



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Security Policy

Conduct and Behaviour of Visitors in Parliament Buildings

Annex A

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Policy on conduct & behaviour of visitors within Parliament Buildings, the immediate precincts, and any other location outside Parliament Buildings where a Plenary or Committee meeting is taking place

1. Overview

Definition of a visitor – all persons (except for Secretariat staff, MLAs, members' staff and party staff) within Parliament Buildings, the immediate precincts and any other location outside Parliament Buildings where a Plenary or Committee meeting is taking place.

A strategic aim of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ('the Commission') is to:

“Ensure that the Assembly and its work is accessible to all and communicated widely.

It is with this aim in mind, that the Commission welcomes visitors to Parliament Buildings, to view proceedings and to attend events and functions. The preservation of order and the safety and wellbeing of all users of Parliament Buildings will at all times be primary considerations of the Commission.

Plenary Sittings and Committee meetings are the core business of the Assembly and must therefore be allowed to proceed without any interference or disruption. The purpose of this policy is primarily to ensure that Assembly core business and other events, be these at Parliament Buildings or at an outside location, can proceed without interference from or disruption by visitors.

Underpinning this policy is Assembly Standing Order 66 which states, among other things, that:

“Members of the public seeking to attend proceedings of the Assembly shall be permitted in such places reserved for them by the Speaker save that –

- (a) They are not permitted in the Public Gallery during contemplations;*
- (b) They are not permitted to have any item in the Public Gallery which in the opinion of the Speaker could interfere with the preservation of order; and*
- (c) The Speaker may, in the interests of preserving order, require them to leave.”*

In the case of Committee proceedings, similar directions may be given by the relevant Chairperson.

2. Application

The policy applies to **all** visitors whether or not by way of invitation, entering:

1. Any area within Parliament Buildings, including the Public Gallery
2. The immediate area outside Parliament Buildings within the perimeter boundary railings
3. Any Plenary Sitting or Assembly Committee meeting held outside Parliament Buildings

3. Responsibilities

The Commission has overall responsibility for the maintenance of good order and conduct in Parliament Buildings.

The final decision as to who is permitted to enter Parliament Buildings rests with the Commission. This includes visitors.

The Security & Usher management team have daily operational responsibility for overseeing the conduct of visitors to Parliament Buildings; there is of course a responsibility on Members and Assembly permanent pass holders who have invited visitors into the building to ensure that those visitors behave appropriately.

There is also a responsibility on visitors to remain with their hosts or sponsors at all times during visits, and to ensure that they do not access areas to which they are not entitled to enter.

In the first instance, any concerns relating to visitor behaviour should be addressed by front line supervisory Security and Usher staff on duty at Parliament Buildings, in their capacity as Authorised Officers under Article 23 of the Public Order (NI) Order 1987. It may also be prudent to draw concerns to any persons hosting such visitors, where applicable.

Whilst normally, visitor behaviour does not present any real difficulties for staff, there may be occasions when Security and Usher staff will require further guidance and direction from Security Management. In such instances, the visitors must remain outside Parliament Buildings until a direction from Security Management has been received.

There may also be some occasions when further direction may be sought from the Director of Facilities/Keeper of the House. In the absence of the Director of Facilities/Keeper of the House, Security & Usher Management may consult directly with the office of the Clerk/Director General.

4. General Rules of Entry

Whilst the Assembly welcomes visitors to Parliament Buildings, persons will not be permitted to enter Parliament Buildings if they are:

- behaving in an unruly or disorderly manner;
- wearing uniform or displaying regalia or emblems which could be construed as divisive, inappropriate or offensive, or which could be identified as sectarian or aligned to one particular section of the community;
- carrying flags, banners, placards or similar items with a clearly visible message; or
- wearing any item of clothing with logos, illustrations or print displayed which may be deemed offensive, inappropriate and has the potential to cause disharmony, and especially those that have been directly linked to community conflict in

Northern Ireland, or is clearly identified with a matter being debated in the Chamber or in Committee.

Security Officers & Ushers will consult with their managers on what is appropriate particularly when considering clothing such as sporting attire.

It is acknowledged that it may be possible for certain items of clothing etc to be concealed under outer garments, and staff will remain alert to such a possibility, taking action as appropriate in the circumstances.

Appendix (A) should also be referred to in relation to Uniforms, Flags, Music & Emblems.

5. Assembly Plenary Sittings

Visitors should follow the instructions of Assembly Security Officers and Ushers at all times.

Visitors planning to observe Assembly Plenary Sittings will be expected to behave in an orderly and proper manner at all times. Behaviour not permitted includes shouting, hissing, jeering, stamping of feet, applause, etc.

Visitors will not be allowed to take into the Public Gallery items such as mobile phones, other electronic equipment, cameras, bags, briefcases or food and drink. These items may be temporarily stored externally as directed by the Assembly staff.

Interaction of any kind between visitors or other persons in the Public Gallery and Members or officials in the Chamber is not permitted.

Where an individual or group of persons in the Public Gallery interrupts or attempts to interrupt Plenary proceedings, the Speaker will generally issue a warning from the Chair. If the interruption continues, the Speaker may order the Ushers to clear the Public Gallery, and may also suspend the Sitting.

In the first instance, an Usher should ask the person/s to desist or refrain from behaving in the manner in question. Should the person/s refuse to comply with that request, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Northern Ireland Assembly Police Unit (NIAPU) may then be requested to ensure the removal of those persons from Parliament Buildings under the auspices of the authority held by Security & Ushering staff, as per Article 23 of the Public Order (NI) Order 1987.

Where a Plenary Sitting is held outside of Parliament Buildings as referred to in para 2.3, Security & Ushering staff will continue to act as Authorised Officers.

6. Assembly Committee Meetings

Visitors planning to observe Assembly Committee Meetings will be expected to behave in an orderly and proper manner at all times. They should follow the

instructions from Assembly Security Officers, Ushers and Committee staff. Failure to comply with these instructions could mean that they will be asked to leave the room in which the meeting is being held.

The passing of notes or papers to Members or witnesses is not permitted during meetings.

Briefcases or large bags are not permitted in meeting rooms; these items may be temporarily stored externally as directed by the Assembly staff.

All mobile phones or other electronic equipment must be switched off prior to entering the rooms.

Electrical or camera equipment is not permitted except by prior permission of the Committee Chairperson.

Visitors must observe silence and must not applaud, shout or stamp their feet.

Where an individual or group of persons interrupts or attempts to interrupt the meeting, the Committee Chair may issue a warning. If the interruption continues, the Chair may order the Ushers to clear the meeting room, and may also suspend the Meeting. The assistance of NIAPU may be sought if necessary.

Where a Committee Meeting is held outside of Parliament Buildings as referred to in para 2.3, Security & Ushering staff will continue to act as Authorised Officers.

7. Functions and events in Parliament Buildings

Functions and events are an integral part of the engagement process and give visitors an opportunity to learn about the Assembly's legislative role.

Visitors attending functions and events in Parliament Buildings must adhere to the guidelines above in relation to general behaviour and clothing. Security & Usher Services staff will again be available to deal with any difficulties arising as a result of inappropriate behaviour of visitors.

Functions and events are arranged through the Information and Outreach Directorate, for further information on these matters please contact the Events Office on 028 90521948.

8. Protests, Demonstrations and Rallies

Where the organisers of any protest, demonstration or rally at Parliament Buildings have had prior discussion with the Assembly Events Office, some members of the protest group such as organisers or speakers may be permitted access to the front steps outside Parliament Buildings, subject however to the agreement of the Security Manager, having consulted with NIAPU. Such persons will still be subject to search

at the Search Facility at the East Glen. In no circumstances will persons be allowed access via the pedestrian gates in the front railings of Parliament Buildings. These gates will be used only for emergency evacuation purposes.

A limited number of the protesters may be allowed into Parliament Buildings, again subject to the agreement of the Security Manager. However they will not be permitted access to the media once inside Parliament Buildings. In instances where there has not been prior discussion however, access to the front steps will normally not be permitted, and the persons concerned will be required to remain outside the perimeter boundary railings while the protest, demonstration or rally is on-going.

Banners, flags, placards etc will not be allowed into Parliament Buildings under any circumstances.

9. Training, Monitoring and Review

All Security & Ushering staff will receive regular and appropriate training on a range of equality issues and in particular issues such as race and in engaging with people who have special needs as this was highlighted during the screening process.

All complaints made by Visitors will be monitored and will be if appropriate incorporated in reviews of this policy

This policy will be reviewed every six months.

Dress/Uniforms

The following regulations apply to dress and uniforms on entry to and whilst in the building.

Type	Category
Schools	Permissible
Recognised Youth Organisations e.g. Boys Brigade, Scouts, Girl Guides, etc.	Permissible
Clerical e.g. collars, gowns, robes	Permissible
Sashes & Regalia e.g. Loyal Orders, Hibernian, etc	Not permissible
Military I. UK Military	Permissible where triple sponsorship secured and where those wearing the uniforms are representing their service in an official capacity.
Military II. Of other jurisdictions	Permissible where triple sponsorship secured and where those wearing the uniforms are representing their country in an official capacity.
Replica uniforms	Requires approval by SMG or Commission level
Sporting Attire including blazers, tops, tracksuits.	Permissible where triple sponsorship secured and where those wearing are representing their sport in an official capacity.
Emergency Services PSNI, Fire, Medical, etc	Permissible when representing their Service in an official capacity or providing their service as part of the event

The use of any flags, emblems or music that might raise issues of potential sensitivity or controversy must first be discussed with the Events Office on 028 90521948

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

NI Assembly should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the Assembly), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the Assembly).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy: **NIA Visitor Policy**

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

A New Policy

What is it trying to achieve?

The purpose of this policy is primarily to ensure that Assembly core business and other events, be these at Parliament Buildings or at an outside location, can proceed without interference from or disruption by visitors.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

If so, explain how.

All categories should gain from the policy.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Security & Ushering Management wrote the policy

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Policy will be owned by Facilities Directorate and implemented by Security & Ushering Services; however Information and Outreach Directorate will also have a role in ensuring that sponsors/event organisers comply with it.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

If yes, are they



financial



legislative



other, please specify _____ N/A _____

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations
- voluntary/community/trade unions
- other, please specify : All visitors to the Assembly

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?

Functions and Tours Policy (1)
CCTV Policy (2)

- who owns them?

(1) Information and Outreach Directorate
(2) Facilities Directorate

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

Table 1

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.
Political opinion	<p>As a political institution, politically associated needs are continually being addressed and met to a high standard. During the policy development we have ensured we adhered to Equality Legislation that is in place in Northern Ireland; which includes European Directives, wider European Community legislation and international obligations also affect people's equality rights.</p> <p>Mitigation of any adverse impact upon Political Opinion has been supported through the "three signature" policy (See Appendix A of Policy). However, there may be circumstances when the regulations in Appendix A may be deemed permissible, on these occasions approval is required by SMG or at Commission level.</p>
Racial group	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document. However, staff training and development and monitoring of complaints and feedback from customers will be continued.
Age	Addressed as permissible in Appendix A – Schools and Recognised Youth Groups.
Marital status	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.
Sexual orientation	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.
Men and women generally	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.

Disability	Building compliant with DDA regulations and staff trained to engage with people with special needs. Parliament Buildings has charter mark award from 'Action on Hearing Loss'. Staff training and development, and monitoring of complaints and feedback from customers will be continued.
Dependants	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Table 2

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Political opinion	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Racial group	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Age	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Marital status	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Sexual orientation	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Men and women generally	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Disability	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.
Dependants	Addressed issue raised through evidence gathered at table 1.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 below.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.	NONE
Political opinion	As a political institution, politically associated needs are continually being addressed and met to a high standard. Mitigation of any adverse impact upon Political	Minor – Mitigated by “three signatures policy” – Appendix A.

	Opinion has been supported through the “three signature” policy (See Appendix A of Policy). The “three signature” policy ensures cross party support for events in Parliament Buildings. A signature must be received from three MLA’s which demonstrate cross party support.	
Racial group	Following meetings with the Equality Commission NI, the Assembly has been offered specific training in addition to staff training that has been received.	NONE
Age	Following meetings with the Equality Commission NI, the Assembly has been offered specific training in addition to staff training that has been received.	NONE – Addressed in Appendix A
Marital status	Following meetings with the Equality Commission NI, the Assembly has been offered specific training in addition to staff training that has been received.	NONE
Sexual orientation	Following meetings with the Equality Commission NI, the Assembly has been offered specific training in addition to staff training that has been received.	NONE
Men and women generally	Following meetings with the Equality Commission NI, the Assembly has been offered specific training in addition to staff training that has been received.	NONE
Disability	<p>The Assembly Commission is fully committed to providing all necessary resources in terms of people, time and finance to be made available to make Parliament Buildings as accessible as possible.</p> <p>Assembly staff have been trained to deal with a wide range of needs and situations. These needs are continually being addressed and updated. In addition to staff training, information is available in multiple formats,</p>	NONE – Building DDA compliant

	autism awareness, communication tactics and audio visual equipment. The Assembly is also committed to monitoring feedback and complaints.	
Dependants	There is currently no information that indicates that this document will disadvantage or have any negative impact on this group if implemented and operated as laid within this document.	NONE

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?		
Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Political opinion		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Racial group		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Age		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Marital status		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will

		continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Sexual orientation		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Men and women generally		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Disability		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.
Dependants		No, The policy will assist in providing staff and visitors with a set of guidelines on acceptable behaviour for visitors to the Assembly. We will continue to monitor feedback and regularly review this policy.

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief		None
Political opinion	Three signature rule - The “three signature” policy ensures cross party support for events in Parliament Buildings. A signature must be received from an MLA which demonstrates cross party support.	Minor
Racial group		None

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different

religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

No

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

None

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

All persons working in the building will be consulted on the impact of this policy. External stakeholders and members of the public will also have an opportunity to consult on the policy. We have identified minor amendments to the Policy and feel that they can be addressed and included in the policy revision.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

N/A

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

We will consider consultation comments. However, at this point, prior to consultation, we believe this policy has minor impacts that will be addressed through minor policy amendments. Minor issues are detailed throughout table and contained within this summary form.

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Equality Commission NI recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Equality Commission NI publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

We will consider consultation comments, However, at this point, prior to consultation; we believe this policy has minor impacts that will be addressed through minor policy amendments during revision:

- Specific training will continue to be provided for staff;
- Complaints will continued to be monitored and addressed;
- Customer feedback will continue to be monitored and addressed;
- Continued operation of the three signatures policy.

Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been ‘**screened in**’ for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people’s daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority’s functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the

public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Equality Commission NI's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Equality Commission NI recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Seamus McAleer	Deputy Security Manager	29/05/12
Approved by:		
Ken Eccles	Security Manager	30/05/12

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.