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**Question Bank**

March 2022

# Demographics

## About demographics

Demographics is data about people that describe things like age, ethnicity, marital status, education, gender, income, etc. The commonly used ones are included in this section, but other types of information that might come under the generic term “demographics” is included in other sections.

There is more than one way to ask a question, but we recommend that everyone uses the **recommended** **taxonomy** to enable comparisons to be made and data combined from different local Healthwatch.

## Protected characteristics, special category and Healthwatch taxonomy

### Protected characteristics

Healthwatch are public bodies and must comply with the [public sector equality duty](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty) in the Equality Act 2010. You are required to have due regard to the following when exercising your functions:

* 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.

### Special category data

The [UK General Data Protection Regulation](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/) (GDPR) singles out some types of personal data which are more sensitive and gives them extra protection. This is because the use of this data could cause risk to the individual's fundamental rights and freedoms. We have only included those relevant to Healthwatch here - political opinions, for example, does not come under Healthwatch’s remit:

* Ethnic origin
* Religion or belief
* Sexual orientation
* Health and wellbeing

You must always ensure that your processing is lawful, fair and transparent and complies with all the other principles and requirements of the UK GDPR. You will need an additional lawful basis to collect special category data. See our [guidance on data protection legislation](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2019-06-20/data-protection-advice-and-guidance) for further details.

### Healthwatch standard taxonomy (and minimum viable)

Healthwatch England collects and analyses data from a wide range of sources, including but not limited to around 150 independent local Healthwatch organisations. For that data to be aggregatable, we must use a standard taxonomy. We have indicated below which demographic questions are in the standard taxonomy. We are also producing a minimum viable taxonomy which will be a subset of the standard taxonomy to allow greater data sharing with Healthwatch England. We should use these categories across all types of data collection. At the very least, you should collect age, gender and ethnicity in all surveys.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type | Special Category Data (GDPR) | Healthwatch England standard taxonomy | Healthwatch England minimum viable taxonomy |
| Age |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| Gender |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| Gender Identity |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |
| Sexual Orientation | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |
| Race or ethnic origin | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| Religion or philosophical belief | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |
| Pregnancy and maternity |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |
| Marriage and civil partnership |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |
| Health: Disability | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| Health: Long term condition | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| Health: Neurodiversity | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |
| Carer |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |

## Age

Age categories approximatively reflect life stages. When analysing the data, you may need to recode them in broader categories, but there is value in using more narrow classifications that coincide with Healthwatch England guidance, as it will allow cross-borough aggregation and comparison.

Question 1: minimum viable taxonomy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What age group are you in?  [SS] | * 12 and under * 13 to 15 years * 16 to 17 years * 18 to 24 years * 25 to 49 years * 50 to 64 years * 65 to 79 years * 80+ years * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Gender/gender identity

Healthwatch England believes that our taxonomy on gender/sex/gender identity needs to be based on the kind of data we need to represent the views and experiences of people who use health and social care services in England. Our research is not based on people's biology but on how they perceive themselves and are treated. We know from our insight that trans people feel that they are often not taken seriously by health providers in their new gender identity.

Question 2: minimum viable taxonomy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are you?  [SS] | * A woman * A man * Non-binary * Prefer not to say * Not known * Prefer to self-describe (please specify) |

Question 3:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is your gender identity the same as your sex recorded at birth?  [SS] | * Yes * No * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Sexual orientation

Question 4:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is your sexual orientation?  [SS] | * Asexual * Bisexual * Gay man * Heterosexual / Straight * Lesbian / Gay woman * Pansexual * Prefer to self-describe (please specify) * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Partnership status

This is a protected category, but only for employment purposes.

Question 5:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How would you describe your *marital or partnership status*?  [SS] | * Single * Cohabiting * In a civil partnership * Married * Separated * Divorced / Dissolved civil partnership * Widowed * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Pregnancy and maternity

Question 6:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How would you describe your *pregnancy or maternity status*?  [MS] | * Currently pregnant * Currently breastfeeding * Given birth in the last 26 weeks * Prefer not to say * Not known * Not applicable |

## Ethnicity/Race

The Ethnicity question is very detailed, but you can use overall groupings for analysis where data volume is too low in an individual category. Some of these categories require a free text box for "other".

Question 7: minimum viable taxonomy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How would you describe your ethnic group?  [SS] | * Arab * Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi * Asian / Asian British: Chinese * Asian / Asian British: Indian * Asian / Asian British: Pakistani * Asian / Asian British: Any other Asian / Asian British background (please specify) * Black / Black British: African * Black / Black British: Caribbean * Black / Black British: Any other Black / Black British background (please specify) * Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Asian and White * Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Black African and White * Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Black Caribbean and White * Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background (please specify) * White: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh * White: Irish * White: Gypsy, Traveller, or Irish Traveller * White: Roma * White: Any other White background (please specify) * Any other ethnic group (please specify) * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## English Language skills

English fluency (and IT skills) may directly impact users' access to services.

Question 8:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How well can you understand, speak, read and write English? | Not at all well | Not well | well | very well | Unsure or don't know |
| I understand spoken English [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |
| I speak English [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |
| I read English [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |
| I write English [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |

## Education level

Levels of education may help understand social class and its intersection with health inequalities. Answer options ideally should be worded to be inclusive of those who completed their education outside of the UK.

Question 9:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is the latest educational level you have achieved?  [SS] | * None * Primary (left school before/ at 11) * Secondary (left school before/at 16) * A-levels, high school or equivalent * Post-secondary vocational/ technical * University (1st degree) * Postgraduate (2nd or further degree) * Not known * Prefer to self-describe (please specify) |

## Employment status

There can be an argument for allowing this question to be multiple-choice. Many retired people and students have paid or volunteer jobs.

Question 10:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following best describes your current (main) employment status?  [SS] | * Working full time (employed or self-employed) * Working part-time (employed or self-employed) * Unemployed and looking for work * Unemployed and unable to work (health issues/ disability) * Retired * Stay at home parent * Carer to a member of the household with additional needs * Student * Doing unpaid work/ volunteering * Other (please specify) |

You can use a free text box for occupation, but bear in mind this might be problematic for those not working in a specific role or working at all, and it could generate a very diverse set of data that could be time-consuming to code.

Question 11:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is your occupation?  (Write-in) | [free-text box] |

## Religion

Question 12:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is your religion or belief?  [SS] | * Christian * Muslim * Hindu * Sikh * Jewish * Buddhist * No religion * Prefer not to say * Not known * Other (please specify) |

## Carer

A [carer](https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/comm-carers/carers/) is anyone, including children and adults, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

Question 10:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you consider yourself to be a carer?  [SS] | * Yes * No * Prefer not to say * Not known |

# Living standards

## Financial situation

Wealth/poverty can be influenced by many factors, such as care needs, disability, housing, and family. Disposable income is a good proxy for this but asking for a specific monetary figure is problematic as context can make this meaningless. Often, respondents don't want to provide this information. We, therefore, recommend using a subjective measure. This is quite a wordy set of answers, so using underline, bold or capitals can draw the respondents’ eye to key words that differentiate the answers.

Question 13:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following best describes your current financial situation?  [SS] | * I have MORE THAN enough money for basic necessities and A LOT spare that I can save or spend on extras or leisure. * I have MORE THAN enough money for basic necessities and A LITTLE spare that I can save or spend on extras or leisure. * I have JUST ENOUGH money for basic necessities and little else * I DON’T HAVE ENOUGH money for basic necessities and sometimes or often run out of money * Prefer not to say * Not known |

Question 14:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| From which of the following sources do you receive income?  [MS] | *Wages/salary*  *Income from self-employment*  *Disability benefits (e.g., Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payment)*  *Means-tested benefits (e.g., Universal Credit, Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Pension Credit)*  *State retirement pension*  *Other benefits*  *Student loan*  *Occupational/private pension*  *Other income (please specify – free text box)*   * *Prefer not to say* |

## Housing situation

This may be relevant for specific surveys covering things like the impact of the environment on health or when talking to a particular group, like homeless people.

Question 15:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following best describes your housing situation?  [SS] | * Own outright * Paying a mortgage * Living with family members * Renting privately * Renting from the council, housing association or another social landlord * Informal living arrangement (no-contract sublet, staying with friends) * Supported living scheme * Care home * Temporary accommodation/ hostel * Homeless/Sleeping rough * Prefer not to say * Not known * Other (write-in) |

## Household Composition

These questions work together. For example, a single parent would have dependents living in the home and be the only adult.

Question 16a:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How many dependent children live in your home (under 18)?  [SS] | * None * 1-2 * 3-4 * More than 4 * Prefer not to say |

Question 16b:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Besides you, what other adults (18 or over) live in your home?  [SS] | * I’m the only adult (18 or over) * My partner only * I live with other adults who are not related to me and who are not my partner (e.g., co-tenants) * I live with members of my family (e.g., parents, siblings, other relatives) * I live with my partner and other adults * Prefer not to say * Other (write-in) |

## Poverty indicators

This question can provide further indicators of poverty over and above financial situation, and it includes specific indicators that have implications for health (cost of medication, dental care).

Question 17:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In the last 12 months, to help you keep your living costs down, have you......?  [MS] | * Reduced the amount of food you eat or bought cheaper types of food * Used a food bank * Changed shopping destinations, for example, using charity shops * Spent less on medication/prescriptions * Avoided doing things you enjoy like going to the cinema or going out with friends? * Avoided visits to the dentist * Used less heating or made other choices to reduce energy bills * Had to make difficult decisions about which bills to pay * None of the above * Other [ please specify] * Prefer not to say |

# Health and wellbeing

## GDPR and health and wellbeing

Health data is one of the special categories of personal data that require additional protection. The UK GDPR defines health data as “personal data related to the physical or mental health of a natural person, including the provision of health care services, which reveal information about his or her health status.” It covers a comprehensive range of issues, so it will cover any questions about health and wellbeing. For further details, see the [ICO guidance](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/special-category-data/what-is-special-category-data/#scd5).

## Disability

Question 18a: minimum viable taxonomy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you have a disability?  [SS] | * Yes * No * Prefer not to say * Not known |

Question 18b:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following disabilities apply to you?  [MS] | * Physical or mobility impairment * Sensory impairment * Learning disability or difficulties * Mental health condition * Long term condition * Other (please specify) * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Long-term condition

Question 19a: minimum viable taxonomy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you have a long-term health condition?  [SS] | * Yes * No * Prefer not to say * Not known |

Question 19b:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following long-term conditions?  [MS] | * Asthma, COPD or respiratory condition * Blindness or severe visual impairment * Cancer * Cardiovascular condition (including stroke) * Chronic kidney disease * Deafness or severe hearing impairment * Dementia * Diabetes * Epilepsy * Hypertension (high blood pressure) * Learning disability * Mental health condition * Musculoskeletal condition * Other (please specify) * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is increasingly being given greater consideration within our society – and rightly so, considering an estimated one in seven people in the UK are neurodivergent. Debate exists around terms such as "condition" or "disability” about neurodiversity and getting this wrong can offend people who are diagnosed or consider themselves neurodiverse. For that reason, we have created this question to take neurodiversity out of other umbrella terms. Although this is not one of the named nine protected characteristics, it would come under disability within the Equality Act 2010.

Question 20:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Have you been diagnosed with any of the following?  [MS] | * Autism (ASD) * Dyspraxia * Dyscalculia * Dyslexia * Dysgraphia * *ADHD/ADD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, attention deficit disorder)* * *Tourette’s* * Prefer not to say * Other (please specify) * Not known |

## General Health

Question 21:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How would you describe your current state of your health?  [SS] | * Very good * Reasonably good * Fair * Quite poor * Very poor * Prefer not to say * Not known |

## Wellbeing choices

Using statements with an agree/disagree scale is a quick way to cover a range of attitudes in one grid question. You can adapt statements to the research topic, but here are some examples on wellbeing.

Question 22 (grid):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To what level do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? | | | | | | |
|  | Disagree completely | Disagree slightly | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree slightly | Agree completely | Unsure or don't know |
| I take an active interest in maintaining my physical health [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I exercise at least once a week [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I consider my diet to be healthy [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am concerned about my current health [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I take active steps to look after my mental health [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I believe I am physically fit [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I believe I am a healthy weight [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Devices and digital

## Devices and internet access

When researching digital access, it's helpful to know what kind of devices people have access to.

Question 23:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following devices do you own or have regular access to?  [MS] | * Personal or work computer (desktop/laptop) * Tablet (e.g., iPad or similar) * Smartphone * Smart TV * Games console (e.g., Nintendo, PlayStation, Xbox) * Basic phone * None of the above |

Question 24:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you have access to the internet on a regular basis?  [MS] | * Yes, on home wi-fi/ broadband * Yes, on public wi-fi (e.g., in a café) * Yes, at work * Yes, on a mobile network (e.g., smartphone, tablet) with a SIM * No, I have no access to the internet * Other (please specify) * None of the above |

## Digital confidence

Having a device and internet access does not always equate to digital confidence or abilities. Someone may be able to use WhatsApp for communicating with family but not be able to download and effectively use a banking app.

Question 25 (grid):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To what level do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? | | | | | | |
|  | Disagree completely | Disagree slightly | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree slightly | Agree completely | Unsure or don't know |
| I am confident in using apps to carry out day-to-day tasks (e.g., banking, booking travel) [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am confident in using online search tools to look for information (e.g., Google) [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am confident using written communication such as email, WhatsApp, text [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am confident using on-screen/video communication such as Facetime, Zoom, Teams or Skype [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Impact

## Impact on day-to-day living

Question 26:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last at least 12 months?  [SS] | * Yes, limited a lot * Yes, limited a little * No, not limited * Prefer not to say * Unsure or don't know |

Question 27 (grid):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| In what way has… has impacted the following aspects of your life? | | | | | | |
|  | Very negative impact | Quite a negative impact | Neither positive nor negative impact | Quite a positive impact | Very positive impact | Unsure or don't know |
| Ability to work (voluntary or paid) [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ability to carry out daily household tasks [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ability to care for others [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ability to socialise [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| My ability to stay physically fit [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| My mental health and wellbeing [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| My relationship with partner, close friends, or family [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| My financial situation [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Communications

## Accessibility

Accessibility of information in a medical context has recently been an essential focus for Healthwatch. For example, you could use this question as a screening question, where your target sample is solely people who need support to access the information they need.

Question 28:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you have a disability, impairment or sensory loss that can make accessing information challenging?  [SS] | * Yes * No * Don’t know * Prefer not to say |

Only ask if a person has an impairment – which you can establish by using the previous question.

Question 29:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| To what extent do you agree that the communications you received from the NHS about your care or treatment was accessible, i.e. appropriate for your needs (language, braille, print size etc.)?  [SS] | * Disagree completely * Disagree slightly * Neither agree nor disagree * Agree slightly * Agree completely * Unsure or don't know |

## Amount of information

Question 30:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How would you describe the amount of information you were given when…...?  [SS] | * I was given more than enough information * I was given enough information * I was not given enough information * I was given no information * Unsure or don't know |

## Quality of information

Question 31:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To what level do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? | | | | | | |
| “The communications I received from the NHS about were…?” | Disagree completely | Disagree slightly | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree slightly | Agree completely | Unsure or don't know |
| Clear [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Easy to understand [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contained all the information I needed [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Accurate [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Location

Depending on your research topic, you may want to consider a question that identifies a location. It could be where an individual lives (first half of postcode maybe), local authority or ward, region, GP practice, hospital etc. Collecting more granular information on location can help the results be analysed by different types of geographical areas, for example, local Healthwatch, CCG, ICS etc. You may also be able to analyse it against other datasets.

This type of data will be personal data. If you are collecting the data in connection with your statutory duties, your lawful basis for collecting it will be substantial public interest. You will need to tell people how you intend to use postcode data.

# Emotions

Despite qualitative methodologies being the "go-to" for feelings and emotions, you can use survey questions to provide some indication of these “softer” measures. One way you can do this is to provide a list of words and ask the respondent to pick any that apply, their top three or even top one, for example. Using an "other (please specify)” allows you to capture emotions you may not have considered. When using a list of words, it’s better to provide a mixture of positive and negatives that could reasonably apply to that situation. For example, visiting a hospital clinic is highly unlikely to be "fun", but it might be "reassuring"!

If you are looking for a more nuanced view, you could use a disagree/agree scale.

Question 32:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How did you feel when…?  [MS] | * Protected * Vulnerable * Cared for * Ignored * Empowered * Helpless * Safe * Scared * Excited * Worried * Relieved * Annoyed * Happy * Demotivated * Motivated * Sad * Optimistic * Let down * None of the above * Other (please specify) * Unsure or don't know |

Question 33 (grid):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| When you received your letter about…. from your consultant, to what level do you agree or disagree that you felt…? | | | | | | |
|  | Disagree completely | Disagree slightly | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree slightly | Agree completely | Unsure or don't know |
| Protected [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Vulnerable [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Empowered [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Annoyed [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Relieved [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Let down [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Optimistic [SS] |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Other ways to identify people whose experiences aren't heard

At Healthwatch, one of the challenges is often to reach people in certain groups. You can use a bank of statements to allow people to identify themselves as belonging to those groups, but it’s vital to include a “none of the above” and/or “prefer not to say” option. Always consider whether these categories are appropriate for the audience you are targeting.

Question 34:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Which of the following statements apply to you?  [MS] | * I belong to the LGBTQ+ community * I don’t have a support network (friends and/or family) * I consider myself to be neuro-diverse (e.g., autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette’s etc.) * I am a veteran (have been in the armed forces) * I am homeless * I live in a rural/isolated setting * I am an ex-offender * I am a refugee or asylum seeker * I am a serving member of the armed forces * *I have experienced domestic abuse (e.g., violence, psychological or financial)* * *I am a sex worker* * None of the above * Prefer not to say |

# If you need further help

Please contact the Research Helpdesk if you need any help with survey questions or any other aspect of research. You can contact us at research@healthwatch.co.uk.