Diversity Monitoring Data Questionnaire for the Built Environment

UK and the Republic of Ireland

Why monitor diversity data in the Built Environment?

This EDI demographic questionnaire is part of one of the three main aims in an action plan created as part of a Memorandum of Understanding and signed by six prominent built environment leadership bodies. Creating a standardised data collection questionnaire across the six organisations on behalf of our sectors is a move towards ensuring the built environment is more representative of the society it serves. This will help us create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive sector.

The questionnaire has been developed by a dedicated working group with representatives from the six membership organisations: The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB); The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE); The Landscape Institute (LI); The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA); The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

The aim of this questionnaire has been to create a consistent approach to data collection that will allow for meaningful comparison across our collective membership. It will help to formulate a clear picture of the wider built environment sector and inform targeted action to improve EDI outcomes. Below, we have compiled a suggested set of questions for use in the UK and the Republic of Ireland which reflect the way Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census data is collected, which is the current market practice standard. In addition, we have consulted the Stonewall guidance for questions on gender and sexual orientation, and the Scope guidance for questions on disability.

We encourage adoption of these questions which will in future make it easier for all of us to benchmark across the built environment and recognised national data. As the area of EDI data collection continues to evolve, it is possible that some of the categories and definitions suggested here may also need to be adjusted and additional areas of diversity might need to be considered. However, it's important to start somewhere and the approach suggested here will provide a strong foundation to build from. Please note that these questions are for the use in the UK and the Republic of Ireland only.

Template Diversity Monitoring Questions

1. What is your date of birth?

Example: 7 January 2019

....

2. What best describes your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ I use another term

....

☐ Prefer not to say

Reference: Stonewall (2019), 'Understanding LGBT Experiences: A guide for equalities monitoring in the UK'.

This question is about gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply held sense of their own gender. According to the 2019 Stonewall guidance, providing employees with a space to define their own identity for all questions is important. Here this is achieved by including an 'I use another term' option, which also provides an open text box space, allowing you to collect the most accurate information.

Reference: Stonewall (2019), 'Understanding LGBT Experiences: A guide for equalities monitoring in the UK'.

This question is also about gender identity. For trans people, their own sense of who they are does not match the sex that society assigns to them when they are born. Collecting data on employees' gender identity must be done sensitively. Trans employees may not feel comfortable disclosing this information because of concerns about data security or if they are not openly trans.

3. Do you consider yourself to be trans?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

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4. What is your race or ethnic group?

Reference: Office for National Statistics

This question is not about your nationality, place of birth or citizenship - it is about the group to which you believe you belong. Please tick one option you feel most accurately describes you.

Asian / Asian British

☐ Bangladesh   ☐ Chinese   ☐ Indian

☐ Pakistani   ☐ Sri Lankan

☐ Any other Asian background

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

☐ African   ☐ Black British   ☐ Caribbean

☐ Any other Black background

Mixed / Multiple ethnic background

☐ Asian and White   ☐ Black African and White

☐ Black Caribbean and White

☐ Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background

Other Identities

☐ Arab

☐ Any other ethnic background

White

☐ Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish

☐ Irish   ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller

☐ Roma   ☐ Any other white background

☐ **Prefer not to say**

Reference: Scope (2019), 'A guide to reporting on disability employment'.

This question is shaped by Scope's commitment to the social model of disability, which we share. According to Scope,

"As many disabled people do not consider themselves as having an impairment or condition based on a limited legal definition, more and more organisations, such as Scope, do not define disability using the Equality Act. We, and other inclusive organisations, base our definition of disability on an approach known as the social model of disability. This approach argues that people are disabled by barriers in society, and focuses on removing those barriers" (2019: 10).

5. Are you disabled, have an impairment, condition, or access need?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

....

5a. If yes which of these statements apply to you? Select all that apply.

☐ I have a physical disability

☐ I have a medical condition

☐ I have a mental health condition

☐ I identify as neurodivergent

Reference: Currently there is no reference for this question. It was agreed by the Memorandum for Understanding working group and will be reviewed in 2024.

This question seeks to better understand the kind of disability or condition the person may identify as having.

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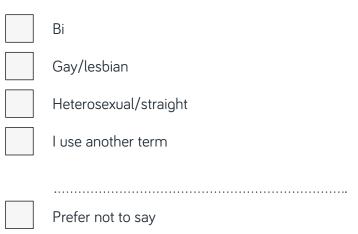
Reference: Stonewall (2019), 'Understanding LGBT Experiences: A guide for equalities monitoring in the UK'.

In line with Stonewall's guidance, we have shortened 'Bisexual' to 'Bi' as it is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Gay/lesbian has been listed as a single option rather than separate options for gay men and gay woman/lesbian. This means all that people of all identities can choose the option that best suits them.

6. What best describes your sexual orientation?

☐ Bi

☐ Gay/lesbian

☐ Heterosexual/straight

☐ I use another term

....

☐ Prefer not to say

7. What is your religion or belief?

☐ Buddhist

☐ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

☐ Hindu

☐ Jewish

☐ Muslim

☐ No belief or religion

☐ Sikh

☐ Any other religion or belief

....

☐ Prefer not to say

Reference: Office for National Statistics

According to ONS, this question is a measure of how a person connects or identifies with a religion, whether or not they actively practice it.

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Additional questions which some organisations may wish to ask.

8. What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged about 14?

[ ] Modern professional and traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil or mechanical engineer.

[ ] Senior, middle, or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.

[ ] Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.

[ ] Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.

[ ] Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.

[ ] Routine, semi-routine manual, and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter or waitress, bar staff.

[ ] Long-term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).

[ ] Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know

[ ] I prefer not to say

Reference:
Social Mobility Commission

NOTE – if you are intending to ask this question it is important to understand how you manage the data to provide you with meaningful data. You should refer to the Social Mobility Commission website: https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/.

9. Do you have any caring responsibilities for a child/children and/or another adult/s?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Reference: ONS

It is important that a question collects information about different types of caring responsibilities, reflects on the changing nature of these roles, acknowledges that respondents might have multiple caring responsibilities and that responsibilities might not occur on a regular or daily basis. This ONS question has therefore been modified slightly to allow for this, following the AdvanceHE guidance:

https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/
equality-diversity-and-inclusion/using-data-
and-evidence/monitoring-questions/caring-
responsibilities.

UK GDPR

Data privacy and confidentiality is key, especially when handling sensitive personal data such as EDI demographic data. It is important to work with your organisation's Data Protection Officer to understand any restrictions or other requirements to gather, process and analyse this data.

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Messaging guidance and FAQs

Background

Improving diversity data collection forms a central part of the wider Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), The Landscape Institute (LI), The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

The MoU action plan has three areas of focus:

- Data collection
- Improving understanding of transition from education to employment
- Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) competencies

As part of that commitment to members, we will support them to submit personal demographic data during the membership renewal process.

This personal data includes:

- Age
- Gender and gender confirmation
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Race and Ethnicity
- Disability

With this data we will be able to gain a holistic view of the characteristics of our member population. This improved understanding will help drive more targeted, collaborative and effective initiatives to advance diversity, equity and inclusion across the whole of the built environment in the UK and Ireland.

This guidance document is also intended as a tool to support other organisations (such as employers and other membership bodies) to collect data in a standard format, helping to facilitate benchmarking in future.

Why this is a central part of our joint action plan

- As part of our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, we signed the Memorandum of Understanding to drive forward the creation of a more diverse and inclusive sector – ensuring it is more representative of the society it serves.

- Historically, across the built environment, we have not collected detailed demographic data. Without it, we do not have a clear understanding of the gaps and areas of most need for advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- To build a more comprehensive and meaningful picture of our membership and the built environment workforce, we are asking our members to share more demographic data with us at the individual level. This data will be protected, anonymised, and aggregated.

- We are publishing our jointly agreed question set to support other organisations (such as employers and other membership bodies) to collect data in a uniform way across the sector. We also hope, by doing this, that we make this easier for organisations which may not have the capacity to do this otherwise.

- This data will only be collected on a voluntary basis.

- To effectively drive change and build an inclusive profession where everyone can thrive, we need data. Every individual's contribution matters.

* We will then follow through with commitment by publishing anonymous / aggregate data once sufficient data has been collected.

Here are some FAQs to help answer the queries that members or employees may have:

Q: What personal information is being collected?

With our fellow membership organisations, we agreed to collect member data on those protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act (2010), which are not always covered by the formal membership registration process: age, disability, race and ethnicity, gender-confirmation, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Q: Why do you want this information?

Right now, we do not have a clear, accurate picture of the demographics of our membership/employees. The only way we can change this is by collecting personal data from our members/employees.

Having an accurate picture of our membership/employees will allow us to identify gaps in representation, identify appropriate actions and analyse the impact of policies and practices. This will help to ensure that working in the built environment sector is a positive experience for all.

In addition, professional membership bodies are covered by Section 57 of the Equality Act (2010) which makes it unlawful for a trade organisation to discriminate against a person who is or is applying to be a member on the basis of defined 'protected characteristics'. Similarly, Section 53 of the Act makes it unlawful for a qualifications body to discriminate against a person when conferring relevant professional qualifications. Section 57 makes it unlawful for a trade organisation to discriminate against, harass or victimise a person who is, or is applying to be, a member. It also requires trade organisations to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Collecting members' data enables professional membership bodies to identify how inclusive, accessible and fair they are and to see whether they are complying with these legal requirements.

In short, your data will help us:

- Develop an in-depth understanding of inequality, different experiences, and areas for action
- Indicate the impact of policies and practices on different groups in the built environment sector
- Help us to ensure that we are not inadvertently discriminating against certain groups of people
- Ensure we are compliant with the relevant legislation

Q: How will my data be used?

We want to see the 'big-picture' – so we will analyse the data anonymously at the highest level in order to ensure that we are not inadvertently discriminating against any of the protected characteristics. For example, in membership bodies, the results of this comparative analysis may, over time, be incorporated into annual membership reporting to ensure transparency.

The data will also be used to inform equality analysis to ensure we are acting in accordance with best practice in our role as a professional membership organisation.

Q: What are you doing with the aggregate data?

By agreeing to one set of data questions across all built environment organisations, we can create a holistic picture of the industry that is both shareable and comparable. The results of the data will help shape our EDI actions and initiatives to make the sector welcoming to all. Sharing this with employers and other membership bodies will help to embed data collection and support action across the whole sector.

Q: Who will have access to my answers?

All the answers you provide will be treated as strictly confidential and held within the terms of the GDPR. Your answers will only be accessible to colleagues who will analyse the data at the highest level.

Q: What if I am not comfortable providing this personal information?

Providing this information is voluntary, and we have incorporated a 'prefer not to say' answer as one of the possible options, as some members may not wish to disclose this information.

Q: How can I help make the built environment sector a better place to work for all?

Please help us by completing your personal data when asked to do so by your employer and professional membership organisation. The demographic questions should take a maximum of 5 minutes – not too long for a good cause!

Q: Will I receive additional information?

No, the EDI data is not linked to marketing, it is being collected purely for monitoring reasons for the evaluation of EDI progress.

Q: Will my personal information be passed on to any third parties?

No, it will not be shared with third parties and will only be shared externally as aggregated/anonymous data sets. We will adhere to privacy law and ensure there is no risk of individuals being identified through the data. We will never share any EDI data that identifies our members either directly or indirectly.

Q: Why are you asking about 'gender' and not 'sex'?

We anticipate that many of our members will tell us that they are male or female. However, we also recognise that for some members these options will not fully express who they are.

So we have adopted a more inclusive approach by referring to 'gender' and by including a 'non-binary' option.

Q: Why are you only asking UK and Ireland members?

Collecting data from members beyond the UK and Ireland is difficult because of a combination of different legislation, but more importantly, the different ways in which people see and describe themselves; the descriptors that we use in the UK and Ireland do not travel well, e.g.: in South Africa there are only four race descriptors, African, White, Coloured and Indian – of these, only white easily matches descriptors typically used in UK and Ireland. These nuances make not only the asking tricky, but also making meaningful comparisons. That said, we plan to further consider what meaningful data we can collect in an international context over the forthcoming months.

Q: If I want to give feedback or have any further questions?

Please contact the EDI teams or leads in your respective organisations.

As the area of EDI data collection continues to evolve, it is possible that some of the categories and definitions suggested here may also need to be adjusted and additional areas of diversity might need to be considered. Feedback is welcomed. Please get in touch with your relevant membership body to provide any comments or questions.

February 2024