



Collecting Info on a Service User's Gender and Sexual Identity

Why Do We Need To Ask?

- Asking for this information gives the Service User the opportunity to let you know any information they want you to have - e.g. if they have a preferred pronoun they want you to use (her/she/they)
- LGBT+ people might have specific support needs - knowing this information enables tailored signposting/support.
- Collecting this information helps Services to monitor if groups are under / over represented in a Service. Services might need to address particular barriers to ensure all groups can access your Service. Sex, Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment are Protected Characteristics under Equality Act 2010. Equalities monitoring questions should cover the nine protected characteristics.
- For third sector community and charitable organisations, this information may be required for your funding monitoring.

Staff Confidence

It is common that staff may feel uncomfortable or lacking in confidence when asking questions about gender and sexual identities. This may be due a number of reasons such as:

- lack of training on language and terminology that may be used,
- feeling that these are personal questions and not understanding the need to ask
- not wanting to cause offence/embarrassment.

We would recommend that all staff, and certainly front-line staff who will be directly asking monitoring questions should undertake some basis LGBT+ awareness training to address the above issues.

Tips on how to ask these questions

- **Confidence** - Understand why you are asking - then you can explain the positive reasons and that they are standard questions that everyone is asked (they are not being singled out).
- **Get Comfortable** - Work to become comfortable to ask these questions. If you are comfortable, your service user is more likely to be. Don't assume that if you feel discomfort that a service user does – we are all in different places with our learning journey on LGBT+ identities.
- **Welcome Questions** - Encourage a service user to ask if they are unsure about what they are being asked.
- **Be factual** - Don't make a big deal of the question – just be factual – don't shy away from listing the options, it can help people understand what you are asking.
- **Don't push for an answer** – you are giving people a space to give you the information if they want to—make sure people know 'prefer not to say' is a valid option to choose
- **Confidentiality** - make sure you explain the boundaries of confidentiality in your service. In terms of info sharing be particularly aware that gender identity and sexual identity and trans history can be sensitive information and sharing this info without consent can put people at risk. Always remember to check for consent to share any of this info.
- **LGBT+ Translations** - Use our translations of LGBT+ terms for speakers of other languages if needed.
- **Educate** - Consider if a copy of the Genderbread would help you explain these concepts if needed



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DESIGNING FORMS

Best practice when asking questions about gender and sexual identities

- Don't mix gender / sexuality questions
- If options are given then list these options alphabetically e.g. bisexual, heterosexual, lesbian etc
- Include an 'Other - please specify' option for each question
- The form should be clear that all questions are optional and/or give a 'prefer not to say' option for each question

SEE EXAMPLE below:

Please note all questions are optional

Sex

What is your sex?

- Female
- Intersex
- Male

Trans history

Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

- No
- Yes
- Other (please state)

Gender Identity

Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Other (please state)

Pronouns

What pronouns do you use?

- He/Him

Sexual Identity

Which of the following options best describes how you think of your sexual identity?

- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Other (please state)

- She/Her

- They/Them

Examples above are partially based on information from the Office for National Statistics

www.sayit.org.uk/callitout



Doncaster Council