

SDS Equality Monitoring Form Guidance

This guidance and the form have now been updated for the 1st of April 2024 to provide clarity on how to complete the SDS Equalities Monitoring form and how to record the information on FIPS.

The guidance below outlines the process for collecting equality information, what we use it for and highlights good practice to help participants feel comfortable disclosing their information to us.

Process

The SDS Training Agreement and SDS Equality Monitoring Form should be completed at the same time.

The information collected from the Equality Monitoring Form should then be input to FIPS. A new participant cannot be registered on FIPS without this information.

As outlined on the Equality Monitoring Form, you should ask participants to sign Section B to demonstrate that they have read and understood the [SDS privacy notice](#). **Section B should be retained by the Provider and produced for inspection on requests by SDS.**

Section A should be completed by the participant. Please refer to the guidance below should they have any questions about why this data is collected or what it is used for. **Section A should be securely destroyed once the information has been entered into FIPS.**

FIPS now has an additional box for Providers to add information disclosed by participants in the new free text box in the disability section on the Equality Monitoring Form.

You should retain a copy of the signed Training Agreement and Equality Monitoring form for SDS audit purposes.

Information provided on the Equality Monitoring Form should always be on the basis of self-disclosure from the participant. Assumptions should not be made about which category participants fit into. This information should be entered into FIPS on the basis of the completed Equality Monitoring Form.

Updating equality data on FIPS

Sometimes a participant might disclose equality information to you at a later date, after their form has been entered into FIPS. This data can be updated on FIPS but only if the individual consents to this and is made aware of SDS Privacy Statement (Section B). To update equality data on FIPS, participants and providers should retain confirmation from the participant that they consent to a change being made to their equality data (this should include the date of the consent). You should not record details of the question or the response, just confirmation that a change has been made to the equality data. This could be recorded as part of a progress review, confirmed via email or a written update, including signature and date, on Section B of the form. This should be retained for audit purposes in line with the usual process.

Why do we ask for equality information?

Skills Development Scotland has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure our services are inclusive and can be accessed by a diverse range of individuals. We also have a duty under the Children and Young Persons Act to ensure we are supporting care experienced young people.

As part of these duties, we monitor uptake of our services so that we can identify and address any areas of under-representation of particular groups. For example, if our data showed that there were very few disabled people accessing our programmes then we can take steps to try to address this.

Encouraging disclosure

The SDS Equality Monitoring Form must be completed by all participants. Participants have the option to select 'Prefer Not to Say' if they do not wish to disclose their equality information, however it is important for us to understand who is using our services. It is ultimately beneficial to our customers that we can identify any groups that are under-represented or face additional barriers to accessing our services so that we can take steps to improve access to our programmes. Under the disability section we have added additional information to help the participant identify any long term illness that may be relevant to them. There are some steps that you can take to ensure participants feel comfortable disclosing their equality information:

- Ensure staff involved in collecting and inputting equality data understand why SDS requests this information so that they can explain this to participants if asked.
- Ensure that people feel that they are in a safe and non-intimidating environment where they will not be interrupted. For example, completing the form in a group situation would not be appropriate.
- To encourage participants to complete the form accurately it should be done in a private space ensuring confidentiality of the information. Ideally, in a 1:1 situation with a trainer that they have already met. This also gives them the opportunity to ask questions and/or disclose any of the information to their trainer, enabling you to discuss any support needs that they may have.
- You should make it very clear that you and your organisation understand the information is personal and sensitive and that it will be treated confidentially, and will not be shared with other participants or employers.
- You should make it clear that the information is anonymised and used for reporting purposes only
- You should explain that the purpose is to ensure all groups have equal access to the programme.
- When a participant does not disclose at the beginning of their programme but feels more able to do so later on, it is very important that you update FIPS (please follow guidance above on making changes to FIPS).

Further information

If you have any questions regarding equality monitoring or would like to speak to someone about encouraging a more diverse range of individuals onto the programme, please contact equality.apprenticeships@sds.co.uk and one of our team will discuss this with you.

If you have any queries about FIPS, please use the [FIPS Customer Support Request Form](#).