



Home Office

Inclusive language by design

Inclusive language builds trust and helps us communicate more clearly

Use the Home Office Design System to learn how to write for and about diverse groups of people: design.homeoffice.gov.uk/accessibility/inclusive-language

Age**Disability****Sex****Gender****Sexuality****Ethnicity****Nationality****Religion**

Age

Only ask for age if it's necessary — for example, if a person must be over 18 to use a service.

Do user research to identify the varying needs of users from different age groups.

If you have to mention age, use ranges — for example, '18 to 24' or 'over 65'.

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Disability

Recognise the physical and emotional barriers people may face when using your service.

Clearly signpost users to other ways of accessing your service.

Do not automatically refer to disability — consider using ‘people with disabilities or impairments.’

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Sex Gender

Only ask for sex or gender if a service will not work without this information.

When asking for gender, provide options other than male and female.

If you need gender information, ask about sex assigned at birth and gender identity.

Tell users why you're asking about sex or gender identity.

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Sexuality

Only ask users about sexual orientation if a service will not work without this information.

Do not differentiate between same sex and heterosexual relationships — use neutral terms such as ‘partner’ or ‘spouse’.

Avoid assumptions about users and their sexual orientation or relationships.

Tell users why you need to ask about sexual orientation.

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Ethnicity Nationality

If you refer to ethnicity or nationality, be specific and do not generalise about regions or ethnic groups.

Do not use the term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' or the acronyms 'BAME' or 'BME'.

Use a capital letter when writing about ethnic groups or nationalities — for example, 'Black' or 'Asian'.

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Religion

Only ask about religion or faith if a service will not work without this information.

Use language that is culturally inclusive and appropriate for people of different faiths.

Make adjustments for people that need to use a service — for example, wearing a head covering in a photo for religious reasons.

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