Do you need data on the additional ethnic groups you are requesting for policy development?

Yes

Your needs for ethnic group data

Thinking about policy development, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested.Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.

Thinking about policy development, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested. Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.:

This submission addresses the ethnicity categorisation options for Gypsies and Travellers. The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' encompasses a range of distinct communities, including Romany Gypsies, Scottish and Welsh Gypsy Travellers, and Irish Travellers. These groups are recognised as ethnic minorities and are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

The submission highlights the need for the existing 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnicity category in the harmonised ethnicity standard and the 2031 Census to be further disaggregated to reflect the different ethnic groups. The submission also highlights the lack of consistent adoption of the existing harmonised ethnicity standard and 2021 Census categories across government departments.

Lack of adoption of the existing harmonised ethnicity standard:

Gypsies and Travellers experience some of the worst inequalities across health, education, criminal justice, economic inclusion, and accommodation deprivation . The Women and Equalities Committee ran an inquiry in 2019, 'Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities'. The Committee highlighted the inadequate and inconsistent ethnic monitoring across departments and the impact this has on policy development, resource allocation and service delivery.

'The lack of consistent data collection on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people means that public bodies are failing to tackle inequalities that are clearly evidenced in academic research and in work being carried out by grassroots organisations...'Although the importance of having data, both for policy-making and resource allocation, is clear, it seems that most public bodies do not provide the option for Gypsy and Traveller people to disclose their ethnicity.'

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) is consulting on the need for additional ethnic categories; however, this will add limited value when the existing harmonised ethnicity standard and 2021 Census classification of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' is not widely or consistently applied across government. For example:

The Department for Education has one ethnic category for 'Gypsy/Roma' and a separate category for 'Irish Traveller'. By aggregating Romany Gypsies and Roma into one ethnic category, this compromises the data as they are separate ethnic groups, who experience different barriers to education, such as having English as a second language for Roma, digital exclusion and accessibility for families who travel. For these barriers to education to be addressed, data needs to be collected and published separately for Romany Gypsies and Roma.

Home Office data on the ethnicity of hate crime victims is published under the five high categories . 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' falls under the 'White' ethnic category. Therefore, despite evidence which highlights high levels of race hate incidents and crimes experienced by Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, there is no national data on this, and therefore, policy development, resource allocation and service delivery have largely failed to address this issue.

The Department of Health and Social Care have omitted to include Gypsies and Travellers entirely in the Data Dictionary, which masks stark health inequalities which are highlighted in the 2011 and 2021 Census and in other data sets. For example, those who identified as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' in the Census reported worse health across all age groups and in both sexes than the overall England and Wales population . The failure to adopt the harmonised standard and/or the 2021 Census categories conceals essential data needed in order to develop targeted policies, allocate resources and deliver those services to the right people.

The need for disaggregated ethnicity data for policy development, resource allocation and service delivery:

The existing harmonised standard and Census category 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' is problematic due to the misrepresentation of the distinct cultures. Furthermore, public bodies have a duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality. To do this effectively, they need precise data on each group's demographics, health, education, and accommodation needs. Aggregated data under "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" makes it harder to identify and address specific inequalities faced by each group. Below we outline community views on the existing ethnicity categories and present data on the need for further disaggregation.

Community views on the existing 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnic category:

As part of the response to this consultation, 10 interviews were conducted with community members, including four Irish Travellers, five Romany Gypsies and one Scottish Traveller. Views were sought on the existing 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnic category used in the harmonised standard and the 2021 census, the high-level categories and how interviewees wished to disclose ethnicity on official forms.

Eight out of ten of those interviewed stated that the existing category contained two distinct ethnicities with diverse cultures, and therefore, there was a need to include two separate categories, one for English Romany Gypsies or Romany Gypsy and one for Irish Travellers:

'No, it's not right, I think there should be two separate options.'

'We are completely different cultures, we came from different countries and we don't mix, it doesn't make sense to say we are the same, to me.'

'One is Irish, and one is English; the cultures are different and we are coming from Ireland, they are not.'

'…we are not the same, and also, it should say English Romany Gypsy, not just Gypsy. There is a big difference in our cultures, it's like calling a Chinese person Japanese. We have always lived in England, for generations, we are English Romany Gypsies.'

'I think there should be a separate category. A lot of misunderstanding can happen if you just put us together, then people won't understand us, or our history, you know.'

'They should be separate because we are two different cultures, we aren't the same, and we shouldn't be lumped together.'

Community views on the high-level ethnic categories:

The 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' category sits under the high-level 'White' category in official classifications. Of the ten respondents, six said they felt 'White' was the right category, while others felt 'other' or 'mixed' would be more appropriate. It is important to note that three of the four who said the high-level ethnic category should be 'Mixed' or 'Other', identified as Romany Gypsy:

'Romany Gypsies do not have white ancestors, so should not be under "white". I can't speak for Irish Travellers.'

'Because we are not just one of those. Me and my family are White British, but we are also Gypsies, and that's very different from being just white in this country.'

'I just think that Romany is a minority, but we are white, so that makes the most sense to me, yeah.'

'There are lots of different nationalities, to put people into a 'white' category is just too simple. I think people identify in different ways, there are so many nationalities living here, you have to move with the times.'

An additional concern with categorising these ethnicities under the broad "White" classification is that, when data is reported only at this aggregated level due to small sample sizes, the significant and persistent inequalities experienced by these communities are effectively obscured. This lack of granularity undermines evidence-based policymaking and hampers the development of targeted interventions to address specific needs. To address this, steps should be taken to boost sample sizes through other methods.

Community views on disclosure of ethnicity:

When asked how people would like to record their ethnicity on official forms, participants specified Irish Traveller, Romany Gypsy, English Romany Gypsy, while others stated that they do not disclose their ethnicity because of experiences of being treated differently after doing so.

'I'm fine with putting down Gypsy, I'm an Irish Traveller, but I'd be happy putting down Gypsy on the form.'

'Irish Traveller, that's what I am.'

'Romany Gypsy'

'…I put White British down, because, yes, I'm Romany Gypsy, but I don't tell others, because it changes things.'

'Either White British or English Romany Gypsy.'

'If I'm filling in a form, I put down White Irish. People treat you differently when they find out you're a Traveller. I have seen it happen. I have had it happen to me. I am protecting me and my own, it's the discrimination we face, still today.'

This is a small sample size and should not be taken to represent the views of the different communities. Given the mixed views among the interview respondents, there is a clear need to consult community members more widely on the proposals contained within this consultation.

Evidence of the need for disaggregation:

Given the fact that the vast majority of data sets aggregate Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Welsh Gypsies and Scottish Gypsy Travellers into one category, it is difficult to evidence the need for disaggregation for data purposes. However, there are some limited examples of how inequalities are experienced differently between Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

In terms of health inequalities, there is evidence which shows that Irish Travellers in Ireland are genetically predisposed to Classical Galactosaemia, an autosomal recessive condition. Approximately 1 in every 16,200 babies born in Ireland each year may have this condition. However, it is particularly common among babies born to Irish Traveller parents, in whom the incidence is approximately 1 in 450 births . If health data in England and Wales were collected on Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies separately, differences such as these could be identified, and services could be properly resourced and allocated.

Another example is the data collected by the Department for Education. Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller ethnic groups are disaggregated into 'Gypsy/Roma' and 'Irish Traveller' categories. For the school year 2022-2023, the percentage of pupils getting at least a grade 4 or grade 5 in GCSE English

and maths for 'Irish Travellers' was 30.7 and 17.5, respectively, and for the 'Gypsy/Roma' category, this was 16.2 and 7.7, respectively . It can be seen that there is a marked difference in outcomes, indicating a need to understand those differences better and allocate resources, commission services, and shape policies accordingly.

Links to evidence and resources:

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/360.pdf
https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ICESCR-Written-Evidence-Branded_PDF-1.pdf
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/360.pdf
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025#sectio
https://gateherts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Rain-Report-201211.pdf
https://gateherts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Report-Racism-GRT-Review-202021-2.pdf
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/gypsyoririshtravellerpopulationsenglandandwales/census2021#genera
https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/child/newbornscreening/newbornbloodspotscreening/information-for-professionals/a-practical-guide-to-newborn-bloodspot-scree
https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/a-to-c-in-english-and-maths-gcse-attainment-for-children-aged-1

Your needs for ethnic group data

Do you need data on the additional ethnic groups you are requesting for equality monitoring?

Yes

Your needs for ethnic group data

Thinking about equality monitoring, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested.Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.

Thinking about equality monitoring, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested. Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.:

See previous response

Your needs for ethnic group data

Do you need data on the additional ethnic groups you are requesting for service delivery?

Yes

Your needs for ethnic group data

Thinking about service delivery, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested.Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.

Thinking about service delivery, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested. Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.:

See previous response

Your needs for ethnic group data

Do you need data on the additional ethnic groups you are requesting for resource allocation?

Yes

Your needs for ethnic group data

Thinking about resource allocation, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested, if applicable.Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.

Thinking about resource allocation, explain why you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested, if applicable. Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.:

See previous response

Your needs for ethnic group data

Do you need data for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested for any other purpose?

Yes

Your needs for ethnic group data

Explain why you need data for other purposes for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested.Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.

Explain why you need data for other purposes for each of the additional ethnic groups you have requested. Include links to published research, case studies or other supporting evidence.:

See previous response

Your needs for ethnic group data

At what geographical levels would you expect to use this information? Select all that apply.

UK, National, Regional, Local authority level or Local Government District

Other, please specify::

Your needs for ethnic group data

Thinking about government statistics, do any other survey questions provide data that measures the additional ethnic group you have requested?This could be collected through survey questions such as country of birth, language, national identity, religion, etc.

No

Your needs for ethnic group data

Do you use any official data to measure the additional ethnic groups you have requested? Official data might include data from government surveys, administrative data, or other data collected by public organisations.

Yes

Your needs for ethnic group data

What official data do you use to measure the additional ethnic groups you have requested?Official data might include data from government surveys, administrative data, or other data collected by public organisations.

What official data do you use to measure the additional ethnic groups you have requested? Official data might include data from government surveys, administrative data, or other data collected by public organisations.:

ONS Census

Your needs for ethnic group data

To what extent, if at all, does this official data meet your current requirements for the additional ethnic groups you have requested?Official data might include data from government surveys, administrative data, or other data collected by public organisations.

Requirements neither met nor unmet

Your needs for ethnic group data

Why does this official data not meet your needs?

Why does this official data not meet your needs?:

N/A

Your needs for ethnic group data

Do you have any other comments on the additional ethnic groups you have requested?

Do you have any other comments on the additional ethnic groups you have requested?:

N/A

Your needs for ethnic group data