

Chief Statistician  
Roger Halliday



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

T: 0131-244 0302  
E: chiefstatistician@gov.scot

Public Body Chief Executives  
Sent via e-mail.



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Dear Public Body Chief Executive

### **DATA ON SEX AND GENDER**

I was asked by the then Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People to bring together a working group to look at the way data on sex and gender is collected and published, and put together guidance for public bodies. The scope of this work is about data collected and used by Scottish public bodies – not just for producing statistics, but for operational, and research use too.

I have engaged widely on this sensitive issue, including with the public, and consulted on a draft set of guidance. I am now publishing a final set of guidance on the issue, which is attached.

I recognize that we have common ambitions to eliminate discrimination, foster good relations and advance equality in our society. This guidance aims to make part of the way we achieve that more straightforward.

While the guidance is specifically on sex, gender and trans issues, the key part of this is that my expectation of public bodies is that they routinely gather and publish data on socio-demographic characteristics (including the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010) of people in Scotland. The purpose of this being to use this information to design, plan, monitor and evaluate services that are sensitive to the needs of all of Scotland and create the conditions where there are opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish.


This guidance can help you to do that: it lays out ways of thinking through your needs for data on sex and trans status, and presents standard questions for public bodies to adopt, which are consistent with Scotland's 2022.

In addition to the guidance, my team will run some sessions for those in your organisations responsible for collecting, managing, publishing and sharing data.

Related to the aims of this guidance, Scottish Government has an Equality Data Improvement Programme. As part of this, I am leading a project to help public bodies understand how people with different protected characteristics are accessing and are impacted by their services. This is being done by securely piecing together a record level dataset on protected characteristics from a range of administrative and census datasets to provide a much better coverage and quality. The [blog](#) gives further details. If you would like to combine this data with information you hold to improve your understanding of equalities, please get in touch.

While this is guidance rather than being mandatory, I am keen to understand your plans for its adoption, and any challenges you may have in doing this. To help with this, can you provide a summary of your plans by the end of November please to [ChiefStatistician@gov.scot](mailto:ChiefStatistician@gov.scot).

Yours sincerely



Roger Halliday  
Chief Statistician