



## Diversity and Inclusion Survey (DAISY) question guidance - Working draft

**The guidance is a work in progress** and comes from reviewing existing diversity monitoring questionnaires and recommendations, alongside ongoing informal consultation. As best practice continues to develop in this area and we become aware of different perspectives and experiences, our ideas will change – and we welcome feedback or suggestions for updates. We are sharing this working draft so that others can see our thinking around the best ways to ask diversity monitoring questions, and what sources we have used to develop this. We'd like to thank the members of EDIS for their feedback on an earlier draft.

This guidance is **specific to a UK context** and may not be applicable in other settings. For example, best practice questions and response options for race and ethnicity will vary substantially and are legally prohibited in some countries. There is also some variation in approaches to diversity monitoring across the UK's four nations.

If you are interested in reading more about diversity monitoring, we recommend the recent UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion evidence reviews (the [UK review](#) and the [International review](#)). In both reviews, Chapter 7 is particularly relevant.

### **Here are some of our general recommendations, followed by suggestions for questions you could ask and why you might choose to ask them in certain ways**

#### **Think about GDPR in good time**

Diversity monitoring data is often potentially identifiable (as you can triangulate between different responses), so it is important to think about GDPR in good time: ask for advice in your organisation and/or look at available online resources (e.g. Information Commissioner's Office [Guide to GDPR](#)). When reporting the findings, it is also vital to ensure that the data isn't identifiable. This can be done by not reporting data for any groups smaller than 10 people – where relevant, you can combine response options for categories with small numbers to achieve this.

#### **Make sure that your survey is accessible**

There are a number of ways that surveys can be made more accessible, including providing opportunities to complete them in multiple different formats (e.g. online, paper, verbal), ensuring that online text and formatting is compatible with a screen-reader, and using accessible fonts. Most online survey tools provide accessibility guidance and the UK Government Digital Service also provides detailed [accessibility advice](#) for government consultations, which can be helpful in other settings.

#### **Use alphabetical order**

It is a good idea to list response options in alphabetical order, to avoid appearing to prioritise certain responses (e.g. by putting "White" or "Straight" first). However, options such as "Prefer to self-describe" and "Prefer not to say" don't need to be alphabetised and can be put wherever makes most sense, usually at the end. Some organisations also recommend asking the diversity monitoring questions in alphabetical order by topic (e.g. Age, Disability, Ethnicity etc).

#### **Response rates**

Response rates are key to the value of diversity monitoring data. We plan to include suggestions for increasing response rates in future versions of this guidance. The recent [UKRI review](#) flags the following three areas as potentially impacting disclosure (page 53): environmental (developing a culture where people feel able to disclose identity characteristics without concern about negative consequences); technological (e.g. survey software, privacy and data security), and behavioural (methods used to ask questions). We believe that showing that you are genuinely using the data collected to advocate for and create positive change in EDI is also crucial for preventing survey fatigue in this area.



### Balancing missing data and 'prefer not to say'

It is difficult to use diversity monitoring data in a meaningful way if there is lots of missing data, but this needs to be balanced with giving people the opportunity not to answer questions if they would prefer not to. For this reason, it is important to give people the option of "Prefer not to say". However, it can also be useful to remind people that the more data you have, the more useful the survey will be. In online surveys, it is often possible to add prompts if people have left an item blank, asking if they would like to complete this before moving onto the next question. Missing data can also be reduced by thinking carefully about your response options. For example, someone might not want to report exactly what their caring responsibilities are but would be happy to report that they have caring responsibilities of some sort, and this can be included in the response options (see question guidance below).

### Design questions and benchmark with care

One of the most common reasons for collecting diversity monitoring data is to benchmark against existing statistics. To do this well it is crucial to ensure that you really are comparing like with like. Even if it seems like two questions are asking very similar things, slight differences can have a big impact on how people interpret the questions and the answers they give. If you aim to benchmark against other statistics (e.g. census data), you need to find out how the questions were asked for these statistics and ask your questions in a comparable way. This is particularly important in some areas, for example there are substantial differences in how surveys ask questions about disability and/or chronic health conditions, which leads to large variability in reporting rates and issues with comparability and benchmarking. The most important statistics to benchmark against will depend on the context of your data collection. In some settings, there are standards for what data is collected and how (e.g. [HESA](#) for UK higher education data). As highlighted in the recent [UKRI review](#) recommendations (page 55), questions should aim to comply with reporting requirements and, to the greatest extent possible, enable people to respond in a way which reflects their lived experience.

### Decide which questions are most important for you

Our suggested questions cover multiple important areas in diversity monitoring, but questions will be more or less relevant in different contexts and you should select the ones which are most relevant for your survey and organisation. For example, different questions may be required in an HR context compared with the questions you might ask to understand more about attendees at an event. As above, in some settings there are standards for what data is collected and how, and these standards should be followed in these settings (e.g. HESA for UK higher education data). It is therefore likely that you will want to adapt some of these suggested questions/response options or add in additional questions to suit your needs. We plan to include guidance on questions about nationality and region in future version of this guidance.

## Age

### Suggested question structure:

#### What is your age?

- Up to 24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65-74 years
- 75+ years
- Prefer not to say

*(These are example response categories which can be adapted)*

### Things to consider

This is a relatively standard structure for questions about age. Age categories (rather than date of birth) usually give enough information for diversity monitoring.

If you want to compare with existing data, your categories need to be compatible with those used in previous data collection or reporting (e.g. using 25-34 years or 30-39 years)

Consider the likely age of respondents and adapt your response categories for these, but don't make assumptions - e.g. that all PhD students are in their 20s or that everyone in employment is under the age of 65.

## Disability and long-term health conditions

### Suggested question structure:

#### 1. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

#### 2. A) Do you have any of the following disabilities, long-term conditions or impairments? Select all that apply:

- I do not have a disability, long-term condition or impairment
- I have a disability, condition or impairment listed below but prefer not to specify which
- Dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia
- Neurodiverse (e.g. autism or ADHD)
- Hearing, speech or visual
- Long-term health condition (such as diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis, heart condition, epilepsy, energy-limiting conditions, chronic pain)
- Mental health condition
- Mobility or musculoskeletal (including back, neck and shoulder)
- I have a disability, condition or impairment not listed above (*please describe if you wish*)

### Things to consider

We recommend asking multiple questions about disability and explaining why you are doing this in your questionnaire. For example: *"The following 3 questions ask about disability and long-term conditions in different ways. Asking about disability is complex, and these questions will help us to develop a broader understanding and compare with existing statistics. Please answer each question separately and don't feel that your answer to one should determine your answer to the others."*

The final sentence above is important as many people who meet the [Equality Act definition of disability](#) (see Q3) do not consider themselves to be disabled (see Q1). There are many possible reasons for this – for example, some people reject the language around disability entirely, whilst others would view themselves as having an illness or health problem rather than a disability.

**Suggested Question 1:** This question is widely used by UK public sector organisations (e.g. see Kirklees Council guidance [here](#)). It enables people to self-identify and allows you to explore the experiences of people who identify as disabled. However, this question generally can't be used for benchmarking against official statistics (e.g. the UK

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- Prefer not to say

OR

2. **B) Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term condition?** (such as dyslexia, diabetes, arthritis, a heart condition, or a mental health condition)

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

3. **Do you experience barriers or limitations in your day-to-day activities related to any disability, health conditions or impairments?**

- Not applicable
- No
- Yes
- Prefer not to say

### Other questions

Other options include the [Government Statistical Service](#) harmonised questions for measuring disability for the Equality Act 2010. These are helpful for benchmarking purposes, but the phrasing of the questions around “conditions or illness [which] reduce your ability” could be considered problematic.

Some surveys provide the Equality Act definition of disability and ask people if they consider themselves to be disabled based on this definition. However, this can be confusing and may be problematic as you are imposing a definition of disability on people who might not be comfortable defining themselves in this way.

If you're unsure about appropriate terminology, useful guidance can be found [on the Government Office for Disability's website](#). We also recommend reading about the [social model of disability](#) and trying to ask questions and report findings in a way which is consistent with this.

census) because it leads to much lower reporting rates than the Equality Act definition.

**Suggested Question 2:** The two suggested Q2 options are adapted from recommendations from the [Business Disability Forum](#) (BDF). The BDF state that their suggested categories or examples can be edited (as we have done here) but recommend that categories for type of condition should be kept relatively broad.

Suggested Question 2A) about types of conditions can be helpful for providing an overview about potential areas of need. If you ask this question it is crucial to allow people to select all that apply, as many people will experience conditions from more than one category. Questions about specific types of disability, conditions or impairments (i.e. 2A) should only be asked if you are able to analyse and use this information. This is dependent on time and resources as well as sample size. If you don't have sufficient numbers or capacity, then question 2B) could be asked instead.

**Question 3:** This question is adapted from the Equality Act definition of disability (a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities). This is helpful for benchmarking as the Equality Act definition is used as the basis for many diversity monitoring statistics, particularly in an employment setting. We phrased our suggested Q3 to talk about experience of barriers rather than people being impaired, based on the social model of disability.

If you can only ask one question about disability, it is important to think about which of these questions is most important for you.

### Reporting guidelines

You should try to report your findings using the same language used in the question. For example, don't report that x% of people are disabled if the question actually asked if people experience barriers or limitations in their day-to-day activities. Instead, it would be better to report that x% meet the Equality Act definition of disability.

## Ethnicity

### Suggested question structure:

**What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background**

#### **Asian / Asian British**

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian background, *please describe*

#### **Black / African / Caribbean / Black British**

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, *please describe*

#### **Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups**

- Asian and White
- Black Caribbean and White
- Black African and White
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background, *please describe*

#### **White**

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Irish
- Any other White background, *please describe*

#### **Any other ethnic group**

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group, *please describe*

### Things to consider

This question comes from the 2011 UK census. If you are asking questions to a UK based sample, it is generally best to use the Government Statistics Service recommended ethnicity questions (as used in the UK census). We recommended giving the response categories in alphabetical order.

Although these categories are widely used, we believe that further development of this question is needed – for example, whether any response options should be added or removed. Development of the 2021 UK census question is in progress and the response option “Roma” is likely to be added.

It is much more difficult to develop race/ethnicity categories for international groups. Race is a social construct and will therefore be a product of the social context it is asked in. One option for international surveys is to provide a free text box and ask people to self-describe their ethnicity, but this can then require substantial work to code the data, particularly if the sample is large.



## Gender

### Suggested question structure:

#### Which of the following best describes your gender?

- Man
- Non-binary
- Woman
- Prefer to self-describe (*please describe*)
- Prefer not to say

### Things to consider

Questions are asked about gender in many different ways. This question is based on combining guidance, e.g. from [Stonewall](#), [IX Interactions](#) and the [Human Rights Campaign](#).

For D&I monitoring we are usually interested in gender, a socially constructed concept, rather than sex, which relates to biological characteristics. However, sometimes questions are asked around sex because the Equality Act 2010 lists sex as the protected characteristic rather than gender. It is correct to use “woman” and “man” when asking about gender, rather than male and female which relate to sex. However, questionnaires often ask people to report their gender using male and female as categories, which can be confusing. The option “other” should be avoided, “prefer to self-describe” can be used instead.

Some specific data collection purposes (e.g. for pensions) require a dichotomous response of male or female. Unless you are collecting data for these purposes you should not give dichotomous response options for gender (i.e. include non-binary and an option to self-describe).

Trans identity should be explored as a separate follow-up question, it is incorrect and inappropriate to list “trans” as an option in the original gender question (see below).

## Gender identity

### Suggested question structure:

#### Do you identify as trans?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

### Things to consider

This question is recommended in the Stonewall guide “[Do ask, do tell](#)”. Under the Equality Act, “gender reassignment” is a protected characteristic, however alternative wording such as “gender identity” is usually preferred.

Some questions ask people whether their gender identity matches their sex as registered at birth. However, unless this is crucial for your data collection, we recommend asking people whether they identify as trans as this is generally considered to be a less intrusive question.

## Sexual orientation

### Suggested question structure:

#### Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bi/bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Queer
- Straight/heterosexual
- Pansexual
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

### Things to consider

This question is based on the [Advance HE](#) recommendations, which draw on definitions from Stonewall and Maape. Advance HE and the Equality Challenge Unit state that although “queer” has previously been a derogatory term, the term has been reclaimed by many LGB+ individuals who don’t identify with the traditional categories around sexual orientation. We also include “pansexual” as an additional response option, based on feedback from previous survey respondents.

Helpful information additional about asking questions on sexual orientation (and gender identity) can be found in the Stonewall guide “[Do ask, do tell](#)”

## Caring responsibilities

### Suggested question structure:

#### Do you have any caring responsibilities? (tick all that apply)

- None
- Primary carer of a child or children (under 18)
- Joint primary carer of a child or children (under 18)
- Primary carer of a disabled child or children
- Joint primary carer of a disabled child or children
- Primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years or over)
- Joint primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years or over)
- Primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 and over)
- Joint primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 and over)
- Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)
- I have caring responsibilities but prefer not to specify what these are
- Prefer not to say

### Things to consider

This question comes from [Advance HE](#) recommendations, which draw on guidance from the Carer’s Trust.

We added options for “joint primary carer” following consultation with Wellcome’s Parents and Carers Staff Network, as this reflects how many people describe their caring responsibilities.

## Religion

### Suggested question structure:

#### What is your religion or strongly held belief, if any?

- No religion
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Spiritual
- Any other religion or belief (*please describe*)
- I have a religion or strongly held belief but prefer not to specify what this is
- Prefer not to say

### Things to consider

This question is an adapted version of the planned UK 2021 census question. As with questions about disability, differences in the ways that questions about religion are asked lead to substantial variability in reporting rates

The 2011 UK Census asked “What is your religion?” Although “no religion” is given as an option, this question is seen to lead to over-estimation of the proportion of people who are religious, as people may report religions that they are culturally or previously affiliated with, as opposed to reporting their current faith. This is borne out in the fact that, according to the census, 25% of people in the UK have no religion – whereas in the [British Social Attitudes Survey](#) (2018), 52% of people did not regard themselves as belonging to any religion based on alternative questions. The 2021 UK Census plans to update the question to “What is your religion, if any?”, a variant of which is suggested here.

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) [has recommended inclusion of 'Spiritual'](#) which was not included in the Census, defined as belief in the spiritual dimension of all life, which can be experienced directly and without the assistance of conventional religion'.

### Reporting guidelines

If you ask the census-based question, this should be reported in terms of cultural affiliation rather than faith.



## Socio-economic variables

### Suggested question structure:

**1. What type of school did you attend for the majority of your time between the ages of 11 - 16?**

- A state-run or state-funded school in the UK - Non-selective
- A state-run or state-funded school outside the UK - Non-selective
- A state-run or state-funded school in the UK - Selective on academic, faith or other ground
- A state-run or state-funded school outside the UK - Selective on academic, faith or other ground
- Independent or fee-paying school in the UK
- Independent or fee-paying school outside the UK
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say

**2. When you were 18, had any of your parents or guardians completed a university degree course or equivalent (e.g., BA, BSc or higher)?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say

**3. Please tell us about the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged 14. If this question does not apply to you (because, for example, you were in care at this time) select "This question does not apply to me".**

- Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, clerical worker, call centre agent, nursery nurse.
- Long term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year)
- Middle or junior managers such as: office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- Modern professional occupations such as: teacher nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer.

### Things to consider

These questions based on recommendations from The Bridge Group. Asking questions about socio-economic status (SES) is complex, and no single questions can fully indicate a person's SES. Again, you may want to ask multiple questions – or think about what aspects of SES are most relevant in your context.

[The Bridge Group](#) has [published guidance](#) on questions to ask relating to socioeconomic diversity based around five key criteria:

1. Accurate measure of disadvantage
2. Comparability
3. Likely to elicit a response
4. Clarity of the measure
5. Longevity of measure

We have used the following three questions, but more options are described in their guidance

- **Suggested Question 1** is a frequently used measure of SES and can be used to benchmark against UK populations and other employers.
- **Suggested Question 2** can also be used to benchmark against UK populations and other employers. It is recommended to ask this question related to when the respondent was 18 rather than asking them to report whether this is currently true.
- **Suggested Question 3** is based on a measure of employment relations and conditions of occupations, published by the Office of National Statistics. Parental occupation is an important indicator of SES. The response options are relatively complicated but this methodology for classifying parental occupation is well-established.

If this section is of particular interest to your organisation, the Government has published [recommendations on how employers can measure socio-economic background in their workforce](#). The recommendations have been developed in consultation with private sector employers and experts.

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- Routine manual and service occupations such as: HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
- Retired
- Senior managers or administrators (usually responsible for planning, organising and co-ordinating work, and for finance) such as: finance manager, chief executive.
- Semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant.
- Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- Traditional professional occupations such as: accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil /mechanical engineer.
- This question does not apply to me
- I don't know
- None of the above (*please describe*)
- Prefer not to say

