

# Diversity Monitoring

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## Introduction

Bournemouth Borough Council adopted standard diversity monitoring categories in 2009 to help inform it of the needs of its diverse communities and therefore improve the way it designs and delivers its services to local residents.

This guidance is a response to queries from staff and customers seeking clarification on why the council collects diversity data, how it analyses the data and how it uses the data to improve services.

This guidance was written to assist officers on how to use the diversity monitoring categories when gathering information about service users/residents/non-users and to use that knowledge as evidence to prioritise the delivery of appropriate public services.

There is a legal requirement for local authorities to demonstrate that they are not discriminating against different groups of staff and customers and that they treat all groups fairly. Bournemouth Borough Council extended our diversity monitoring to cover six of the protected characteristics under the new Equality Act 2010 (Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation). Monitoring by the protected characteristics is needed to:

- Support our services to be efficient as it will inform service delivery making services more targeting.
- Meet our statutory equality duties
- Support the Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) process
- Support with our progress towards Excellence under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Service areas should consider the development of bespoke monitoring forms which best reflect the most relevant data they need to collect to improve their services.

Examples of monitoring forms can be found in this document.

The guidance links to a number of corporate documents including:

- Customer Strategy
- Comprehensive Equality Scheme
- Consultation and Engagement Strategy
- The Consultation Handbook
- Corporate Plan
- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Workforce Development Strategy

## What is diversity monitoring?

Diversity monitoring is a process the council uses to collect information about staff, service users and (potentially) non-users as well as information on residents.

Diversity monitoring is an effective tool which enables the council to analyse the use and experience of services by different groups of people and, where necessary, to take appropriate action to improve those services.

## Why do we monitor?

Good diversity monitoring provides evidence to support the delivery of Bournemouth Borough Council's Equalities Policies and Diversity Promise. We are committed to ensuring everyone will have equal access to employment and our services.

Analysing diversity data can:

- Reveal whether the service is being used by a particular group
- Show if there are any different needs that are pertinent to a particular demographic group
- show under or over-use of a service by a particular community
- reveal differential outcomes
- provide evidence that services are not discriminatory
- measure service effectiveness and value for money
- identify how a service should be changed or developed
- find out whether customer satisfaction rates vary between different communities

It also allows the council to show:

- our services are delivered in a fair and equal way to all our customers
- that customers who use our services are not further disadvantaged because of the way we deliver our services
- how to shape new and existing services around customer needs
- a generally increased understanding of the needs of non-users and our residents

It allows the council to demonstrate that it does not discriminate against different groups of staff and show that it treats all groups fairly. Legally the council must publish this data annually.

## When to monitor

Monitoring can be part of an existing process for example as part of an assessment process for access to service or as part of the recruitment process. The exact frequency can vary according to function or service:

- a one off time limited snapshot exercise e.g. research, consultation
- An ongoing and continuous process with regular review e.g. service take-up, outcomes
- Periodically (monthly, quarterly, annually etc) e.g. satisfaction surveys

## How to monitor

The council collects information on age, disability, ethnicity, religion/belief, gender and sexual orientation by asking people to answer questions based on individual self-identification. These are now known as protected characteristics under the Equality Act

2010. Three additional characteristics have been included under this new legislation these are pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership.

Sometimes, people do not wish to share this information. We accept this, but would want to explain to people that collecting this information will help us tailor our services to their needs and find out people's opinions on the services the council delivers.

It is important when collecting this information that we do not make assumptions about a person's categories, we must allow them to self classify on all categories.

In some instances it will not be relevant to know the full diversity profile of our users because of the type of service being provided or the way it is being delivered. In such cases officers are expected to use their common sense about what information should be collected. When making this decision you must make sure you know why you are asking for all of this data and that it is relevant, be aware if you are too invasive you may contravene the Human Rights Act - Article 8 which provides a right to respect for one's 'private and family life, his home and his correspondence'. However, managers will be required to explain the reasons for not including certain diversity categories if challenged.

## Priority areas for diversity monitoring

Analysing diversity information can be particularly useful in the following priority areas:

- frontline service delivery
- services targeted at vulnerable people
- those services where there has been historical evidence of unequal impact whether locally or nationally
- customer complaints, comments and compliments
- delivering services based on judgement or entitlement
- services where there are nationally established equalities indicators
- cross-cutting services affecting different groups of people
- consultations with residents/service users/non-users
- Take up or non-take up of services
- Legal action against the organisation

## Customer satisfaction or complaints

Including an additional section on diversity monitoring to routine customer satisfaction surveys or complaints records is helpful to assess whether satisfaction rates vary between different communities.

You can use this method to find out:

- Satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels or complaint rates between different communities
- if there are particular areas of a service that are a problem/liked by different communities
- if there are different expectations between different groups of people

## How do I actually include diversity monitoring questions?

Including diversity monitoring questions may seem daunting initially. However, it is not difficult to do. The following steps should help:

- When deciding which categories to monitor by especially when it comes to gender identity, religion or belief or sexual orientation, consideration should be given to the following:
  - Why you are asking for this information and how you will use the results
  - How concerns about confidentiality can be addressed
  - How to explain the purpose and importance of monitoring to employees and service users
  - How to deal with potential prejudice and concerns arising from monitoring additional equality strands (communication and education are key, some help with this can be found further on in this document)
  - How reliable will the results be? (expect a lower response rate to the newly introduced categories - this will change over time as people get more used to disclosing this information)
- Have a look at the example Diversity Monitoring Questions to help you decide which categories you will be including. The format of the questions has already been agreed by the Equality and Diversity Strategy Group and relies on service users self-classifying themselves. The categories are taken from the national census categories 2011, it is important to stick with these categories to ensure consistency across the council. It will also enable data to be analysed across the council as similar categories have been used.
- If you have decided not to collect information on gender identity, religion/belief or sexual orientation be clear of your reasons and be prepared to justify your decision to either the Equality and Diversity Strategy Group, Equalities Team or the Corporate Strand Equality Champion. Before you decide to exclude a diversity category you need to assure yourself that your service does not disproportionately impact upon any of these groups of people. For example, collecting data on sexual orientation is not particularly relevant to collecting opinions on Controlled Parking Zones, but would be highly relevant in relation to the delivery of mental health services. If you are not sure whether to exclude one of these diversity categories contact the Equalities and Diversity Officer (Sam Johnson ext. 4609) or Equalities and Diversity Co-ordinator (Jo Hooper ext. 8244) for further advice.
- Additional advice on collecting monitoring data on Gender Identity can be found on the Press for Change website <http://www.pfc.org.uk/node/1408>

“We would not advise the monitoring of trans people if the act of monitoring makes them identifiable. There is a high danger of contravening s.22 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 if subjects are identifiable. Therefore monitoring should not be carried out on small populations as, even when the results are anonymised, a single positive in a small group may lead to inadvertent disclosure.”
- make sure you have a system in place to store this information securely and confidentially and if possible anonymously
- identify who is responsible for analysing the data
- agree how the data is going to be fed back into service design and planning

## Collecting the data

### Provide an explanation

Always include an explanation of why diversity information is being collected, how it is being collected and what it will be used for. Remind people that the information shared is confidential.

It is reassuring to service users to include contact details of an officer based in the service area who can answer further queries.

**Example of preamble:**

Bournemouth Borough Council is committed to delivering more choice and better value to everyone who uses our services. But we want to make sure that the right services are reaching the right people at the right time. To help us make sure we are doing this correctly it would be helpful if you would answer the questions about yourself. Some of the questions may feel a little personal, but the information we collect will be confidential and any data published cannot be traced back to you. If you would like to know how we have used this information, please contact .....service contact name...

**Diversity Monitoring Questions:**

All of these examples can be reformatted to fit your specific data collection design.

**Example of Survey/Consultation Monitoring Questions:**

**Age**

Under 18	
18 - 24	
25 - 34	
35 - 44	
45 - 54	
55 - 64	
65+	

Date of Birth dd/mm/yyyy

**Disability**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. In this definition 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial and 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months. This would include illnesses such as cancer, HIV or mental health problems.

Do you consider that you have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010?	Yes
	No

If you have answered 'yes', please select the definition/s from the list below that best describes your disability/disabilities:

Hearing (such as: deaf, partially deaf or hard of hearing)	
Reduced physical capacity (such as inability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, debilitating pain and lack of strength, breath, energy or stamina, asthma, angina or diabetes)	
Visual Impairment (such as blind or fractional/partial sight. Does not include people whose visual problems can be corrected by glasses/contact lenses)	
Speech (such as impairments that can cause communication problems)	
Severe disfigurement	
Mobility (such as wheelchair user, artificial lower limb(s), walking aids, rheumatism or arthritis)	
Physical co-ordination (such as manual dexterity, muscular control, cerebral palsy)	
Mental illness (substantial and lasting more than a year, such as severe depression or psychoses)	
Long Term progressive condition (i.e. Cancer, MS, HIV)	
Other disability (please specify)	

**Ethnicity** - These are based on the 2011 Census categories

**White:**

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	
Irish	
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	
Any other White background (please specify if you wish)	

**Mixed/multiple ethnic group**

White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background (please specify if you wish)	

**Asian/Asian British**

Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
Any other Asian background (please specify if you wish)	

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

African	
Caribbean	



Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (please specify if you wish)	
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**Other ethnic group**

Arab	
Any other ethnic group (please specify if you wish)	

**Gender**

Male	
Female	

Is your current gender different to that you were assigned at birth?

or

Do you identify as transgender or transsexual?

Yes	
No	

For the purpose of this question “transgender” is defined as an individual who lives, or wants to live, full time in the gender opposite to that they were assigned at birth.

**Religion or belief** - These are based on the 2011 Census categories

No religion	
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	
Buddhist	
Hindu	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
Any other religion/belief (please specify, if you wish)	

**Sexual Orientation**

Bisexual	
Gay man	
Gay woman/lesbian	
Heterosexual/straight	
Other (please specify if you wish)	

**Post code:**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The information provided will help us to improve our services to you and others in Bournemouth.

**Example of Tear - off slip categories** - this may be useful if you are doing customer feedback forms, you could include just the categories below as you may not have as much space to collect a comprehensive set of data. This is to show how you can still get a meaningful set of data but with slightly reduced information.

**Age**

Under 18	
18 - 24	
25 - 34	
35 - 44	
45 - 54	
55 - 64	
65+	

**Disability**

Do you consider that you have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010?	Yes
	No

**Ethnicity** - these are based on the 2011 Census categories

**White:**

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	
Irish	
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	
Any other White background (please specify if you wish)	

**Mixed/multiple ethnic group**

White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background (please specify if you wish)	

**Asian/Asian British**

Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
Any other Asian background (please specify if you wish)	

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

African	
Caribbean	
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (please specify if you wish)	

## Other ethnic group

Arab	
Any other ethnic group (please specify if you wish)	

## Gender

Male	
Female	

## Religion or Belief - (based on 2011 Census categories)

No religion	
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	
Buddhist	
Hindu	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
Any other religion/belief (please specify, if you wish)	

## Sexual Orientation

Bisexual	
Gay man	
Gay woman/lesbian	
Heterosexual/straight	
Other (please specify if you wish)	

## Example of Face to Face/Telephone diversity monitoring

Asking these types of questions face to face can be nerve racking for staff as well as potentially being seen as intrusive by our customers.

Sometimes, people have never shared this information before and feel a little awkward when answering the questions. Encourage officers to take the time to explain why the council is collecting this information and how the information will be used to improve services. Remember to encourage respondents to share as much information as possible but remain sensitive to the fact that people may choose not to share personal information.

### Tips to remember:

- Wait until the end of the conversation to ask the monitoring questions.
- Explain that this is a separate process and will not affect the outcome of the previous conversation.
- Explain why the information is being asked for e.g. we can only improve our services if we know who is or is not using them.

- Remember that asking for this information is asking personal questions, so be sensitive in the language you use.
- Let the customer know that they do not have to disclose the information if they don't want to. They are less likely to feel intimidated when given a choice.
- Assure the customer of the confidentiality of the information they are giving you.
- Do not try and guess someone's category. You may think you can guess, but you may not be correct. Your responsibility is to ask the question.
- Do not push someone into sharing their information, it is their choice whether they disclose or not.
- Do not ask for further information - only record their disclosure.

### Examples of questions:

"At Bournemouth Borough Council we are committed to delivering more choice and better value to everyone who uses our services and to make sure that the right services are reaching the right people at the right time. To help us make sure we are doing this correctly we would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Some of the questions may feel a little personal, but the information we collect will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act and it will not make any difference to the service you receive if you do not answer them."

"How would you define your ethnicity?"

"Do you consider yourself to have a disability?"

"Are you happy to have your gender recorded? If so, as what?"

It may be necessary to explain that this question is being asked because we do not wish to make any assumptions, so rely on self categorization.

## Frequently Asked Questions

People are not used to disclosing personal information if they do not see the relevance. Stonewall have produced a really useful booklet which will help you answer many of these questions:

['What's it got to do with you?'](#)

### Why are these highly invasive questions necessary?

It is necessary for us to understand who is responding to our consultation exercises to help ensure we can identify any differences in opinion between different respondents. In the past we have often identified differences between younger and older respondents, male and female respondents, parents and non-parents. In future, we wish to be able to expand this type of analysis and be able identify if any differences exist between other groups therefore it is necessary to gather information about respondents.

Also, through the Government Equality Legislation, councils will have a commitment to monitor all the strands of equality to ensure that the services we provide are fully inclusive. This improves our performance as a council and ensures we aim to provide the best service to all our residents and visitors.

Finally, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has recommended that we should

gather more data on sexual orientation. As this is virtually non-existent in Britain public policy decisions are being made based on assumptions about the size, location, or specific needs of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual population rather than facts.

With regards to the questions being deemed invasive, providing options to declare, for example, disability or sexual orientation supports under-represented groups, recognising them as a normal part of our society. There is also a 'prefer not to say' option for those who do not wish to supply such information.

### **What are they used for?**

As mentioned above, the questions are used to help us look for similarities and/or differences between the different groups which exist in Bournemouth. By gathering such information we can get the best possible understanding of residents' priorities. This fullness of understanding should, in turn, help us provide services to the highest possible standard. Having information available to us will enable the Council to discover if there are any significant gaps in satisfaction with services linked to sexual orientation, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability or any other aspect, and work towards overcoming them. Diversity monitoring is also a way of checking whether unfair discrimination is taking place, in order to protect people from it. If we have a better understanding of the make-up of our resident it assists us in analysing areas of policy or their application, that may be presenting difficulties for people, particularly those from under-represented groups. Being able to provide real evidence also helps to make a successful business case for change, where areas of difference or difficulty become evident.

### **How securely are they stored?**

Make sure officers asking these questions know how the information is to be stored.

### **Who processes them / who has access to them?**

Make sure officers asking these questions know who will be responsible for looking after the data and processing it.

### **Exactly which Council policies are affected by answers on sexuality and transgender/transsexualism?**

This is not a comprehensive list but provides some clear examples. There are instances where residents' sexual orientation and/or gender may affect the service they receive from us. For example, policies around domestic violence may be different for same-sex couples than heterosexual couples, when placing people in care services or when looking at benefit entitlement there may be a need to consider who should and shouldn't be regarded as a couple and policies on adoption may also need to consider sexual orientation. Transgender residents may be affected by any council policy which is influenced by the gender of the resident. For example, our registration services conducting either a marriage ceremony or a civil ceremony based on gender and our leisure services may offer gym classes or swimming sessions which are 'ladies' only.

## **Briefing officers**

Make sure your colleagues understand why your service is including diversity monitoring as part of its service analysis so that they can answer queries from users. Their support of diversity monitoring is crucial in making it both a success and meaningful to improve council services.

Sometimes, people have never shared this information before and feel a little awkward when answering the questions. Encourage officers to take the time to explain why the council is collecting this information and how the information will be used to improve services. Remember to encourage respondents to share as much information as possible but remain sensitive to the fact that people may choose not to share personal information.

Refer staff to the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Always reassure people the information collected is confidential - make sure officers are clear about what should happen to this data and how it will be stored.

Publicise your service's decision to include diversity monitoring in its consultation surveys, customer feedback and service user information and acknowledge the contribution of officers in making it a success.

## **What do I do with the data?**

### **Storing the information under Data Protection Act 1998**

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires sensitive information to be stored in a secure manner, where access to the information is restricted to named officers in the service area. (See under Confidentiality) Further details can be found on BIZ under Law and Governance/Legal Services/Information Compliance.

You must be clear that the information you are collecting is lawful and for a specified purpose.

Care must be taken when publishing the data to make sure individuals are not easily identified. For example, publishing information on educational attainment in a school, where there is a single pupil in a year group from a particular diversity group or publishing results which even when anonymised could inadvertently disclose someone's gender identity who would be protected by the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

## **Confidentiality**

Remember, in the majority of monitoring exercises, the information collected is anonymous. However, to ensure confidentiality is maintained the following can be done:

- store the monitoring information in a separate and secure place
- keep access to the data limited to only a few named officers
- separate the monitoring information from the service-specific information once it is recorded.

## **What do I do with the collected data?**

Once you have decided what type of diversity information you are collecting you need to consider the following:

- how will the information be collated
- how will the information be analysed
- what will the information be compared with
- how will the results be published
- how will the data be incorporated into service improvement plans

- how will the outcomes be measured

Data collected can be used for:

- Setting SMART targets
- Evaluating service delivery by comparing performance data over time
- Redesigning services
- Developing positive action programmes
- Targeting action to reduce identified inequalities

Cross-relating measures could include measuring:

- take-up of services
- satisfaction levels
- complaints
- number of people applying for a service
- number of people accessing a service
- number of people receiving positive outcomes
- funding levels

#### Case Study: Funding to the voluntary sector

A department identified that its third sector funding programme was failing to adequately reach BME, gender specific and disability focused groups. Consequently it decided to revise its funding arrangement. This enabled the authority to include different impairment groups and new and emerging communities. Ensure that its new arrangements met its equality duty of promoting good relations.

The system of recording and collecting diversity information needs to be incorporated into existing service management systems to ensure the information is used effectively. The following section shows how analysing diversity data can be used to measure the impact of services on different groups of people.

#### Significant differences.

Small differences in outcomes for different groups are to be expected as a result of chance. However, where differences are substantial and persist over time investigation is required. Exactly what size of difference should trigger investigation is a matter of judgement. It is helpful to present data for different groups as rates rather than percentages as demonstrated in the following two tables.

Table one: comparing percentages among service users and the population

Ethnic Groups	% among service users	% in population
White	68%	70%
Asian	7%	13%
Black	9%	6%
Chinese	5%	2%
Other Groups	11%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

It can be difficult to judge what a significant difference is when data is presented in this way because of differences in the sizes of the sample groups. It is often preferable to show the data in the following way, where such differences in the size of groups are better taken account of

**Table two: comparing rates of service usage among different groups**

<b>Ethnic Groups</b>	<b>Service users per 10,000 residents</b>
White	21
Asian	14
Black	40
Chinese	28
Other groups	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>

In this case we can see that the rate of usage among Black residents is almost twice that for all groups and a third lower for Asian residents. These are large differences that might have been missed if the data is displayed as in table one.

Where numbers are very small, any comparisons may be of less use.

**Target setting**

Target setting is an important component of measuring performance improvement.

The inclusion of segmented diversity data into the performance target ensures that the impact of the service on different communities can be compared enabling remedial action to be taken where necessary.

Segmenting targets can also help to legitimise the allocation of resources, make sure expectations of performance is realistic and agree timescales for improvement.

**Case Study - Changing services.**

A local authority reviewed who was using it's 'meals on wheels' service. Monitoring of service users showed that there was very little use of the service by people from certain BME communities. The authority decided to renegotiate it's contract and provide a variety of meals which were more likely to appeal to a wider range of people. There was a dramatic increase in the take up by BME people as well as improved satisfaction levels among 'White British' users who said the choice and quality of the food had improved.

**Further Information:**

Please contact the Equality and Diversity Team:

Sam Johnson - Equalities and Diversity Manager, 4609, [sam.johnson@bournemouth.gov.uk](mailto:sam.johnson@bournemouth.gov.uk)

Jo Hooper - Equalities and Diversity Co-ordinator, 8244, [jo.hooper@bournemouth.gov.uk](mailto:jo.hooper@bournemouth.gov.uk)