35		Over 65	
36-45			

Disability

Do you have a long term illness or disability? Y/N

If yes, please specify the type of impairment(s).

Mobility		Mental Health	
Hearing		Communication	
Vision		Other (please specify)	
Learning			

Gender

What best describes your gender?

Male	
Female	
Prefer to self-describe	

If you are unable to provide a free text category for people to self-describe, you can include 'other' to recognise the fact that some people do not identify as male or female.

Titles and Gender Options

When signing up for services, service users are regularly asked for their title and gender. Often, the options given exclude non-binary identities. The option of Mx should be included as an option for trans and non binary people. When designing forms, you should carefully consider whether you need this information. If you do, service users should always be given open text boxes to use their own terms or be given the option to leave the title blank.

Race

What is your ethnic origin?

White	
Black	
Asian	
Chinese	
Mixed	
Other (please specify)	

If it would be useful to know ethnic origin in more detail, you could consider the following categories:

White	British	
	Irish	
	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT)	
	Any other white background – please describe	

Mixed	Black Caribbean & White	
(dual heritage)	Black African & White	
	Asian & White	
	Any other mixed background – please describe	

Asian/Asian	Indian	
British	Pakistani	
	Bangladeshi	
	Chinese	
	Any other Asian background – please describe	

Black/Black	African	
British	Caribbean	
	Any other Black background – please describe	

Other Ethnic	Arab	
groups	Any other ethnic group – please describe	

Monitoring Religion and Belief (including non belief) and Sexual Orientation

Services may need to ask equality monitoring questions relating to religion and belief and sexual orientation and especially if there is a lack of data relating to these areas. 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. Putting the sexual orientation questions before those on religion/belief has been shown to be more effective than after religion/belief.

Sexual Orientation

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/Straight	
Gay/Lesbian	
Bisexual	
Prefer to self-describe:	

If you are unable to provide a free text category for people to self-describe, you can include 'other' to recognise the fact that some people do not identify as the options you have provided.

Religion and Belief

Which of these statements best describes you?

I am a Christian		I am a Sikh	
I am Hindu		I have no religion or belief	
I am Jewish		Other – please specify:	
I am a Muslim			
I am a Buddhist			

General Equality Monitoring Question

If evidence or experience is telling you that your proposals to change the service will not affect people with protected characteristics any differently than people without one, then you could ask the following general question so that the public has the opportunity to raise any concerns that you might not have thought about.

“The Council is committed to delivering its services fairly and complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. If you, or a member of your family, have a specific need which affects the way you use our services, please give details below:....”

4. What do I do with the information I have collected?

The aim of equality monitoring is to check that your consultation has reached a diverse audience and 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 officers for consideration at the Council's Corporate Equality Group.

5. Who do I contact for help?

Name	Tel No	Area of Expertise
Karen Moss	0115 977 4860	Equality

6. Frequently Asked Questions on 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 Public Sector Equality Duty 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.

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

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 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. Sample Equality Monitoring Questionnaire

A sample questionnaire is attached for you to use or edit as appropriate to your needs.

Equality Monitoring Sample Questionnaire

Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to treating people fairly and complying with its Public Sector Equality Duty. So that we can monitor that what we are providing is meeting people's needs and is fair and effective, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions about yourself. Please be assured the information you give will not identify you individually and will be used for no other purpose and will remain confidential.

1. What is your age?

Under 16		46-55	
16-25		56-65	
26-35		Over 65	
36-45			

2. What best describes your gender?

Male	
Female	
Prefer to self-describe:	

3. Do you have a long term illness or disability? Y/N

If yes, please specify the type of impairment(s).

Mobility		Mental Health	
Hearing		Communication	
Vision		Other (please specify)	
Learning			

4. What is your ethnic origin?

White	
Black	
Asian	
Chinese	
Mixed	
Other (please specify)	

5. What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/straight	
Gay/Lesbian	
Bisexual	
Prefer to self-describe:	

6. Which of these statements best describes you?

I am a Christian		I am a Sikh	
I am Hindu		I have no religion	
I am a Muslim		Other (please specify):	
I am a Buddhist			