

Frequently asked questions:

Statistical standard for gender identity

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Supplementary information to the [Statistical standard for gender identity](#).

What is gender identity?

Gender identity is an individual's internal sense of being wholly female, wholly male, or having aspects of female and/or male.

Isn't someone's sex and gender identity the same thing?

For most people, their sex and the gender they identify as are the same. However, for others, their sex and gender identity don't match. Sometimes the terms 'trans' or 'genderqueer' are used to describe this group of people, although these terms do not cover the range of gender identities in our society.

What is sex, then?

Sex is the distinction between males and females based on the biological differences in sexual characteristics, whereas gender identity is how you experience gender internally.

Why do we need to know about gender identity?

By measuring and using gender identity data, we can better understand the diversity of our population.

Also, by ensuring there are inclusive options, the visibility of the range of gender identities will increase. The Human Rights Commission has found that visibility reduces discrimination.

Why is the gender identity definition in this statistical standard different from the Human Rights Commission definition?

The statistical standard definition states "gender identity is an individual's internal sense of being wholly female, wholly male, or having aspects of female and/or male". This is a statistical definition and is required to be specific and measurable. The definition captures the measurable spectrum of gender identities.

In [To be who I am: Kia noho au ki tōku anō ao. Report of the inquiry into discrimination experienced by transgender people](#), the Human Rights Commission defines gender identity as "a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male or female, something other, or in between. A person's gender identity may or may not correspond with their biological sex". This definition is more of a sociological definition. By introducing the term 'something other', this definition is limitless and goes beyond the binary boundaries of male and female.

What will the gender identity information be used for?

The gender identity information will be used by researchers and decision-makers to better understand the population make-up of New Zealand. It may effect policy changes as the needs and size of the differing gender identities are better understood. It will also ensure New Zealand government records can reflect the diversity of our population.

The collection and use of the information will conform to privacy laws and the information won't be released in a way that can identify any individual.

What is 'gender diverse' and why is it in the statistical standard?

For statistical purposes, 'gender diverse' is the chosen 'umbrella' term for the variation of gender identities in the gender spectrum (ie it encompasses gender identities such as transgender, agender, and non-binary). Gender diverse is seen as a neutral, official umbrella term. For the definition, please refer to the statistical standard for gender identity.

How will asking for gender identity information affect me?

You may notice in the future that some government forms will ask for your sex and others will ask what gender you identify as. Other forms may ask you both.

A question about gender identity will only be included when there is a clearly defined need for the information to be collected.

Why would some forms ask for sex and others gender identity?

In some situations knowing someone's sex as recorded at birth is important. For example, in clinical situations when various medications react differently to each sex; or to calculate population growth.

In other situations, knowing someone's gender identity is important to ensure adequate services are provided, and that the individual is addressed correctly.

Other times, both types of data may be required.