

Equality Guidance for collecting monitoring information



Understanding
and using equality
monitoring questions



Introduction

Though there is a great deal of information available from the census on the population of Warwickshire, the census is only undertaken every decade and in between significant changes will occur in the population. In order for us to be more aware of these changes and the impacts, we need to look at who is using a service and monitor any situations where there is evidence that one group may not be making use of a service. If a group is not using a service we need to know why so that we can examine the reasons, identify any obstacles and find potential solutions. Therefore, collection of equalities data is vital since only by asking all the questions can we check that all groups are using a service which makes good business sense, helps WCC to meet its legal duty and evidences need when starting a new scheme or applying for funding.

The Equality Act 2010 also introduced the concept of the Public sector Equality Duty which requires Warwickshire County Council (WCC) in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We can only meet this duty by collecting and reporting on the equality data profile of our customers and staff. This enables WCC to see whether services are truly reaching all of the communities we serve.

This Equality Monitoring Guidance is intended to help you understand the principles of equality monitoring and provides you with information that will assist you to monitor your customers and staff effectively.

What will the County Council do with this information?

The County Council is committed to delivering excellent services, but can only do this if we understand who our customers are and what particular needs they may have. Having appropriate and sufficient equality monitoring information will help us to:

1. Find out if our equality policies are working effectively and prevent discrimination.
2. Find out who is using our services and how satisfied they are with them.
3. Identify the need for new or changed services to meet the different needs of customers.
4. Determine whether we are listening to and reaching all groups in the community and that services are delivered fairly and equitably.
5. Ensure the needs of people with different cultures, religions and languages are taken into account when we plan new services
6. Improve our reputation as a good employer and ensure that we create a diverse workforce which reflects the communities we serve
7. Use this information to promote cohesion and integration.
8. If necessary make a strong proven case for a change in funding to address the imbalance in service use that the data has revealed.

This will help us to set actions and targets which will improve access to services and make them more relevant to the needs of different people, especially those who are often overlooked.

Religion/belief and sexual orientation

There is increasing understanding about the barriers that are faced by people because of their sexual orientation or their religion/belief and this has only been made possible due to collection of this data. Therefore, it is important for the County Council to begin to understand more about the barriers which people may experience and we have expanded our monitoring categories accordingly.

We do recognise that there are likely to be sensitivities around monitoring sexual orientation, however by failing to do so risks reinforcing stigma and invisibility. This could mean that we do not address the real issues which may affect the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who work for the Council or live in the county. It is therefore important that we respect these views whilst also ensuring that we provide fair and equal access. Similarly, monitoring religion/belief will help us to ensure that we are taking into account the needs of different religious groups, or those who have no religion, when providing services.

It has been raised in the past by some members of the public as to why ethnicity matters, the key answer to this is that service usage across Warwickshire is not even and some minority groups have historically not been using services. Asking this question helps us to ensure that no group is marginalised or ignored.

When asking for this monitoring data it is important to stress that this is not compulsory and that people can choose not to answer. However, it is best practice to ask all the equality monitoring questions. With the creation of this guidance we will then be able to standardise the position across all Warwickshire County Council surveys.

How to manage the results

It is vital that we also process and understand this data once it has been collected. The information must be analysed and collated in order to show the profile of those who have responded. This information will enable the service to evidence how equality considerations have been taken into account when completing an Equality Impact Assessment.

Important note for Managers/ team leaders

Please note that people do not have to provide this information and there is the option to tick 'prefer not to say', however we must ask the question. If you receive any enquiries, you need to explain that under the Data Protection rules this information is confidential and is only to be used for statistical purposes in order to improve access to our services.

The questions must be included in a separate section from any personal data such as name and address. In practice this means a separate sheet of paper for paper copies and a separate section for online forms.

In addition you will need to ensure you comply with information governance if you are collecting names and addresses.

Sometimes your staff will feel awkward when asking these questions and this can often be because they do not understand why this information is needed - please make sure that you are

confident enough to support them with this task. It would be helpful if you share and publish the results of the monitoring. The key concern from the public is that such data is intrusive and irrelevant; however, the following response can be modelled to fit any particular inquiry but outlines a potential way of answering public concerns.

Thank you for raising your concerns over certain questions being asked within the monitoring information. I include the following reply on behalf of Warwickshire County Council, explaining why the questions you mentioned are included.

As a public service provider the county council is expected to demonstrate that its services reach and are used by a broad section of the community. To this end we need to understand who is using our services, this data can then be collated and compared across the county as a whole. The resulting comparison helps us build an accurate picture of service users and allows any gaps in user uptake to be identified and explored. In relation to your question (Insert information related to their question here)

On other occasions when we are undertaking a consultation prior to proposed changes to the service, we aim to seek a range of opinions from a broad cross section of the community. These questions help us to check that this is being achieved. We therefore ask these questions firstly to identify the makeup of the service users and second to help us build a better picture of Warwickshire.

Where we introduce new categories we generally give people the option to decline to tell us this information, we use this as a measure of people's confidence in sharing such information with us. Where people do provide us with equalities monitoring information it is collated anonymously and not identifiable back to the specific individual.

If you require any further advice or support please contact:
equalities@warwickshire.gov.uk

Equality Monitoring questions

The questions we need to ask to ensure that we are reaching out to all sections of the community are listed in this appendix along with the following statement to help the respondent understand why they are being asked.

Warwickshire County Council is committed to promoting and achieving equality and fairness for all. The information requested below helps us monitor and understand the profile of our customers, staff and members. It is confidential and anonymous, and it cannot be attributed back to you.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty section of the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty to understand the communities we serve, our customer profile and the profile of our staff and members. This Duty can only be met by effective monitoring of the protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010.

Therefore, the equality monitoring questions we need to ask are listed below:-

What is your gender identity? please tick box

☐ Male (including trans man) ☐ Female (including trans woman) ☐ other including non-binary

How old are you? please tick box

☐ Under 18 ☐ 18 – 29 ☐ 30 – 44 ☐ 45 – 59 ☐ 60 – 74 ☐ 75 +

Do you have a long standing illness or disability? (physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.)?

Please tick one box

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your ethnicity ?			
White – English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish / British		Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	
White - Irish		Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller		Asian or Asian British - Chinese	
White - Any other background please specify		Asian or Asian British - Indian	
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean		Asian or Asian British Any other background	
Mixed - White and Black African		Black or Black British - African	
Mixed - White and Asian		Black or Black British - Caribbean	
Mixed - Any other mixed background		Black or Black British - Any other background	
Arabic		Any other Ethnic group Please specify	

What is your religion?			
Buddhist		Sikh	
Christian		Other - please specify	
Hindu		None	
Jewish		Prefer not to say	
Muslim			

Do you consider yourself to be...			
Heterosexual or straight		other	
Gay or lesbian		Prefer not to say other	
Bisexual			

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey.