



A maturity self-assessment for APS HR Professionals

Part 3: Assessing your agency's disability data collection

This maturity self-assessment accompanies the [factsheet](#) and [example wording](#) for HR professionals.

How to use this document

It will help you undertake a self-assessment and consider your agency's maturity when requesting, collecting, and using APS employee disability information and offers suggestions for how to improve these practices.

This maturity self-assessment can assist you to identify areas for improvement that may help employees feel safe and comfortable when sharing their disability information in HR systems. **This is not a formal assessment tool.**

When to use this document

You can use this maturity self-assessment as often as you like to track progress of initiatives and improvements that have been established to improve your data collection practices. You can use the self-assessment annually as part of re-prioritising workloads and focus.

What is included

The maturity self-assessment covers aspects that can help **employees feel comfortable and safe when sharing their disability information.**

- **Explanatory text** that goes alongside disability, and other diversity information collection questions.
- Policies and practices about **collecting, and using APS employee disability information.**
- Policies and practices **outside of information collection.**



These aspects are indicative, not exhaustive. Diversity information collection practices and activities are disparate across the APS.

Each maturity level builds on the previous level. Good practice includes standard practice, and better practice includes good practice.



This maturity self-assessment has 2 supporting resources

[A factsheet](#) exploring the barriers that prevent people from sharing their information and recommendations for how to better communicate to employees about disability data collection.

[Example wording](#) of explanatory text and a email reminder to help generate ideas to use in your agency.

Explanatory text

Aspects	Standard practice	Good practice	Better practice
Accessibility	Aligns with the Australian Government Style Manual. All users, including people who use assistive technology, can read explanatory text and associated documents.	Uses phrasing that is easy to read and jargon-free .	User-informed and created in collaboration with people with disability. Accessibility extends beyond web-based documents (e.g. alternative formats are offered, like short videos).
Definition	The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition of disability is included.	Uses a wider lens than the ABS definition of disability (e.g. highlighting a range of experiences , including invisible disabilities, and undiagnosed disabilities).	Recognises the limitations of the medical model of disability inherent in the ABS definition. Reflects people with lived experience of disability.
Privacy	Outlines that data will be treated as confidential and protected, for example, with reference to the <i>Privacy Act 1998</i> .	Provides a clear and practical privacy statement that outlines what the agency will do with the employees' information.	Specifically outlines who will be able to see the employees' information and why . Contains information about opting out and whether the data will continue to be hosted.
Data use transparency	Outlines how employees' information may be used with respect to the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act.	Includes a high-level description of how the information might be used (e.g. in terms of resourcing, planning and policies).	Includes specific detail of how the information will be used, and shared with staff on an ongoing basis.
Benefits	Contains high-level information of how the information will be used with respect to agency goals (e.g. 'strategies').	Includes information on broad benefits to the agency and staff (e.g. information shared in HR systems can identify emerging trends and/or needs of employees).	Provides specific information on benefits for the agency and staff (e.g. information shared in HR systems is provided to Work Health Safety Officers to initiate any adjustments required).
Contact person	Contact details for HR are available.	Contact details of the Disability Contact Officer (DCO) are available in the explanatory text, or other avenues to seek support.	Information is hosted in a visible place on the Intranet about the DCO role ; and who to contact to obtain adjustments (e.g. ICT, property adjustments, support people).



How better practice agencies communicate about data use and benefits across the employee lifecycle

- Publicly reporting on progress towards employment goals and targets.
- Communications about the importance of inclusive and accessible workplaces.
- Communicating about how employees' information is being used to identify the types of resources required (e.g. support people, equipment, property adjustments).

Collecting and using APS employee disability information

Aspects	Standard practice	Good practice	Better practice
Purpose of information collection and use	Used for reporting on staff demographics to the APSC for the APS Employment Database (APSED).	Informs recruitment strategies (e.g. by providing insight to the agency on workforce profile, or recruitment and separation data captures how many people with disability are being employed and the length of their tenure).	Used to identify and reduce barriers to recruitment and progression, and improve employee welfare . See below for examples.
Practices to keep information up to date	Employees are able to update their diversity details in the HR systems.	Ad-hoc all-staff reminders to update diversity details, in conjunction with other updates and/or communications attached to days of significance.	Behaviourally informed, targeted communications throughout the employee lifecycle . Communications use best practice referenced in the factsheet and are tailored to reflect the benefits of how the agency is using the data.



How better practice agencies use data to improve employee welfare

Examples of data use:

- Identify trends to employee career development related to barriers and patterns that people with disability experience.
- Improve resourcing allocated to Work Health Safety teams and/or Disability Contact Officers.
- Identify and apply solutions to property, processes, policies, and ICT and/ or people services.
- Use data to create greater visibility of employees with disability and make avenues available to support their needs.

Example initiatives to improve individual employee welfare:

- Inclusive recruitment processes.
- Proactive, seamless, and easy-to-navigate processes to help employees request and receive the support they need.
- Pastoral care throughout the employee lifecycle (attraction through to separation).
- Employee-led networking opportunities are actively offered.
- Focused career progression and/or professional development initiatives.
- Increased resourcing for WHS teams and/or DCOs.



HR information is private and confidential. When this data is for reporting purposes, it should only be presented in aggregate and combined so that individuals are not identifiable.

Before using information shared in HR systems in a new way (e.g. to set up a workflow) engage your agency's **Privacy Officer**.

You may need to conduct a [Privacy Impact Assessment](#). This is an assessment of a project that identifies the impact that the project might have on the privacy of individuals, and sets out recommendations for managing, minimising or eliminating that impact.

Policies and practices outside of information collection

Aspects	Standard practice	Good practice	Better practice
Psychological safety	Adheres to legislated and/or required guidance for Work Health Safety.	Creates initiatives to build employee trust (e.g. provides training on psychologically safe practices).	Creates a psychologically safe environment that builds employee trust, by actively role modelling a psychologically safe culture and environment at all levels.
Discrimination	Adheres to the Discrimination Act and other relevant legislation.	Implements an anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment strategy and/or policy with a zero tolerance stance. Outlines escalation processes and accountability.	Creates a zero-tolerance culture of discrimination, bullying and harassment. Escalation processes are clearly articulated, with multiple resolution avenues offered that are appropriate, empathetic and respect employee dignity.
Workplace adjustments	Provided to employees when they request them . Adjustments are seen as an exception. Provides largely physical adjustments.	Offered by the agency at on-boarding . Adjustments are considered for all employees without stigmatisation.	Actively offered by the agency throughout the employee lifecycle under “working your best” principles, distinct from flexible working arrangements.
Assistive Technology	Provides high-level information on assistive technology.	Details are provided on types of assistive technology available and a point of contact .	Care is provided over the employee lifecycle – including contact points and regular check-ins - ensuring supports are fit for purpose, able to be used, and in good condition.
Property	Government-occupied offices are fully accessible, including ramps/lifts, automatic doors, wide walkways and doorways, clear signage and disabled bathrooms. Fully flexible working remote options available.	Accessible desk set up offered.	Office fit out is flexible to employee needs (e.g. quiet areas, short distances to disabled bathroom). Implements recommendations from the Dignified Access Review .



How you communicate with employees about disability information collection can contribute to building workplace psychological safety

For example:

- Making explanatory text welcoming, supportive, and judgement-free.
- Being transparent in the explanation of what is being done with the information received.



Summary and action planning

Compare the text in each area to your own agency's practices.

Comparing aspects of your own agency's practices can help you identify areas of improvement. This may mean updating explanatory text with more information, changing a policy, or starting new initiatives. Improvement may take you from 'standard' to 'good', 'good' to 'better' – and beyond!

Review: Indicate which areas can be improved at your agency

Explanatory text

- Accessibility
- Privacy
- Data use transparency
- Definition
- Contact person
- Benefit

Policies and practices outside of information collection

- Psychological safety
- Discrimination
- Workplace adjustments
- Accessing Assistive Technology
- Property

Policies and practices about collecting, and using APS employee disability information

- Purpose of information collection and use
- Keeping data up to date

Prioritise: Now that you have identified areas to improve, here are some questions to consider when deciding what to prioritise.

- Which areas do you think will have the biggest impact if improved?
- Can you identify any 'quick wins' that are low burden and will benefit employees?
- Are there longer-term items that you can set in motion?
- Is there existing work in your agency that updates and improvements could tie into? For example, HR system updates, policy and strategy development.
- What approvals will be needed to update explanatory text or change policies and practices?
- Who should be consulted? For example, staff networks, enabling services, ICT.
- If any items are out of scope, who can you contact advocate for change? For example, senior staff, working groups, networks etc..

Commit: What are your next steps?

Summary: How the maturity levels differ

Agencies that are 'standard practice' generally provide high-level information when collecting data, without enough detail to provide assurance to employees about who may see their information, which can lead to lower rates of employees sharing their information in HR systems.

Agencies with 'good practice' use explanatory text to help employees make informed decisions when deciding to share their diversity information in HR systems. The agency provides information about why the agency is requesting their information, and what the agency will do with this information.

'Better practice' agencies actively work to develop and maintain a psychologically safe culture where, when employees are asked to share disability information in HR, employees feel that they have enough information, are supported, and see the benefits.

These agencies provides detailed and nuanced information regarding who sees the data, why they have access, what automatic workflows are in the HR system, and what benefits the employee receives if they choose to share their disability information in HR systems.

