Tenant EDI Data:

Why It Matters and How to Get It Right

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Why Does Tenant Data Matter?

> *The key reasons to collect tenant data revolve around identifying inequalities, tailoring services, and providing appropriate support.*

1. You can't tailor services to tenant needs if you don't know who your tenants are
2. Diversity data helps you spot patterns of inequality in how services are delivered
3. Regulatory expectations around tenant safety and satisfaction require an evidence base

What Do We Mean by EDI Data?

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Race**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Religion or Belief**
- **Gender Reassignment**
- **Pregnancy & Maternity**
- **Marriage & Civil Partnership**

Plus: socio-economic background, nationality, caring responsibilities, and more

GDPR: It's Not a Barrier

Collecting tenant EDI data is lawful — you just need the right framework

1	**Special Category Data**	Health, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation data requires additional safeguards
2	**Consent Is Not Required**	The substantial public interest condition applies — for maintaining or improving equality of opportunity
3	**Written Policy Needed**	You need a documented policy for how tenant data will be used, stored and protected
4	**Be Transparent**	Tenants must know why their data is being collected and how it will be used

Full GDPR guidance available in the HDN EDI Data Handbook

What Tenant Data Can Do

The practical value for your organisation

- Adapt services to individual tenant needs (health, disability, language)
- Guide Equality Impact Assessments on policies and procedures
- Identify communication needs and language barriers
- Highlight areas of digital poverty for targeted inclusion work
- Spot patterns in complaints data by characteristic
- Reveal gaps and inequalities in service uptake

When and How to Collect Tenant Data

At sign-up	The initial point of contact is ideal for gathering data on new tenants
In engagement surveys	Incorporate EDI questions into existing tenant satisfaction surveys to reduce fatigue
During complaints and repairs	Collect or update data as part of the complaints process, ASB, hate crime and repairs reporting
Through multiple channels	Online, face-to-face, written forms, phone calls — use a variety of means for maximum reach
Periodically	After major policy changes or at regular intervals, to monitor change and keep data current

What to Do With Tenant Data

Compare with Census Data

Use ONS data to understand local demographics and spot over- or under-representation in your tenant base

Build EDI Dashboards

Create actionable plans from tenant data — but ask tenants what changes they actually need

Analyse Complaints by Characteristic

Identify disproportionate trends that may reveal bias in services or customer-facing policies

Compare Tenants with Staff

Cross-reference tenant and employee demographics to inform your customer experience strategy

Communicating With Tenants

Tenants are more likely to share data when they know why it's collected and what it's used for

Run annual campaigns

Promote data sharing in accessible formats and in community languages for maximum reach

Show what data achieves

Promote service improvements driven by data so tenants see what's in it for them

Be transparent

Clearly explain why data is needed in each context — and what it will and won't be used for

Build trust and reassure

Assure tenants their data won't identify them publicly and will be stored securely under GDPR

Common Challenges With Tenant Data

Low Disclosure Rates

Tenants reluctant to share data around disability, trans identities, sexuality, and religion

Staff Hesitancy

Frontline staff uncomfortable asking tenants for personal information — training is key

Survey Fatigue

Too many surveys, too often — embed EDI questions in existing touchpoints

Language and Accessibility

Tenants not responding because terminology is unclear or formats aren't accessible

No Self-Service Option

Tenants can't easily update their own information — consider apps or online portals

Data Not Being Used

Collecting data but not acting on it undermines trust and wastes the opportunity

Each of these has practical solutions — covered in the handbook

How HDN Can Help

EDI Data Handbook

Comprehensive guidance on GDPR, data collection, what to do with it, communication strategies, plus employee and board data guidance

- Consultancy support to develop and implement EDI strategies
- Training and development on equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Award-winning staff mentoring programme
- Diversified succession planning and board recruitment

Questions?

Get in touch

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