

## GEC (Global Equality Collective)

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### Experience in Educational Data Collection

The Global Equality Collective (GEC) provides structured multi-stakeholder data collection across Early Years, primary, secondary and post-16 education settings through the GEC Platform, an inclusion intelligence infrastructure designed to support schools, trusts and Local Authorities in capturing lived-experience datasets linked to participation, belonging, workforce conditions and inclusion outcomes.

Since 2021, GEC has supported data collection across approximately 400 schools and colleges in over 30 countries, reaching approximately 250,000 learners and capturing structured datasets from 34,500 staff and students. These datasets include socio-emotional indicators, inclusion climate measures, staff workforce experience, student voice, SEND participation insight, curriculum representation, safety indicators and engagement with learning environments.

The GEC team works collaboratively with independent evaluators to support trial-ready deployment models aligned with Education Endowment Foundation evaluation frameworks. The platform is designed to complement attendance and attainment-focused datasets by enabling structured capture of participation, belonging and workforce insight alongside outcome measures where required by evaluators.

Data collection is delivered through:

- whole-class pupil instruments
- structured staff workforce instruments
- leadership insight capture
- age-appropriate, browser-based completion within school-led administration models
- remote browser-based deployment across settings
- completion supported by trained school-based Champions

The GEC Platform supports demographic segmentation including:

- intersectional lived experiences of SEND
- FSM / disadvantage indicators (socio-economic status, lived care experience)
- EAL
- ethnicity
- gender
- neurodivergence
- intersectional participation characteristics

The platform supports structured data collection across education phases aligned to the English Key Stage framework:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Key Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 3
- Key Stage 4
- Key Stage 5 / Post-16

Data collection supports both primary outcome indicators:

- participation
- belonging
- safety
- engagement with learning environments

and secondary outcome indicators:

- socio-emotional development
- inclusion climate
- workforce experience
- practitioner confidence
- representation and curriculum experience

These demographic indicators are captured through participant-reported lived-experience measures designed to complement, rather than replace, administrative classifications such as MIS-recorded SEND or FSM status where these are available within evaluation datasets. This approach supports identification of participation patterns that may not be visible through administrative indicators alone, particularly where needs are emerging, undisclosed or not formally recorded within school systems.

Survey instruments underpinning the GEC Platform are informed by doctoral research (Ponsford, 2025) on intersectional inclusion measurement and social capital frameworks in education systems, and have been deployed across large multi-setting datasets capturing 34,500 staff and student voices. Ongoing academic work continues to strengthen construct

validity and interpretation frameworks supporting evaluation use.

The approach combines quantitative survey deployment with structured demographic segmentation and qualitative insight capture, enabling evaluators to examine participation, belonging and inclusion alongside attainment and behavioural outcomes where required.

The GEC Platform has particular strength in specialist inclusion-focused data collection including:

- SEND participation and experience
- FSM and disadvantage indicators
- EAL learner voice
- staff workforce inclusion experience
- socio-emotional development indicators
- curriculum representation insight
- parent and carer voice datasets

Assessments are delivered through:

- whole-class completion
- browser-based completion administered within school settings
- staff workforce surveys
- leadership surveys
- remote browser-based administration across settings

Data collection activities typically take place over structured deployment windows ranging from 1–12 weeks, depending on project scope and evaluation requirements.

### **Field Force Capacity and Expertise**

The Global Equality Collective operates a hybrid delivery model combining central research coordination with trained school-based delivery leads (“Champions”) who support structured administration of data collection instruments within participating settings.

Rather than relying solely on travelling external assessors, the GEC model enables structured deployment through designated staff within participating schools and trusts. These Champions are typically:

- senior leaders
- SENDCOs
- pastoral leads
- inclusion leads
- research leads
- trust improvement staff

The delivery model is also designed to operate at Local Authority and multi-school trust scale, enabling coordinated deployment across multiple schools while maintaining consistent safeguarding oversight, communication pathways and implementation fidelity.

In addition to school-led administration, the GEC Platform is supported by structured preparation resources for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), SENDCos and senior leadership teams. These include a Teachers' Toolkit designed to support ethical deployment, accessibility-informed participation planning and interpretation of small-scale lived-experience responses within both staff and student datasets prior to survey rollout. This preparation model supports implementation fidelity across settings while ensuring participation approaches remain consistent with each school's safeguarding procedures and inclusion responsibilities.

This distributed implementation approach supports efficient deployment across large numbers of settings simultaneously while maintaining fidelity to agreed administration protocols and minimising disruption to teaching time.

Central coordination is provided by the GEC research and operations team, which oversees:

- implementation planning
- onboarding processes
- completion guidance
- safeguarding-aligned administration expectations
- accessibility-informed participation completion support
- response-rate monitoring
- quality assurance procedures
- secure dataset preparation

Champions are supported through structured implementation guidance including:

- administrator briefings
- completion protocols
- accessibility and SEND-aware participation guidance
- demographic capture guidance
- escalation routes for safeguarding or participation concerns

Ongoing support mechanisms include:

- Champion Hub implementation resources
- structured deployment timelines
- response-rate monitoring dashboards
- follow-up communications where completion rates require support
- direct liaison with the GEC central team during deployment windows

Where evaluation designs require additional administration arrangements, these would be agreed in advance with participating settings and evaluators.

The GEC delivery model enables scalable deployment across large numbers of schools within defined evaluation timelines.

Geographical reach includes:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- international partner schools across Europe, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and North America

The Champion delivery model has supported data collection across approximately 400 schools internationally and is designed to maintain consistency of administration while enabling high response rates across diverse settings.

## **Communication Systems**

Schools and settings:

The Global Equality Collective communicates with participating schools and settings through structured onboarding processes supported by implementation guidance documentation, completion timelines and reminder communications during deployment windows.

Participation is confirmed through administrator briefings and designated school-based delivery leads (“Champions”) who coordinate completion locally within each setting. Response-rate monitoring dashboards enable the GEC team to identify incomplete submissions and provide targeted follow-up support where required.

The GEC operations team provides direct liaison support with schools and trusts throughout deployment windows.

Evaluators:

GEC works collaboratively with evaluators through agreed deployment planning processes including confirmation of timelines, dataset structure documentation, demographic variable mapping and anonymised dataset export aligned to evaluation requirements.

Any delivery issues affecting participation rates or timelines are identified through response-rate monitoring dashboards and flagged promptly through agreed escalation routes with evaluators.

## Quality Assurance Strategies

The Global Equality Collective operates structured quality assurance processes designed to support high response rates, demographic completeness and dataset reliability across multi-setting deployments.

Strategies used to improve response rates include:

- structured onboarding briefings for participating schools and trusts
- administrator guidance documentation
- Champion-supported implementation within settings
- clearly defined completion windows
- automated reminder systems
- response-rate monitoring dashboards
- targeted follow-up support where completion rates fall below expected thresholds
- accessibility-informed completion approaches for SEND learners and EAL participants
- school-led participation arrangements for learners requiring additional access support

These processes support consistent administration across diverse settings while minimising disruption to teaching time.

To support data quality and completeness, GEC uses:

- instrument standardisation across participating settings
- logic validation within survey instruments
- structured demographic completeness monitoring
- response-pattern anomaly detection
- duplicate-response identification
- completion-window monitoring
- accessibility-informed completion approaches designed to support participation across diverse learner groups, including SEND learners

Where missing data occurs, mitigation strategies include:

- additional completion windows
- targeted reminder communications
- Champion support sessions within settings
- school-led participation arrangements for learners requiring additional access support
- clarification guidance where demographic items have been partially completed

Dataset preparation processes include structured checks for:

- completeness of submissions
- demographic consistency
- duplicate entries
- anomalous response patterns
- alignment with agreed deployment parameters

Data accuracy is supported through automated validation rules embedded within the platform, alongside central review of dataset completeness prior to secure transfer to project partners or evaluators.

Where evaluation timelines require additional deployment capacity, mitigation strategies include:

- extending completion windows where appropriate
- increasing central coordination support
- additional Champion briefings
- additional implementation support agreed with participating settings where required
- prioritised response-rate monitoring across participating settings

These mechanisms enable GEC to maintain consistent participation levels across multi-setting deployments while supporting reliable dataset generation within defined project timelines.

These preparation resources support settings to plan inclusive participation approaches in advance of deployment and to interpret smaller lived-experience response patterns appropriately within safeguarding and inclusion leadership contexts.

### **Project Leadership**

Overall responsibility for data collection delivery would sit with Dr Nicole Ponsford, Founder and CEO of the Global Equality Collective (GEC).

Dr Ponsford is an award-winning educator, doctoral researcher and national leader in equity, diversity and inclusion in education. She has led large-scale multi-institution data collection across approximately 400 schools and colleges internationally, supporting structured datasets capturing the experiences of 34,500 staff and students across Early Years, primary, secondary and post-16 contexts.

Her doctoral research (Ponsford, 2025), *Intentional Inclusion: Investigating Equitable Education and Intersectional EdTech*, introduces the Kaleidoscopic Data framework, which supports ethical and intersectional interpretation of lived-experience datasets in education systems and strengthens approaches to participation-focused measurement alongside attainment outcomes.

Dr Ponsford has worked with:

- Local Authorities
- Multi-Academy Trusts
- national education organisations
- inclusion partnerships
- international school groups

to support structured data collection informing system-level inclusion strategy and workforce development.

Operational delivery support is provided by Gemma Hubert, Chief Operating Officer at GEC, who leads implementation coordination with participating schools and trusts and oversees deployment planning, timelines and liaison during data collection windows.

The wider GEC delivery team supports:

- implementation onboarding
- school liaison
- response-rate monitoring
- dataset preparation
- safeguarding-aligned administration processes
- accessibility-informed participation support

Together, the team has experience coordinating structured multi-setting deployments across diverse educational contexts including schools serving high proportions of SEND learners, pupils eligible for FSM and learners with English as an additional language.

GEC leadership works closely with research partners, Local Authorities and system leaders to ensure data collection processes align with evaluation requirements while maintaining high participation levels across settings.

### **Additional Data Services Offered**

In addition to structured data collection, the Global Equality Collective (GEC) provides a range of supporting services designed to strengthen dataset usability for evaluation purposes.

These include:

- demographic segmentation including SEND, FSM/disadvantage indicators, EAL, ethnicity, gender and neurodivergence
- intersectional analysis to support interpretation across learner groups
- staff and student dataset triangulation where appropriate
- structured leadership insight capture

- qualitative insight capture through open-response instruments
- structured focus group and workshop-based insight capture where required
- generation of governance-ready summary datasets where appropriate for project partners

Where evaluation designs require multi-stakeholder insight alongside attainment or behavioural outcome measures, GEC supports aligned staff, student and leadership dataset capture within the same deployment window.

The GEC Platform enables:

- browser-based secure data collection across settings
- demographic completeness monitoring dashboards
- response-rate monitoring tools
- structured completion-window management
- accessibility-informed participation pathways for SEND learners and EAL participants

Where required by evaluators, GEC can support:

- integration with externally collected datasets
- structured anonymised dataset export
- demographic variable mapping
- qualitative insight transcription and organisation
- alignment with Local Authority or trust-level datasets where permissions are in place

These services enable evaluators to complement attainment-focused datasets with structured participation, belonging and inclusion insight where relevant to evaluation design.

### **Cost Model and Pricing Structure**

The GEC Platform typically operates on a membership-based pricing model for international and independent schools (£2,000 per school plus £2 per student), with a 50% reduced-rate model available for state schools and trusts.

For Education Endowment Foundation evaluations, pricing is adapted to reflect the scale and structure of individual projects and may be agreed on a per-school, per-cohort or per-wave basis depending on evaluator requirements.

Reduced-cost models are available for Local Authority and large-scale multi-school deployments where coordinated implementation supports efficiency and consistency of delivery across settings. The GEC team works flexibly with evaluators to develop proportionate costing aligned with trial design and delivery requirements.

This approach has supported recent coordinated Local Authority–level deployment models designed to generate regional inclusion datasets across multiple schools rather than isolated institutional snapshots.

Cost variation by number of settings:

Costs reduce proportionally where larger groups of schools are participating through shared implementation and coordination.

For example:

- 50 settings: standard scaled deployment
- 100 settings: reduced per-setting coordination cost
- 200+ settings: further efficiencies through larger-scale shared delivery

The pricing structure applies across:

- Early Years settings
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- Post-16 providers

The main variation is typically between:

- independent and international settings
- state schools and trusts
- Local Authority or larger-scale partnership models

### **Mode of delivery and delivery format**

The GEC Platform is delivered primarily through browser-based online deployment. Data collection is typically completed through:

- whole-class student completion
- staff survey completion
- leadership completion

### **Data Protection**

The Global Equality Collective operates GDPR-compliant data collection processes designed for use across schools, trusts and Local Authorities.

Data collected through the GEC Platform is:

- processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- collected for clearly defined purposes agreed with participating settings

- stored securely using role-based access controls
- anonymised or pseudonymised where appropriate prior to dataset sharing
- accessible only to authorised personnel

GEC provides participating schools and partners with:

- a published Privacy Policy
- a Data Processing Policy
- clear information about lawful bases for processing
- transparency regarding data use and retention

The platform is designed to support safe collection of sensitive demographic insight, including SEND, disadvantage indicators and protected characteristics, using age-appropriate and ethically informed approaches.

Dataset exports shared with partners or evaluators are structured in accordance with agreed data-sharing expectations and exclude identifying information unless explicitly required and authorised within project agreements.

Access to datasets is restricted through secure systems and controlled permissions aligned with project requirements. GEC works with participating schools and partners to ensure appropriate data-sharing agreements are in place where required.

Staff supporting deployment are briefed on:

- GDPR responsibilities
- confidentiality expectations
- appropriate handling of sensitive demographic information
- secure communication expectations during deployment windows

Data collection within schools is normally supported by designated school-based delivery leads (“Champions”), ensuring alignment with each setting’s own data protection procedures and safeguarding frameworks.

## **Safeguarding**

The Global Equality Collective (GEC) operates safeguarding-aligned data collection processes designed to work within the existing safeguarding frameworks of participating schools, trusts and Local Authorities.

Data collection through the GEC Platform is normally administered by designated school-based delivery leads (“Champions”), such as senior leaders, SENDCOs or pastoral staff, who already hold safeguarding responsibilities within their settings and operate under the direction of the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

This model ensures that safeguarding oversight remains embedded within each setting's established safeguarding procedures during participation.

The GEC Platform itself is designed to support safe participation by:

- using age-appropriate language across instruments
- avoiding intrusive or diagnostic questioning
- allowing participants to skip questions if preferred
- providing guidance to schools on appropriate completion conditions
- enabling schools to manage completion within familiar safeguarding environments

Where participation raises concerns within a setting, responses are managed through the school's existing safeguarding processes and DSL escalation routes.

The GEC team follows internal safeguarding expectations aligned to working with education partners and ensures that communications with schools are conducted through appropriate professional contacts.

GEC maintains a formal safeguarding policy aligned to education-sector expectations covering:

- safe engagement with children and young people
- appropriate handling of sensitive information
- escalation expectations where safeguarding concerns arise
- responsibilities when working with schools and education partners

Where projects require additional participation arrangements beyond the standard school-led administration model, safeguarding expectations are agreed with participating settings prior to deployment.

## Project Examples

Project	Partners	Phase/ Year Group	Data Collection (test name/s and type/s)	Description (including number of learners tested)
National Parent and Carer Survey (GEC Homes) - open	Parent forums, trusts, Local Authorities and national education networks	Parents and carers of school-aged children (within 3 years of School attendance)	Parents and carers of school-aged children (within 3 years of school attendance)	National dataset programme capturing parent and carer perspectives on inclusion, trust, communication, safety, attendance and curriculum experience to support system-level understanding of family engagement indicators.
GEC Inclusion Index (National Dataset Programme)	Schools, trusts and Local Authorities across England	Key Stage 1–5 / Post-16	Structured pupil voice, staff workforce surveys, leadership insight datasets, demographic segmentation datasets	Large-scale structured dataset capturing lived-experience indicators across approximately 400 schools and colleges internationally, including participation, belonging, safety and inclusion climate indicators. Data set includes approximately 34,500 staff and student responses across multiple education phases.
GEC 26,000 Voices Dataset (Staff and Student Inclusion Research)	Schools, trusts and Local Authorities across England and international partner schools	Key Stage 1–5 / Post-16	Student voice instruments, staff workforce experience surveys, demographic segmentation datasets	Structured multi-setting dataset capturing staff and student lived-experience indicators across approximately 350 schools.  Dataset explored belonging, representation, support and participation indicators across approximately 26,000 respondents.
Portsmouth City Council Inclusion Programme (Dfe PEIA-funded initiative)	Portsmouth City Council and participating schools	Primary and Secondary (Key Stage 1–5)	Student voice datasets, staff workforce datasets, leadership insight capture	City-wide deployment supporting structured collection of staff and student inclusion indicators across 21 schools to inform Local Authority inclusion strategy and participation insight development.

<p>Innovation Grant</p>	<p>National Academy for Educational Leadership (Wales) and participating Welsh schools</p>	<p>Primary and Secondary (Key Stage 2–4)</p>	<p>Staff workforce datasets, leadership insight capture, student voice datasets</p>	<p>Pilot deployment supporting school leaders to capture structured workforce and student participation insight across Welsh schools as part of a national leadership development and inclusion improvement initiative.</p>
<p>International School Inclusion Dataset Programme</p>	<p>Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA)</p>	<p>Primary and Secondary (Key Stage 2–4)</p>	<p>Staff workforce datasets, leadership insight capture, student voice datasets</p>	<p>International deployment supporting structured inclusion and participation insight capture across diverse education systems through browser-based survey deployment.</p>