**BHF demographics data from researchers – FAQs**

**Why does BHF ask for diversity monitoring information?**

In our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy [Igniting Change](https://www.bhf.org.uk/-/media/files/what-we-do/equality-diversity-inclusion/igniting-change-edi-strategy-september-2023.pdf?rev=019cab4fac224dbba9f4a71a5f3518eb), launched in 2022, we outlined clear commitments to addressing inequalities within the research ecosystem, ensuring that BHF plays its part in creating a diverse and inclusive research environment.

BHF is [committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in research](https://www.bhf.org.uk/-/media/files/what-we-do/equality-diversity-inclusion/igniting-change-edi-strategy-september-2023.pdf?rev=019cab4fac224dbba9f4a71a5f3518eb). We understand that providing diversity monitoring information could seem intrusive. However, the more information you share with us, the better we can assess inclusivity in how our research funding decisions are made, and the more clearly we can identify under-representation across different groups. This will allow us at BHF to better understand barriers to researcher career progression and help us consider targeted interventions to remove these, so that we can achieve a more representative and inclusive cardiovascular research community.

It is optional to answer these questions and you can select ‘prefer not to say’ for any questions you do not wish to answer.

**Why am I asked these questions?**

Before 2023, BHF collected diversity information limited to age, disability, ethnicity and gender.

From March 2024, we are capturing information about additional characteristics where under-representation or inequalities have been described in the UK Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (STEMM) sector. We are now collecting data about [7 characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1). We are also collecting information about caring responsibilities, nationality and socioeconomic status.

Once you have provided your information, you will have a chance to update it each time you submit an application for funding. You can access the [Grants Management System](https://researchgrants.bhf.org.uk/) at any time to update your personal information as needed.

**How will BHF use the information I share?**

BHF uses anonymised data to understand the diversity of the researchers engaging with us. This helps us identify which groups are underrepresented, and the barriers that affect certain groups.

The information you share with us will help us consider targeted interventions so we can make meaningful progress and move towards becoming a more inclusive research funder.

To be transparent, we are publishing an aggregated analysis of the data we collect on a regular basis, with [our first report](https://www.bhf.org.uk/-/media/files/what-we-do/equality-diversity-inclusion/diversity-data-research-funding/bhf_our-research-funding-diversity-data-2020-2023.pdf?rev=fa2eb9a706154f2789010076a2d2dc83&hash=F756A98BF26401A61E202B41865AEEB6) about the diversity in our research funding published in July 2023.

**Is it legal for BHF to ask for diversity monitoring information from me?**

Under Schedule 1(8) Data Protection Act 2018, this legal basis is available: specified categories of personal data (namely that relating to racial or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, data concerning health, and data concerning sexual orientation) can be processed for the purpose of identifying and keeping under review the existence or absence of equality of opportunity or treatment between groups of people specified in relation to the particular categories, with a view to enabling equality to be promoted or maintained.

**How will my information be stored?**

Our grants data are stored in our cloud-based Grant Management System which has been developed to ensure compliance with information security standards and is independently security tested at least four times a year.

To protect your identity, we store your demographics data separately from any other information you provide. This includes information about funding applications.  The information you provide is encrypted and password protected for extra security.

**Who will see the responses I provide?**

The demographics data can only be accessed by specific BHF members of staff who have been granted a specific ‘EDI Admin role’, as part of grant management system’s role-based security model. BHF employees who report and analyse demographics data will have access to your anonymised information.

The data will not be seen by committee members and will not be used to inform any decision relating to grants applications and award.

**How were the equality monitoring questions chosen?**

We have followed sector-wide best practice guidelines and recommendations ([DAISY guidance](https://edisgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DAISY-guidance-current-upated-May-2022-V2.pdf), [Advance HE](https://documents.advance-he.ac.uk/download/file/document/10404), [ONS Census](https://www.ons.gov.uk/census)) when designing the questions.

**What does the occupation of my main household earner when I was a child or young person have to do with my socioeconomic background?**

There are lots of ways to measure socioeconomic status, each with their pros and cons. You might be familiar with [POLAR4 indices](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/maps-of-participation-in-higher-education/), or [indices of multiple deprivation](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019), for instance. We have chosen to ask about the occupation of your main household earner when you were a young person.

[Government guidance (.PDF)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713739/Annex_A-_Evaluation_of_measures_of_Socio-economic_background.pdf) suggests that this is a good predictor of socioeconomic background. [Academic research](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-022-01425-4) also suggests that what your parents or caregivers did when you were a young person can have long-lasting impacts. This could impact your own socioeconomic status, education, occupation, etc. when you become an adult.

**Who can I contact for more information or to provide feedback?**

For enquiries or more information, you can contact BHF Research Inequalities Working Group at diversityinresearch@bhf.org.uk.