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# New guidelines to help measure ethnic diversity

Measuring ethnic diversity across the United Kingdom is vital if the country is to promote equal opportunities. The Office for National Statistics has published a new set of guidelines to help everyone gathering data across the country to be more consistent.

The guidelines suggest National Statistics' standards for the collection and classification of information on ethnicity to achieve comparability over time and between sources of data.

The need for more frequent and comprehensive data by ethnicity across a range of administrative and survey data has been recognised for some time at both local and national levels to build a more accurate picture of ethnic groups.

The Policy Action Team on Better Information which relates to the information needs for the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal emphasised that, "some of the groups in society that are the most vulnerable to becoming victims of social exclusion are forgotten simply because not enough is known about their particular circumstances".

The guidance recommends a two-question method for most circumstances and this includes ethnic and national group dimensions. It also recommends that wherever possible a question on religion should be included.

National Statistician Len Cook said: "Defining and measuring ethnicity and national identity has never been easy, especially as what the term embraces is constantly evolving. However, it is vitally important that we do measure ethnicity and national identity and that we do so in a way that is sound, sensitive, relevant and useful."

**Ethnic Group Statistics: A guide for the collection and classification of ethnicity data**

**Free from ONS. ISBN: 1 85774 561 2**

[www.statistics.gov.uk/ethnicityguide](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ethnicityguide)

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