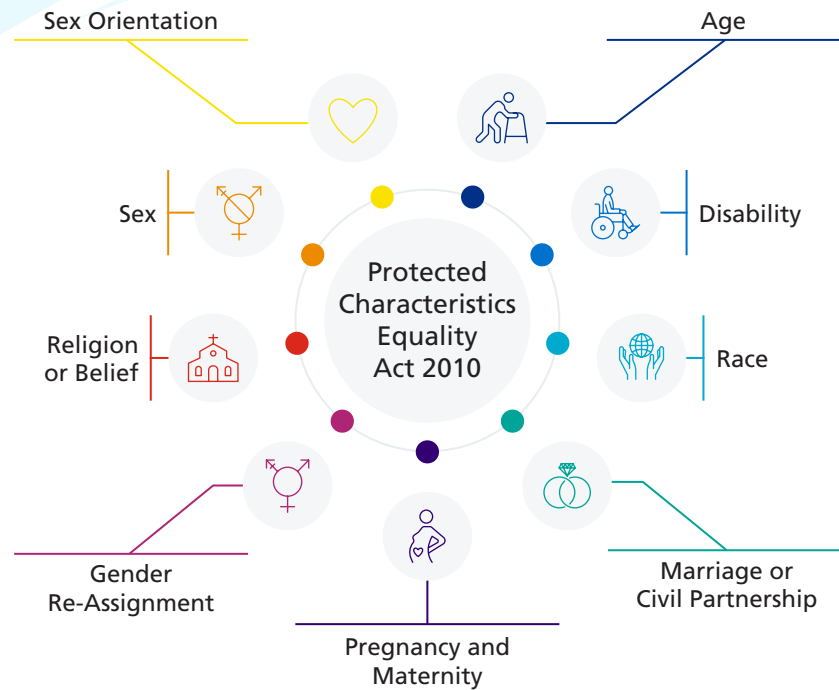


# Collecting protected characteristics information

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone based on the 9 'protected characteristics'. We have a duty to our patients to advance equality across these groups.

We are also committed to advancing equality for inclusion health groups, a term we use to describe people who are socially excluded. For example, this includes asylum seekers and refugees.



## Why should we collect this data?



01

There are mental health inequalities across protected characteristics and inclusion health groups. Many groups experience higher rates of mental illness, limited access to services and worse health outcomes.



02

We need more data to understand these health inequalities, so that we can target them and advance equality for our patients.



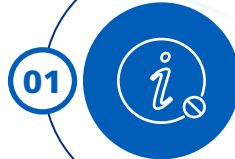
03

With this information, we can design our services to meet the specific needs of our patients, resulting in easier access to care and better outcomes. This will lead to fewer, acutely unwell patients needing our mental health services.



# How to collect protected characteristics information

Patients are not obligated to disclose any information that they would be uncomfortable sharing. Always respect patient consent and choice.



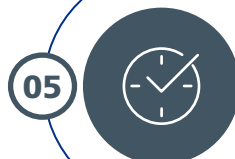
Always allow patients to self-report information about their identity and life circumstances, and never make assumptions.

Explain to patients that data is being collected to improve services so that they are inclusive for all people. Remind them that their information will be confidential.



Avoid using non-descriptive codes such as 'other' and 'unknown', except if patients would prefer not to share this information.

Choose an appropriate time to ask for this information, acknowledging that patients may not feel comfortable or able to share at first.



In crisis care, you may need to infer some information where it directly affects the care a patient needs. When appropriate, you should review this information with the patient (for example, following discharge to a community team).

Further guidance on collecting this information can be found at [NHS Digital - Data quality of protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups.](#)

