Version 1 May 2021



# **DIVERSITY DATA COLLECTION**

A guide to increasing engagement and response rates

The <u>Diversity and Inclusion Survey (DAISY) Guidance</u> published last year was a step towards harmonising EDIS members' approaches to data collection. While this guidance may be useful in other contexts, it is primarily focused on the UK context. This document will be periodically updated and we welcome feedback. A huge thank you goes to the EDIS members and Wellcome's Culture, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team for their contributions to this guide.

Collecting good quality diversity data can be hampered by low response rates. This limits the reliability, reproducibility and ability to interpret the data. Asking the right questions so people feel included is one way of improving this and part f the rationale behind the DAISY Guidance.

As a next step we've explored, researched and shared more of what we've learnt about diversity data collection response rates and ways to improve them. There are additional resources for tips to increase response rates to more general 'inclusion surveys' or 'workplace engagement' surveys online<sup>1,2,3,4,</sup> but we wanted to focus on the diversity data piece in this guide due to the additional power and trust dynamics that impact personal identity disclosure rates.

The goals for demographic data collection are generally:

- To use the data as one of many indicators of progress towards an inclusive and equitable organisation/sector
- To have good enough data that new research questions can be asked of it e.g. Who aren't we reaching? What impact has X intervention had? What are the long-term trends of representation in Y?

"Anonymised data is not the same as anonymous data" – Em Dixon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> How to Improve Engagement Survey Response Rates (Serena Doherty, great{with}talent) <u>https://greatwithtalent.me/2013/09/19/how-to-improve-engagement-survey-response-rates/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> How to Improve Employee Survey Participation – with 15 Tips (Claire Turnbull, Hive) <u>https://www.hive.hr/blog/improving-employee-</u> survey-participation/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> What is a good employee survey response rate? (Jason McPherson, Culture Amp) <u>https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/what-is-a-good-survey-response-rate/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Response rates: The key to a successful survey project (Aidan Stead, Agenda Consulting)

https://www.agendaconsulting.co.uk/2019/05/16/response-rates-the-key-to-a-successful-survey-project/



What is key is the role trustworthiness plays. Demographic data has been weaponised in the past. Power imbalances exist within our workplaces, institutes and society, and we are working within a legacy of power abuse when it comes to personal data (especially in the bio/medical sciences).

Putting the responsibility on people to trust organisations collecting diversity data is flawed. You must instead work to improve the trustworthiness of the systems, decisions and structures you put in place<sup>5</sup>.

Data collection is not a neutral act and we must always be conscious of the impact asking these questions will have on the individual answering them.

For further reading on inclusive data collection please see the following articles:

- Inclusive data: perspectives from a roundtable discussion (Open Data Institute)
- The dividing line: how we represent race in data (Open Data Institute)
- To be seen we must be measured: data visualisation and inequality (Ada Lovelace Institute)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Dr Natalie Banner: How to talk about data without talking about data (Chris Wigley, Genomics England) <u>https://genomicsengland.podbean.com/e/natalie-banner/</u>

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#### WHY DON'T PEOPLE FILL IN DIVERSITY DATA FORMS?

It's important to understand the multitude of reasons why people don't fill in diversity data questionnaires. Our insights have pointed to 3 groups of people (although individuals don't have to fall solely in one group). Considering these perspectives when designing methods of collection, communications, lines of responsibility and resulting action plans will help include everyone in your approach to improving response rates.

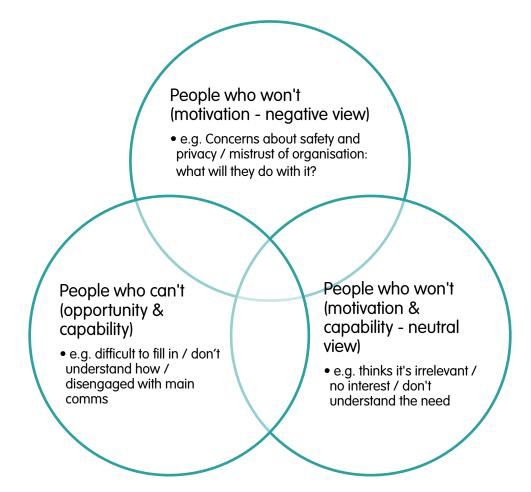


Figure 1 EDIS members, staff and community members shared their experiences of why people don't fill in diversity data forms. We've grouped these thoughts under common themes.

The UKRI '<u>Equality</u>, diversity and inclusion in research and innovation: UK review' identifies 3 key areas to target to improve low disclosure rates as:

- 1. environmental: development of an inclusive culture where people feel able to disclose identity characteristics without fear of negative reprisal
- 2. technological: methods used to disclose information, privacy and data security
- 3. behavioural: methods used to ask questions

You may want to consider these categories as you develop your diversity data collection strategy to further identify barriers and appropriate solutions.



#### WHAT WORKS

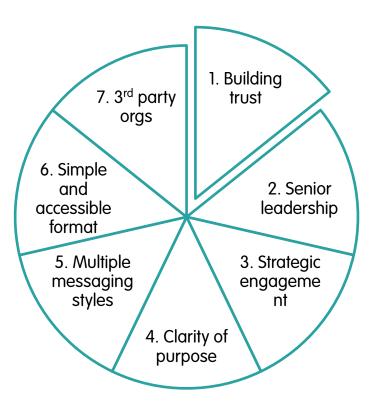


Figure 2 We've identified 7 elements to consider when planning diversity data collection projects. We've highlighted building trust in particular as this also intersects with all the elements listed here: trust in the technical systems you use, trust of institutional governance, and trust in the transparency and openness of the process (including resulting actions).

#### 1. BUILDING TRUST

Trust is key to diversity data collection. The people filling in their personal data must trust that you will not (as has been demonstrated before): misuse the data<sup>6</sup>, share the data<sup>7</sup>, allow individuals to be identified<sup>8</sup> or allow harm to come to individuals based their identity<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Examples of misuse of Census 2001 data on religion (British Humanist Association) <u>https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Howthecensusisused.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> ICO issues maximum £500,000 fine to Facebook for failing to protect users' personal information (Information Commissioner's Office) <u>https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/news-and-blogs/2018/10/facebook-issued-with-maximum-500-000-fine/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> North London council fined after parking ticket system flaw leaves personal information at risk (Information Commissioner's Office) <u>https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/news-and-blogs/2017/08/north-london-council-fined-after-parking-ticket-system-flaw-leaves-personal-information-at-risk/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Dangerous Data: the role of data collection in genocides (Zara Rahman, The Engine Room) <u>https://www.theengineroom.org/dangerous-data-the-role-of-data-collection-in-genocides/</u>



Putting the responsibility on people to trust organisations collecting diversity data is a flawed approach. You must instead work improve the trustworthiness of the systems, decisions and structures you put in place. Consider how you can **demonstrate and communicate that**:

- The data will be stored safely, remain private and anonymous
  - this includes clarity that managers, co-workers, committee members or event teams won't have access to raw data
- The organisation is acting in good faith and clear in its own objectives for using diversity data
- The organisation will act on the results/analysis
  - $\circ$   $\;$  This includes being upfront as to who is accountable for these actions
- The data won't be used to further marginalise groups

Transparency is key to building this trust, so don't shy away from this part of the conversation. Acknowledge the potential concerns of individuals and groups and address them directly.

## Trust is hard to earn but easy to lose

From EDIS members' experiences, even if you've explained who will see the data (e.g. clarifying it will not be managers or co-workers) some people will still need verbal reassurance. Have ways in place to explain and/or confirm things to them personally such as:

- Hosting drop-in sessions for face to face reassurances.
- Have a space for anonymous Q&As (like <u>slido</u>).
- Build FAQ pages on internal communications platforms.
- Have a named individual people can speak to with their concerns and be clear this person won't be handling the data directly themselves.
- Set up stalls at events/in social spaces with people to answer queries and laptops/iPads available

# 2. SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Senior leadership buy-in to any EDI project is essential as it will improve access to resource (money, time and people), help EDI to become embedded throughout the organisation through cascading directives and means someone at decision-making level is advocating for EDI work.

Direct communications from senior leadership can be very effective at increasing response rates. Ways you could do this could be:

- A direct email to staff an email to all staff from a member of the executive leadership team at one EDIS member organisation resulted in almost half of all respondents filling in their data that same day.
- Your keynote speaker and/or your introductory speaker at an event could remind attendees to fill in their forms and emphasise your key messages.



• The head of your organisation could publish a news post talking about why you're collecting this data and its importance. This could be shared on their personal LinkedIn and twitter accounts (or other relevant social media or sites).

#### 3. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT, CLARITY OF PURPOSE AND MULTIPLE MESSAGING STYLES ALL MAKE UP YOUR OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.

Some groups have lower engagement with an organisation or event host in general e.g. don't regularly check intranet sites or low click through rates to all campaigns.

Use your knowledge of your own organisation to identify these groups and target engagement strategies directly to them e.g. can you present at the division's team meeting? Or at a specific conference for that group of members?

You will also need to consider the weight of importance of reaching each group with the resource and time you have available – could you reach a whole group through one person? Is there a low effort engagement piece that could greatly increase one groups response rates? Do you need to put a large amount of time resource into a particular group because they are persistently underrepresented?

#### 4. CLARITY OF PURPOSE

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT, CLARITY OF PURPOSE AND MULTIPLE MESSAGING STYLES ALL MAKE UP YOUR OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.

As part of your communications plan, you must be clear about why you're collecting the data, why it's important for people to respond and how you will use this data. It might be useful to justify why each question is being asked, but this is especially important if you're changing questions from previous surveys or introducing new questions or options.

It's easy to become very 'wordy' in the pre-amble to data collection where we want to explain everything about the survey. As people will be engaging with the survey from different perspectives, use fuller explanations in some messaging and then simpler explanations in other communications (with the ability for people to still find the complete clarity of purpose messaging if they want to.

It can be difficult to outline benefits for an individual to sharing their demographic data, so it is often more useful to outline the benefits to all staff, attendees, members as a collective. If this isn't your first data collection round, outline the actions you've taken since the last that were informed by the survey to help show why you collect this data.

Communicating your organisation's own objectives for using diversity data can also help with building trustworthiness, especially if this is includes a commitment to planned actions and lines of accountability.



#### 5. MULTIPLE MESSAGING STYLES

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT, CLARITY OF PURPOSE AND MULTIPLE MESSAGING STYLES ALL MAKE UP YOUR OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.

As mentioned above, you will have different audience and different messages you need to convey – so you will need a comms plan. Consider how you align the purpose of each communication piece with each audience group and use this to drive which key messages or method of communication you use. You can use the *Example planning sheet (Data collection project)*\* at the end of this guide to help you.

You'll need to work out the best way to reach people and share these messages and there are many options available. Start by identifying different audience 'personas' (you could use the Venn diagram in Figure 1 to help) – where do they engage with your organisation, what interests them, what are their concerns? Tailor your messaging to each. EDIS members have used a combination of:

- Written pieces like news posts or blogs
- Visual pieces like posters or flyers
- Email reminders from different people (senior leaders, affinity network leads) with different levels of detail
- Briefing sessions and FAQ documents for managers, HR partners, or customer inquiry respondents
- Talks or announcements at staff meetings or conferences

There may be some limits to what you can do while working remotely so don't be afraid to be creative!

#### 6. SIMPLE AND ACCESSIBLE FORMAT

An accessible survey or questionnaire is essential to increasing response rates. Simplicity, length of survey and number of clicks (if using computer software) all play their part.

There are also elements of design you can implement to make your data collection process accessible to as many people as technically possible<sup>10</sup> (<u>Universal Design</u> and <u>Design for All</u> approaches). It is normally impossible to design accessibility for every individual with a single tool though – there can be conflicts in accessibility needs. You should aim for more than one method or design configuration of the data collection process for where this might happen (<u>Inclusive Design</u> philosophy is a helpful approach).

Making the process of submitting personal data when using a computer software or online platform simple is important as there is can be a large amount of variability in IT skills – 25% of the UK adult population are unable to use computers beyond single-step tasks<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Designing for accessibility posters (UK Home Office) <u>https://ukhomeoffice.github.io/accessibility-posters/posters/accessibility-posters/dccessibility-dccess</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Skills Matter: Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills – Table A2.6 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) <u>https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/skills-matter\_9789264258051-en</u>

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Accessibility extends to how you present and share the data as well. Simplicity in the messaging you share on the analysis and clarity of actions/outcomes for any report or news post is best, with further links through to dashboards or data for people who are interested further. If you are including graphs, tables, or charts make sure these are designed with as much thought for accessibility as your data collection for example through how you use colour and label data points<sup>12</sup>.

### 7. 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTY ORGANISATIONS

Some people feel more comfortable submitting diversity data to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisation or external software as this puts more distance between their raw data and their organisation, colleagues or managers. Using an external organisation to collect the raw data and report it back to you can demonstrate a very clear message that internal staff or line managers etc won't see the raw data. It can also demonstrate that you are taking this process seriously, resourcing it appropriately and investing in the process for the future.

However, using a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to collect and report this data also has risks that must be mitigated for:

- 1. People need to be able to trust the external organisation.
  - a. They won't have the same relationship with them that could support this trust. Look for organisations with good data protection reputations that have worked with charities and non-profit organisations or partnerships. People are rightfully concerned about what any organisation will do with their data, so ensuring that any 3<sup>rd</sup> party won't use it, sell it on or lose it is essential.
- 2. There may be limitations of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations' tool/software/product.
  - a. We are developing more inclusive questions than are typically available through the DAISY guidance. Not all organisations will understand these as standard, have the ability to customise their platforms to include the options we list, or have experience analysing the data from them.
  - b. If anyone is designing a new system try to design accountability and actions in from the start.
    It's helpful for people to know 'this information/data will go to these people' and then examples of associated actions and who is accountable for the actions.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

It's important to keep thinking about why you're asking for this information, what you're going to do with it and why someone would give you their information. There are also some additional things to consider that the EDIS members have shared:

- Where does power lie as people submit data? This will differ between groups, for examples for employees there is a greater power imbalance between them and their organisation than for job applicants according to data protection regulation.
- How have you made it clear that data is separated from outcomes-based activities like applications and funding decisions?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Accessibility Considerations In Data Visualization Design (Keen) <u>https://keen.io/blog/accessibility-in-data-vis/</u>



- Have you considered what language you're using to encourage people to submit data:
  - You need to balance any emphasis on the value of completing with the fact that it is optional. Encouragement is fine as long as it's not forcing or coercing anyone to fill things in. You'll need to balance phrases such as "Please fill in your data because it's helpful" vs "It's optional to fill in your data, you don't have to if you don't want to, but it is helpful".
- Can you tie your questions directly into your EDI strategy and vision? If so, communicate this.
  - E.g. if you have a strong focus on anti-racism, you may want to focus on adding more detail to questions on ethnicity and commit to intersectional analysis with ethnicity across other characteristics.
- When you get to a position where understanding of EDI, diversity data collection and strategy is increasing in the people you are asking this information of, expect to be critiqued more around your process and the actions expected from the data. This is a positive and shows great progress, but expectations management and accountability is essential.
- Taking on survey feedback doesn't appear to make a large difference to response rates, but the small number of people who are interested and engaged who give this feedback are more likely to become advocates for further engagement if you listen to them (plus they provide lots of great suggestions!).

Hopefully, through the tips listed above and using the template help sheets at the end of this document, people will be more likely to fill in their data, will fill in more of their data and will keep their data up to ate (if relevant/possible).



EXAMPLE PLANNING SHEET (DATA COLLECTION PROJECT)								
Name of project	e.g. "Grants diversity monitoring data 2021" or "Symposium attendees 2021"							
Questions you	e.g. "Are there differences in application success rates for grant applications by ethnicity?"							
want to answer	or "Was there a difference in the demographic makeup of attendees compared to the target audience?"							
Data you will collect & how	You can use the <u>DAISY guidance</u> to support what questions you should ask to collect relevant data. Collection could be through a online survey, paper form, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party org etc.							
Actions you will take (and <u>persons</u> <u>responsible</u> )	e.g. "Where differences in success rates are shown, the <u>director of grants</u> with support of the EDI committee will develop an action plan with an initial goal to reduce this by 50% for 2022" or "If there are fewer people from a particular demographic background than expected, the <u>events and marketing leads</u> will consult with representative bodies of these groups and prioritise their inclusion and attendance at the next event."							
How will you share the data analysis?	e.g. "Online dashboards will be available for members of the public to view aggregated data" or "A blog post will be written and shared on our website of the analysis, findings and agreed actions in August"							
Accessibility review	Describe how individuals will give their information in a step by step process then comment on the accessibility of your chosen data collection method and any ways you've reduced physical barriers to participation. If there are still any limits too accessibility, describe them here and what steps you will take to support people facing these barriers.							
Communications	Date	Method/Type	Key Purpose	Audience				
planning (Tip: use the information in the above rows to help shape the actual content of your communications, be upfront about what you collect, how it's stored & used, and who takes responsibility)	1/1/2021	All staff email from comms & Director	Call to action & full information	All staff				
	2/1/2021	Intranet post	Answering of FAQs & update on progress	Staff unsure of how to fill in data, staff who need to know more				
	10/1/2021	Emails to department staff from heads of department	<i>Reminder of deadline &amp; call to action</i>	Staff yet to fill out data & less engaged with central comms				
	w/c 12/1/2021	Drop in sessions (hosted with staff networks)	Answer staff queries	Staff with concerns about data & staff networks				
	17/1/2021	All staff email	Call to action (links to info online)	Staff that may have forgotten/put it off				

\*You will also need to complete your organisation's data protection/information governance assessments.



EXAMPLE PLANNING SHEET (ANNUAL DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY)								
Month	Survey/Event description	Data to be collected	Purpose	Audience	Key engagement opportunities	Line of responsibility for actions		
January								
February								
March								
April								
Мау								
June								
July								
August								
September								
October								
November								
December								

• Start by planning the year ahead and then if you spot target groups, data or purposes that overlap you can then look to see if there are ways to combine these or change the timing of some to prevent survey fatigue.

• Please remember, if you are collecting diversity data you must have the appropriate consenting process in place as well as privacy and data protection statements that cover ALL uses of the data. This is particularly important if you are using one data set for multiple purposes. Please consult your data protection officer and information governance lead for support with this.



#### APPENDIX: EXAMPLES FROM EDIS MEMBERS

#### **BABRAHAM INSTITUTE**

Babraham Institute used multiple methods of communication as part of their communications strategy for staff demographic data collection and increased their increased disclosure rates for ethnicity by 32%.



Figure 3 A poster used to respond to some of the frequently raised questions about filling in diversity data, courtesy of Elizabeth Wynn from Equality4Success at the Babraham Institute

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Figure 4 A slide used in staff presentations to show the difference disclosure rates can make to understanding staff demographics and where to fill in this data, courtesy of Elizabeth Wynn from Equality4Success at Babraham Institute.

#### WELLCOME

Wellcome used both multiple messaging styles for their 2018 diversity monitoring project including briefing documents for managers that were handed out and left in social areas for maximum reach. You can read more about their overall approach as a case study on page 10 of the <u>Business in the Community (BITC) report -</u> <u>The Race at Work Charter: One Year On 2019</u>.

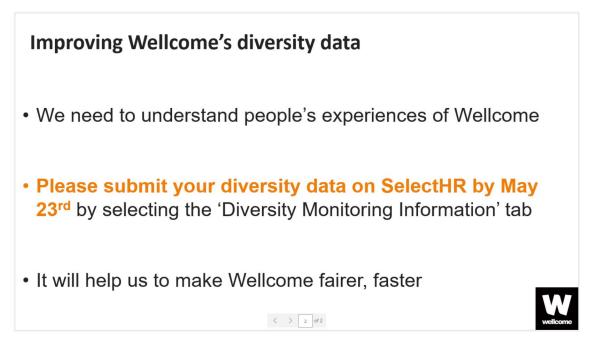


Figure 5 A slide used at an all staff meeting for Wellcome, presented by the Head of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) and a member of their D&I steering group. Additional Credit to sarah Christie and Lynn Huynh who worked on this campaign.

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# Why we're asking your team about themselves

FAQs for managers



Diversity and Inclusion

Your team members may have questions about why the Diversity & Inclusion team are asking them to submit sensitive personal information on SelectHR.

This is not about intruding into each other's lives; it's to help us make Wellcome as inclusive as possible.

Here are a few key facts to help. And you (or they) can ask the D&I team anything else you'd like to know.

Why are we collecting such personal information? With better diversity data we can make Wellcome fairer faster. We know we have a 20% gender pay gap, for example, but we have very little data for many other characteristics, such as disability and ethnicity.

#### How will this data be used?

Learning more about the different groups of people who work here and their experiences will mean we can take steps to make sure everyone is being treated fairly, particularly those groups protected by UK equality legislation. We can tailor relevant changes to Wellcome rather than using guesswork or assumptions.

#### Any questions or concerns? We'll be happy to hear from you or any of your team: inclusion@wellcome.ac.uk



#### Does this mean positive discrimination?

No. Positive discrimination is illegal. If we identify under-represented groups, we will ask why (there may be reasons other than discrimination or access issues). We might then use positive action, such as targeting job adverts, providing additional interview preparation, and mentoring.

#### Who will have access to this data?

- A few designated administrators in the People team will be able to see individuals' data in SelectHR.
- · A version of the collective data with no names in it will be shared with nominated colleagues in People and in Insight and Analysis, who will produce or view reports containing analysed diversity data.
- · Fully anonymised reports will be shared with ELT every year; key findings may be published on Trustnet and the Wellcome website.

Do employees have to provide this information? No, it's entirely optional. And each question has a 'Prefer not to say' option. Also, anyone can withdraw consent to the use of this data at any time on SelectHR.

Figure 6 Wellcome's FAQ flyers for managers to help them answer common questions designed by Lindsay Pentelow. This freed up some time for D&I team members to focus on other forms of engagement and answering other queries or concerns.