

COLLECTING EQUALITY INFORMATION
GUIDANCE ON ASKING QUESTIONS ON:

GENDER



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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Introduction: Why it is necessary to collect information about gender

The Gender Discrimination Act (1975) promotes the equality of opportunity and the prevention of discrimination and harassment on the basis of someone's gender. As a result of this law all public bodies have a duty to produce a gender equality scheme reporting what progress they are making to meet this law and what they are doing to monitor and report on any inequalities that occur with respect to gender. Having accurate data will enable the public and private sector to evaluate and report on their performance in identifying and tackling gender inequalities and what they are doing to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender.

“Poor measurement and a lack of transparency have contributed to society and governments being unable to tackle persistent inequalities and their causes. The data available on inequality are utterly inadequate in many ways, limiting people's ability to understand problems and their causes, set priorities and track progress. And even where data do exist, they are not consistently used well or published in a way that makes sense.”

This was one of the conclusions of *Fairness and Freedom, The Final Report of the Equalities Review* in 2007. This was followed by a report from the Office of National Statistics which identified eight

principles for collection and dissemination of equality data. Principle 4 states that:

“Consistency of methods, concepts and classifications is fundamental in the collection, analysis and presentation of equality statistics.”

In order to promote more consistency the Scottish Government has been working on providing harmonised questions for use in surveys in Scotland.

There are six equality strands: age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion/belief. This guidance note provides a harmonized question for collecting information on **gender**.

Recommended question

Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

There is no recommended or harmonised approach to collecting gender information through administrative data collections.



Transgender people

Recently the lack of information concerning transgender people and the inequalities they face has been highlighted. At the moment there is no fully tested question for use on social surveys to collect this information. If your users do require this information then contact us for advice or see the Scottish Transgender Alliance website.

Contact us

This document has been provided to help people collect information on gender in Scotland. We welcome any comments you have on this guidance note especially any relating to the practical application of the guidance. It will be revised and updated when necessary.

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Useful links

Equalities Review:

<http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/publications.html>

Scottish Government Gender Equality Scheme:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18500>

Scottish Transgender Alliance website:

<http://www.scottishtrans.org/>

ONS Report from the review of equality data:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/measuring-equality/equality-data-review/review-of-equality-data--final-report.pdf>