

School workforce census (SWC)

The school workforce return is a statutory collection required by the DfE, which this year takes place on the first Thursday in November, which in 2025 is **Thursday 6 November**. You should make this statutory return using the school workforce census part of your MIS and upload it to collect by **Friday 7 November 2025**.

Changes from previous collection

As ever, dates have been rolled over to align with the new collection period.

There are no other significant changes.

Important message from the DfE: School Workforce census completion: staff ethnicity and disability data

Over the summer break the DfE has contacted us at the LA about the School Workforce Census (SWC) to draw the attention to issues with our school data returns.

It appears that some schools Ealing showed all staff with a disability status of 'Information not yet obtained' or showed all staff with an ethnicity status of 'Information not yet obtained', or both.

DfE has shared the list with us and we will be contacting each school on the list about this issue. All the schools we contact should invite employees to share their ethnicity and disability information before the next SWC due in November 2025.

A response of 'information not yet obtained' leaves a gap in DfE data, our data and yours, which has significant consequences. In particular it may affect your ability to discharge your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The act requires employers to pay 'due regard' to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics. Legal changes detailed below are also expected which will oblige employers to record this data and validation rules will be introduced in the SWC to check for this data.

The upcoming Equality (Race and Disability) Bill will introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting for larger employers (those with 250 or more employees). Whilst some schools will not have enough employees to come under the purview of this legislation, many multi academy trusts and local authorities will be affected and should therefore be prepared for these legislative changes. Having accurate and complete records on disability and ethnicity will, in time, become essential to meet these requirements.

The department's school workforce census guides, set out the difference between 'Information not yet obtained' and 'Refused' when populating the ethnicity and disability data fields. The first indicates that the information has not been asked for, or that the request has not been replied to. The second indicates that the staff member has communicated a decision to not supply the information, as is their absolute right. In that case the field should read 'Refused'. These two values are not interchangeable, and SWC guidance already requires employers to differentiate between these. From the 2025 SWC new validation rules will be implemented to alert schools and local authorities that the information is 'Not yet obtained' if the staff member has been in post for more than 3 months. To avoid having many queries to deal with, you should ensure this information is obtained before the SWC is returned in November.

DfE specifications

See links below for full DfE guidance available on GOV.UK:

- [School workforce census: guide to submitting data](#)
- [School teachers' pay and conditions](#)
- [School workforce census 2025 business and technical specification](#)

Related services

[Schools research and data 2025/26](#)

Contact:

- **Schools data team:** schoolsdatateam@ealing.gov.uk

Was this page useful?

- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

Last updated: 01 Sep 2025