



Office for
National Statistics

Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources Secondary Standards

National Religious and Sexual Identity

About this document and Update history

About this document

This document forms part of a series that replaces the original *Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Government Social Surveys*. This series will make topics easier to find, with clearer guidance and consistent layouts. By using a series of documents, updates will be simpler and faster, and new topics will be easier to incorporate.

This document is part of the set of Harmonised Secondary Standards for social sources. These are concepts and questions that apply only to a selected group of surveys. They are distinct from Primary Standards, as the latter are used on all or nearly all major government social surveys.

For more information, please see the introductory document, available on our website.

Version 3.0, published in April 2008.

This document was updated to Version 3.0, to add information on 'Sexual Identity'. Contact details for the Harmonisation Team have also been updated.

Previous versions

Version 2.0, published in October 2005.

This version now includes the standard question to collect data on National Identity.

Version 1.0, was published in November 2004.

Version 1.0 was part of a series that replaced the Harmonised Concepts and Questions document. We had worked to make our guidance easier to find and clearer to use. Other than the formatting and layout changes, there were no new changes to questions or outputs in this version.

Please note that version control is new to this edition. Please ensure that you always use up-to-date versions of questions and outputs by checking our website for new editions – the version number will be incremented when changes are made.

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Introduction

With the new devolved administrations, there has been an increasing interest in 'national' consciousness with many people wanting their 'national' identity to be acknowledged. A 'national identity' question has already been developed that should be used if this needs to be taken into account.

Contact us

For more information about Harmonisation or to join our mailing list, please visit our website at www.statistics.gov.uk/harmonisation. If you would like further information or have any questions, please contact:

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Outputs

National Identity

This data presentation classification is based around collecting both ethnic and national group data.

Use this data presentation for national identity in England and Wales:

English	XXX
Scottish	XXX
Welsh	XXX
Irish	XXX
British	XXX
Other	XXX

An example of ethnic and national group data presentation for England and/or Wales is shown below:

England and/or Wales

The ethnic group categories are broadly in line with the data presentation for the 2001 Census and enable general comparability with the Censuses of the different countries of the United Kingdom.

ETHNIC GROUP

White

British	XXX
Irish*	XXX
Any Other White background	XXX
All White groups	XXX

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean	XXX
White and Black African	XXX
White and Asian	XXX
Any other Mixed background	XXX
All Mixed groups	XXX

Asian or Asian British

Indian	XXX
Pakistani	XXX
Bangladeshi	XXX
Any Other Asian background	XXX
All Asian groups	XXX

Black or Black British

Caribbean	XXX
African	XXX
Other Black groups	XXX
All Black groups	XXX

Chinese or Other ethnic group

Chinese	XXX
Other ethnic group	XXX
All Chinese or Other ethnic groups	XXX

All ethnic groups (including White)	XXX
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Not stated	XXX
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NATIONAL GROUP

All ethnic groups (including White)

English	XXX
Scottish	XXX
Welsh	XXX
Irish	XXX
British	XXX
Other	XXX
All	XXX

Not stated	XXX
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Note: XXX indicates where data will be in the presentation table

Inputs

National Identity

The National Identity question should be asked as a separate question in addition to the ethnic group question. This is because our research has led to the conclusion that classifying ethnic group is best achieved separately from national identity. There is an order effect that is best managed by asking national identity before ethnic group, as this allows respondents to describe themselves as English, Welsh, Scottish etc. Research suggests that people were happier when asked about their national identity first.

The questions on Ethnic Group can be accessed at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/harmonisation/downloads/p3.pdf>

The question for national identity and the answer categories that you should give to the people you are interviewing are shown below. You should change the order of categories depending on where you are asking the question. The use of a national identity question in Northern Ireland is not recommended.

England

NAT IDENTITY

– **What do you consider your national identity to be?**

PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER FROM BELOW. CHOOSE AS MANY OR AS FEW AS APPLY.

1. English
2. Scottish
3. Welsh
4. Irish
5. British
6. Other

Scotland

NAT IDENTITY

– **What do you consider your national identity to be?**

PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER FROM BELOW. CHOOSE AS MANY OR AS FEW AS APPLY.

1. Scottish
2. English
3. Welsh
4. Irish
5. British
6. Other

Wales

NAT IDENTITY

– **What do you consider your national identity to be?**

PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER FROM BELOW. CHOOSE AS MANY OR AS FEW AS APPLY.

1. Welsh
2. English
3. Scottish
4. Irish
5. British
6. Other

NAT IDENTITY OTHER

FOR ALL, IF SOMEONE ANSWERS 'OTHER', YOU SHOULD THEN ASK:

- **How would you describe your national identity?**

This question allows respondents to choose more than one identity (if they think of themselves as having more than one). This is because, like ethnicity, national identity is self-defined, i.e. it is something that is subjectively meaningful to the person concerned. The second part of the question 'How would you describe your national identity?' should be asked of those for whom it is relevant, even if these answers are not going to be coded.

Research on evaluating the national identity question shows that the response is very sensitive to exactly how the question is asked, and this can impact on the results quite considerably.

Inputs

Religious Identity

RELIGION

- **What is your Religion, even if you are not currently practising?**

CODE ONE ONLY

7. Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
8. Buddhist
9. Hindu
10. Jewish
11. Muslim
12. Sikh
13. Any other religion, *please describe*

14. No religion

The following question is a non-compulsory follow-up question to the above 'Religion' question.

PRACTISING RELIGION

- **Do you consider that you are actively practising your religion?**

1. Yes
2. No

Please note that the Religious Identity question, wherever possible, should be asked alongside the ethnic group and national Identity questions.

Sexual Identity

There is currently no Harmonised standard or question for Sexual Identity. This however, is being looked into with a view to adopting these for general use. The ONS's Sexual Identity Project was established in 2006 to meet user requirements for information on sexual identity.

Further information on the Sexual Identity Project can be accessed at:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/measuring-equality/sexual-identity/default.asp>