



**Equality Impact Assessment**  
**Northern Ireland Assembly**  
**Digital First Strategy**

## Table of Contents

<b>Consultation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Access to Information</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Policy and Purpose of the EQIA</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Digital First Strategy</b>	<b>10</b>
Background	11
Digital Exclusion	13
Disability	15
Age	15
Racial group	16
<b>EQIA Step 1 - Aims of the Strategy</b>	<b>18</b>
Objectives	19
Internal	20
External	20
<b>EQIA Step 2 - Data and Research</b>	<b>21</b>
Qualitative information:	22
Quantitative Information:	23
<b>EQIA Step 3 - Assessments of Impacts</b>	<b>24</b>
Religious Belief	25
Political Opinion	26
Racial group	27
Age	32
Marital status	36
Sexual orientation	37
Gender	38
Disability	38
Dependants	42
<b>EQIA Step 4 - Consideration of Measures</b>	<b>44</b>
Summary of Section 75 Categories and Mitigating Measures	45
Religious Belief	48
Political Opinion	48

Gender (Men and Women generally)	49
Marital Status	49
Sexual orientation	50
Dependants	50
Age	51
Disability	51
Racial Group	53
<b>EQIA Step 5 - Formal Consultation</b>	<b>54</b>
Principles of consultation	54
Publication of information	55
Opportunities to respond	56
Timescale	57
Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA	57
Monitoring	58
<b>Appendix A - Screening Form</b>	<b>60</b>

## Consultation

1. This Draft EQIA Consultation Report is now available for consultation. All comments are welcome and will be accepted in any format. The consultation period will last for 14 weeks and the deadline for submission of comments is 8 October 2015.

2. All comments should be sent to:

Consultation Response

Communications and Outreach

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3. If there is any information in this report which is not clear, or if you require further information, please contact the Information Officer on the above number. All relevant documents can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Assembly website at <<insert address here>>
4. Please note that all responses will be treated as public, and may be published on the Northern Ireland Assembly website. If you do not want your response to be used in this way, or if you would prefer it to be used anonymously, please indicate this when responding.

## **Access to Information**

5. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is committed to making information as accessible as possible.
6. This document can be made available in alternative formats in circumstances where you cannot access the information in its standard format. Examples of alternative formats include:
  - Easy Read;
  - Braille;
  - Large print
7. To request an alternative format, please contact the Information Officer using the contact details below:

Consultation Response (Alternative Format)

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## Introduction

8. This EQIA is being carried out in accordance with the Assembly Commission's<sup>1</sup> statutory duties under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('the 1998 Act'). Section 75 requires the Commission, in carrying out its functions in Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief,
- political opinion,
- racial group,
- age,
- marital status
- sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

9. Without prejudice to these obligations, the Commission is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission is the body corporate of the Northern Ireland Assembly. It has the responsibility, under section 40(4) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly to carry out its work.

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10. Schedule 9 of the 1998 Act sets out the detailed procedure for the implementation of these duties including the conduct of screening exercises and EQIAs of policies.

11. When undertaking an EQIA, the Commission follows the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in February 2005<sup>2</sup> which recommends that there should be seven stages in the EQIA process:

Stage 1 : Definition of the aims of the policy

Stage 2 : Consideration of available data and research

Stage 3 : Assessment of potential and actual impacts

Stage 4 : Consideration of measures

Stage 5 : Formal consultation

Stage 6 : Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA

Stage 7 : Monitoring for adverse impact.

12. This report sets out the findings of the first four stages of the EQIA process.

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<sup>2</sup> Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI, 2005 (pp.3-4)



## The Policy and Purpose of the EQIA

13. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy to determine the extent of differential impact upon the groups within the nine equality categories and whether that impact is adverse. If it is decided that the policy has an adverse impact on one or more of the nine equality categories, the Commission must consider measures which might mitigate the adverse impact and alternative ways of delivering policy aims which have a less adverse impact on the relevant equality category.<sup>3</sup>
14. In order to determine whether a policy has any adverse differential impact, it is necessary to consider the people affected by the policy, their needs and experiences and the equality categories to which they belong. It is also important to note that while an EQIA must encompass and address the impact of a policy on all nine categories, it may not be that each category will be given equal emphasis throughout the assessment process; instead the EQIA must be responsive to emerging issues and prioritise accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI, 2005 (pp.3-4)

<sup>4</sup> Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI, 2005 (pp.4)

## Digital First Strategy

15. This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) considers the Northern Ireland Assembly's Digital First Strategy with specific reference to its impact on the categories of people specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
16. The Digital First Strategy was subject to equality screening in December 2014 (Appendix A).
17. Based on available data for the screening exercise it was felt that as some of the key potential equality impacts were unknown, (because there was insufficient data upon which to make an assessment), it would be appropriate to conduct an Equality Impact assessment.
18. An Equality Impact assessment was also considered important as the Digital First Strategy has the potential to have a significant impact on the operation of the Assembly.
19. The strategy will operate at a high level and is likely to generate further policies or actions that will be relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

20. The Assembly also recognise that the completion of an EQIA might have wider benefits, including the identification of additional ways to enhance both equality of opportunity and other strategies currently proposed.

## Background

21. In November 2012, the UK Government published its first digital strategy<sup>5</sup>. The strategy sets out how government aims to become "digital by default", redesigning its services to make them "so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will choose to do so whilst those who can't are not excluded". The UK Government Digital Service<sup>6</sup> is leading digital transformation and digital is central to on-going efficiencies and savings.

22. For the NI Assembly, digital first or digital by default is more about adopting digital tools and techniques we take for granted in our personal lives to make the business of the Assembly better. Using tools and techniques that will help us communicate more effectively; share and manage knowledge more robustly; develop more efficient working practices and improve and open up the work of the Assembly to all of our stakeholders.

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<sup>5</sup> UK Government Digital Strategy - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy>

<sup>6</sup> UK Government Digital Services - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-digital-service>

23. The Assembly currently develops and creates most of its information to be shared via hard copy papers, reports and books rather than as data that can be collated, shared, re-used or distributed in multiple formats. On-going developments of the Assembly Information System (AIMS)<sup>7</sup> and an internal project to develop e-committee packs for use by MLAs that replace hard copy packs have been successful and we are now capable of producing more of our content digitally.

24. Westminster recently published their Digital Democracy Commission Report “Open Up”<sup>8</sup>. The report recommends how the UK Parliament can use digital technology to help it to be more transparent, inclusive, and better able to engage the public with democracy. The Northern Ireland Assembly aspires to develop its digital capabilities in a similar way while meeting its corporate objectives of ‘Providing Outstanding Parliamentary Services’, “...influence, enable and deliver change and ‘To Be an Efficient and Progressive Organisation’. We have therefore developed the “Digital First Strategy”.

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<sup>7</sup> AIMS (Assembly Information Management System) – <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk>

<sup>8</sup> “Open Up” – Digital Democracy Commission Report - <http://www.parliament.uk/business/commons/the-speaker/speakers-commission-on-digital-democracy/ddc-news/digital-democracy-commission-report-publication/>

## Digital Exclusion

25. The Assembly believes that digital has the potential to improve engagement and build better relationships with stakeholders.

However, we need to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access the information or services they want or need and are not excluded from doing so. We know from research carried out by a number of organisations the groups that are most likely to be “digitally disengaged”, i.e. older people, those with disabilities, and people without digital skills.

## Northern Ireland Specific Internet Use<sup>9</sup>

26. We know that the availability of internet access is growing.

According to the NI Continuous Survey internet access has grown from 45% in 2005-06 to 75% in 2013-14. The gap between those who have access and those without has grown steadily from 10% in 2005 - 06 to 50% in 2013-14.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Ofcom Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report, 2014

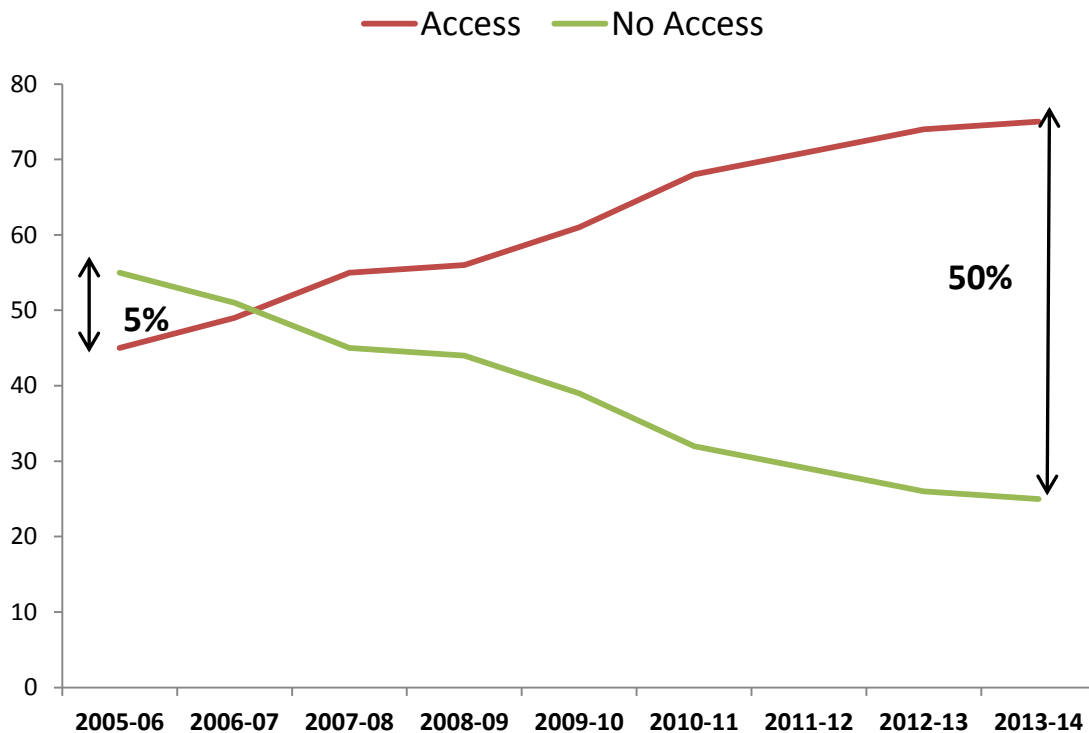


Figure 1 - NI Continuous Survey - Household Internet Access

27. The Office of National Statistics Quarterly Update (Q1) for 2014, report that 197,000 people in NI have never used the internet at all.

### Lacking Skills

28. Despite the growth in availability of internet access the Department of Finance and Personnel's [Go On NI](#) initiative<sup>10</sup> states that 345,000 adults in Northern Ireland lack basic digital skills.

29. The kinds of basic skills that people lack are:

- Using a search engine to find information
- Bookmarking useful websites and services

<sup>10</sup> Go On NI works to promote digital inclusion and help people and organisations to gain basic digital skills - <http://www.go-on.co.uk/ni>

- Storing data on a device or in the cloud
- Keeping in touch using email, instant messaging, video calls and social media
- Booking travel or using other ecommerce sites for shopping
- Creating a social media post

## Disability

30. The Office of National Statistics Quarterly Update (Q1) for 2014 shows that of those who declared themselves as Equality Act disabled<sup>11</sup> 151,000 people had never used the internet.

	Within the last 3 months		Between 3 months and a year ago		More than a year ago		Never	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
Equality Act disabled <sup>11</sup>	188	53.7	3	1.0	7	2.0	151	43.2
Not Equality Act disabled	916	85.2	13	1.2	5	0.4	139	12.9

**Table 1 - Frequency of Internet use by the disabled, NI, Q1 2014 (Source: ONS)**

## Age

<sup>11</sup> Equality Act disabled refers to those who self-assess that they have a disability in line with the Equality Act definition of disability. These figures are UK figures. The Equality Act does not apply in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions, relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across 9 categories of people..

31. According to the 2011 Census approximately 20% of the local population in Northern Ireland are aged 60 and over. This age group is traditionally seen to be less computer literate than younger age groups. However, the 2014 Ofcom Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report, shows that increasing numbers of older adults, are now going online. There has been a nine percentage point increase in those aged 65 and over ever going online (42% in 2014 vs. 33% in 2012).

#### **Racial group**

32. On Census Day 2011, 1.8 per cent (32,400) of the resident population of Northern Ireland belonged to minority ethnic groups, more than double the proportion in 2001 (0.8 per cent).

33. The main minority ethnic groups were Chinese (6,300 people), Indian (6,200), Mixed (6,000) and Other Asian (5,000), each accounting for around 0.3 per cent of the resident population. Irish Travellers comprised 0.1 per cent of the population.

34. The following table shows the main language percentage used by all usual residents, aged 3 and over, taken from the 2011 Census:

Language	Percentage
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Language	Percentage
English	96.86
Polish	1.02
Lithuanian	0.36
Irish (Gaelic)	0.24
Portuguese	0.13
Slovak	0.13
Chinese	0.13
Tagalog/Filipino	0.11
Latvian	0.07
Russian	0.07
Malayalam	0.07
Hungarian	0.06
Other	0.75

Table 2 - Percentage of all usual residents aged 3 and over whose main language is:

## **EQIA Step 1 - Aims of the Strategy**

35. The aim of the Digital First Strategy is to use digital platforms and channels to create and provide rich content for external and internal stakeholders enabling them to participate, interact and engage with the Assembly. We will do this by embracing digital activity and increasing skills internally to ensure that we continue to meet the corporate aim of ensuring that the Assembly and its work are accessible to all and communicated widely.

36. The strategy also focuses on three corporate aims of:

- Providing effective and high quality support -

Using digital solutions and technologies to ensure that data and content created by the Assembly is made available more quickly; in a range of formats; and can be easily shared and re-used.

- Enabling and delivering change by -

Exploring and exploiting digital technology to streamline workflows and be more efficient in our content production.

Using digital tools and information to engage, inform, facilitate and improve people's participation and

engagement in Assembly business and the wider democratic process.

- Being a progressive and efficient Commission by -

Seeking to continuously deliver value for money programmes, review and improve our services and make the Assembly accessible to all.

## Objectives

37. The key objectives of the Digital First Strategy are:

- i. To use digital tools and information to engage, inform, facilitate and improve people's participation and engagement in Assembly business and the wider democratic process.
- ii. To explore and exploit digital technology to streamline workflows and improve efficiency by maximising staff time and reducing print and associated costs and to improve the Assembly's environmental impact.
- iii. To provide MLAs and Assembly staff with the information, support and technology to allow them to carry out their responsibilities effectively, efficiently and professionally.

38. The strategy recommends a phased approach to change which will impact Assembly infrastructure, organisational culture, workflows, and access to software and hardware tools to produce digital services and products. This will in turn change how and where information and services are made available to internal and external stakeholders.

39. Other policies/ strategies with a bearing on this strategy include:

**Internal**

- Information Management Strategy
- Engagement Strategy
- Environmental Strategy
- Equality Policies
- Information Systems Strategy
- Business Efficiency Programmes

**External**

- UK Government “Digital by Default” policy

## **EQIA Step 2 - Data and Research**

40. The second step of the equality impact assessment process considers whether available data and research can provide an insight into the potential impacts on people in the various Section 75 categories. This section of the report sets out the available information.

41. The main stakeholder groups in relation to the Digital First Strategy are:

- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Users of the Assembly website
- User of the Assembly Information Management System (AIMS)
- Secretariat staff;
- Political party support staff;
- Contract staff;
- Trade Unions;
- The general public.

42. This EQIA uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative data from a number of sources.

43. In brief, the following sources were employed:

**Qualitative information:**

- Assembly Questions (both Oral and Written) asked to the Assembly Commission.
- Feedback from the NI Assembly website and Assembly Information Management System (AIMS) users.
- Consultation with senior Assembly staff, Web Team and Equality Manager
- Discussion and feedback from the NIA External Disability Advisory Group<sup>12</sup>
- External Relations Strategy
- Good Relations Strategy Consultation Results Report
- Review of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's Audit of Inequalities and Equality Scheme.
- 5 year review of the Disability Action Plans
- Other relevant articles and journals.

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<sup>12</sup> The NIA External Disability Advisory Group consists of representatives from various disability related charities. The group meets twice a year. The charities that form the group include; Cedar Foundation, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Disability Action, REAL Network, Mencap, National Autistic Society, NI Chest, Heart & Stroke, Royal National Institute of Blind People, Action on Hearing Loss, and Autism NI.

**Quantitative Information:**

- Census information (2011 Census)
- Statistics and Reports from Office of National Statistics (ONS)  
- 2012 to 2014
- Public Attitude Survey
- Ofcom Media Reports (2014)
- Social media statistics for the NIA, Northern Ireland Assembly  
website statistics

44. This data and research has been analysed to provide an insight into the potential impacts of the strategy on people in the various Section 75 categories.

## **EQIA Step 3 - Assessments of Impacts**

45. The next stage of the EQIA process is to assess whether the current strategy or any changes to it may have a differential impact on people in one or more of the Section 75 groups, and then to determine the extent of differential impact and whether that differential impact is direct or indirect on the relevant group and whether it is adverse.

46. The nine categories are:

- a) Religious belief
- b) Political opinion
- c) Racial group
- d) Age
- e) Marital status
- f) Sexual orientation
- g) Gender
- h) Disability
- i) Dependants



47. We consider each category in turn below.

### Religious Belief

48. The results of the 2011 census showed that 45.1 per cent of the population were either Catholic or brought up as Catholic in 2011, while 48.4 per cent belonged to or were brought up in Protestant, other Christian or Christian-related denominations.

Religion (or religion brought up in)	Census 2011	
	Count	Per cent
Protestant and Other Christian	875,717	48.4
Catholic	817,385	45.1
Other religions	16,592	0.9
None	101,169	5.6

**Table 3 - Religion or religion brought up in 2011 - Source: NISRA, Table KS07b (2003); KS212 (2012)**

## Political Opinion

49. The Census 2011 questionnaire did not contain any questions pertaining to *political opinion*. The closest proxy for this item is *National Identity*.

The image shows a screenshot of a questionnaire question. The question number '15' is in a purple box. The text reads: 'How would you describe your national identity?'. Below this, there is a purple arrow icon and the instruction 'Tick all that apply.'. There are six checkboxes with labels: 'British', 'Irish', 'Northern Irish', 'English', 'Scottish', and 'Welsh'. Below these is a checkbox labeled 'Other, write in' followed by a text input field with a grid of boxes for writing.

Source: Census 2011 Household Questionnaire, March 2011

50. The question on national identity allowed multiple responses. Respondents were given the option of declaring themselves as *British, Irish, Northern Irish, English, Scottish or Welsh*.

51. In 2011, two-fifths (40%) of residents declared a *British Only* national identity (without selecting any additional national identities), a quarter (25%) had *Irish Only* and just over a fifth (21%) had *Northern Irish Only*. Of the various combined national identities, *British and Northern Irish Only* was the most prevalent (6.2%), while 5% of respondents included national identities other than British, Irish or Northern Irish.

National Identity	Count	Percentage
All usual residents	1,810,863	100.0
British only	722,379	39.9
Irish only	457,482	25.3
Northern Irish only	379,267	20.9
British and Northern Irish only	111,748	6.2
Irish and Northern Irish only	19,132	1.1
British, Irish and Northern Irish only	18,406	1.0
British and Irish only	11,877	0.7
Other	90,572	5.0

Table 4 - National Identity of usual residents, Census 2011 - Source: Table KS202, Census 2011

## Racial group

52. On Census Day 2011, 1.8 per cent (32,400) of the resident population of Northern Ireland belonged to minority ethnic groups, more than double the proportion in 2001 (0.8 per cent), see Table below.

53. The main minority ethnic groups were Chinese (6,300 people), Indian (6,200), Mixed (6,000) and Other Asian (5,000), each accounting for around 0.3 per cent of the resident population. Irish Travellers comprised 0.1 per cent of the population.

54. Compared with 2001, the minority ethnic count rose from 14,300 to 32,400. Gains were recorded for all groups with the exception of Irish Travellers, whose numbers fell from 1,700 in 2011 to 1,300 in 2011.

Minority Ethnic Group	Census 2011	
Ethnic Group	Count	Percentage
<b>Total residents</b>	<b>1,810,863</b>	
White	1,778,449	98.2
Chinese	6,303	0.4
Indian	6,198	0.3
Mixed	6,014	0.3
Other Asian	4,998	0.3
Other	2,353	0.1
Black African	2,345	0.1
Irish Traveller	1,301	0.1
Pakistani	1,091	0.1
Black Other	899	0.1
Bangladeshi	540	0
Black Caribbean	372	0
<b>Total ethnic pop</b>	<b>32,414</b>	

Table 5 - Minority Ethnic Groups in Northern Ireland, Census 2011. Source: NISRA, Table KS06 (2003); KS201 (2012)

55. It is assumed that the stakeholder profile for the Northern Ireland Assembly would be in line with national averages.

56. The provision of our services and information is universal and available to all regardless of their racial group. However, through the process of consultation we wish to identify any impacts which have not been considered in this current document.

57. The following table shows the percentage main language used by all usual residents aged 3 taken from the 2011 Census:

Language	Percentage
English	96.86
Polish	1.02
Lithuanian	0.36
Irish (Gaelic)	0.24
Portuguese	0.13
Slovak	0.13
Chinese	0.13
Tagalog/Filipino	0.11

Language	Percentage
Latvian	0.07
Russian	0.07
Malayalam	0.07
Hungarian	0.06
Other	0.75

Table 6 - Percentage of all usual residents aged 3 and over whose main language is:

58. The Assembly does not currently produce or publish its procedural information in any languages other than English except for sections of Hansard (Official Reports) where Members have used other languages in the Chamber.

59. The figures from the 2011 Census show that the proportion of those for who English is their main language do not appear to indicate the potential for differential impacts. However, through the process of consultation we wish to identify any impacts which have not been considered in this current document.

60. The Assembly Commission does not yet have an agreed Language Policy. However, draft language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission.

61. The Audit of Inequalities 2011 identified that ethnic minorities are under-represented in public life.

62. Work is being undertaken by the NI Assembly through our Engagement Strategy that will target Strategic Partners to deliver programmes to priority and umbrella groups to create awareness of the Assembly and build confidence in interacting with it. Through Assembly Community Connect we will look to encourage the involvement of ethnic minority groups through targeted events.

63. The Engagement Strategy which is closely aligned with Digital First will also review visitor signage and other materials (online and offline) in line with the draft Language Policy to ensure that information and services are available to all in an appropriate format.

64. In partnership with CCEA (Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment), the Primary Section of the Education Service dedicated website is also currently being translated into Irish.

## Age

65. Table 6 presents the age of usual residents by broad age band.

While children aged 0-15 account for 21% of the population, a similar proportion (20%) are aged 60 and over. The median age is 37 years.

Age Band	Count	Percentage
All usual residents	1,810,863	
Age 0-15 years	379,323	20.9
Age 16-24 years	227,634	12.6
Age 25-44 years	498,046	27.5
Age 45-59 years	347,850	19.2
Age 60-64 years	94,290	5.2
Age 65-74 years	145,600	8.0
Age 75+	118,120	6.5
Mean age (years)	37.6	
Median age (years)	37.0	

**Table 7 - Age of usual residents by Broad Age Band, Census 2011 - Source: Table KS102, Census 2011**

66. According to the 2014 Ofcom Adults' Media Use and Attitudes

Report 83% of all adults now go online. In Northern Ireland the figure is 80%.



## 67. Figures from the Office of National Statistics Quarterly Update

2013 (Q4) on Internet Access show that in the UK as a whole 2% of 16 to 34 year olds have never used the internet and 11% of 35 to 54 year olds have never used the internet. These figures would indicate that the move to a Digital First Strategy would have a minimal impact on these younger age groups. However, it is accepted that it could have a negative impact on older age groups who traditionally are seen to be less computer literate. The chart below shows that 42% of 55 to 74 year olds have never used and 45% of over 75s have never used the internet.

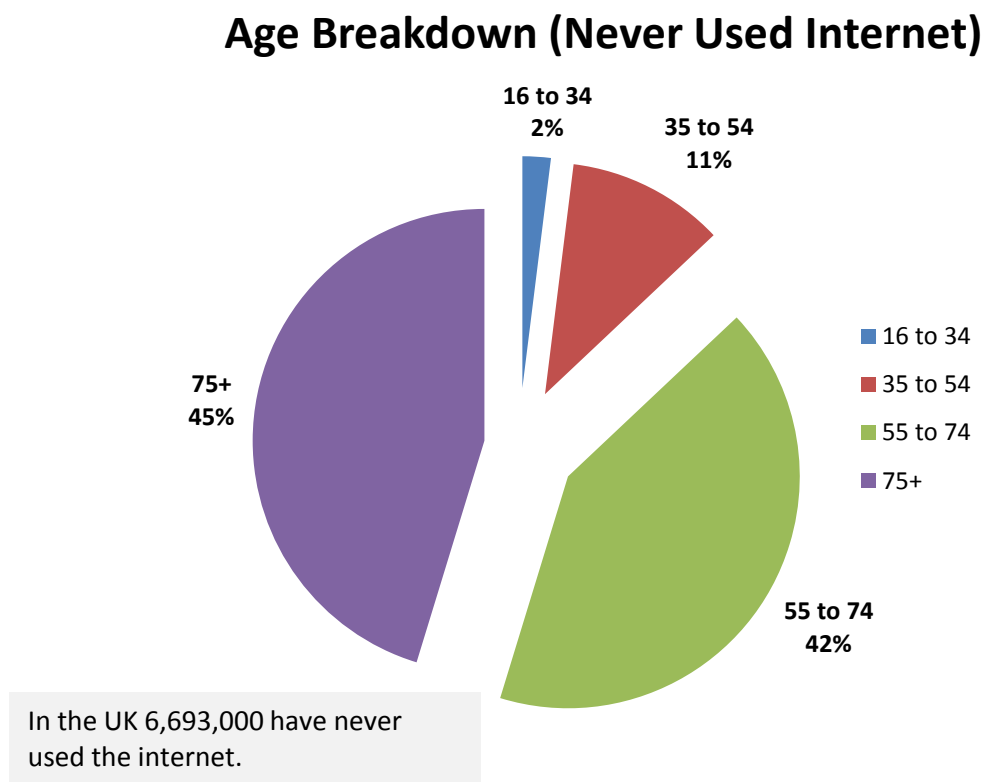


Figure 2 - Source: Quarterly Update 2013 (Q4) Office of National Statistics

68. However, the 2014 Ofcom Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report, shows that increasing numbers of older adults, are now going online. There has been a nine percentage point increase in those aged 65 and over ever going online (42% in 2014 vs. 33% in 2012).

69. This has largely been driven by the growth in Tablet Computers and Smartphones<sup>13</sup> Over four in ten households in Northern Ireland have a tablet computer. Among the UK nations, tablet take-up is highest in Northern Ireland and Wales, having increased by 16 percentage points over the past year, to 45%.

70. Specifically the use of tablet computers by the 65 to 74 year olds has trebled; from 5% to 17% and those aged 65 to 74 are almost twice as likely to use a smartphone now compared to 2012 (20% vs. 12%).

71. Charities and other volunteer organisations are working with older people to help break down the barriers that can lead to digital exclusion and help older people make better use of technology. Conversations with the Policy and Research Office at the Commissioner for Older People in NI outlined some of the UK wide

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<sup>13</sup> 2014 Ofcom Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report

programmes and local programmes run in partnership with Libraries NI.

## 72. Age UK run digital inclusion programmes and campaigns<sup>14</sup>.



Figure 3 - Age UK - Northern Ireland page for Technology and Internet Learning

Libraries NI are working with Age UK to run classes and courses that include technology and the internet through Age UK's University of the Third Age (U3A). Libraries

NI also have their own service

plan of activities for Retired and Older People to encourage them to use technology and use the internet, including:

- “Itea” and Biscuits
- Silver Surfers
- Partnership with U3A
- Got IT? (in partnership with Department of Finance and Personnel programme)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/services-and-practice/computers-and-technology/what-we-do/>

73. Although the Assembly cannot address all of the barriers that older people may face, we will continue to work with charities and other organisations and will continue to engage with them as the strategy develops to try and ensure we can mitigate or eliminate impacts. The Assembly makes information available in alternative formats including hard copy, when requested, for those people who are not able to access content online via their PC, Tablet or Smartphone.

#### Marital status

74. The 2011 Census revealed that almost half (48%) of people aged 16 years and over on Census Day were married, and over a third (36%) were single. Just over 1,200 people (0.1%) were in registered same-sex civil partnerships. A further 9.4% of residents were either separated, divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership, while the remaining 6.8% were either widowed or a surviving partner.

Marital Status	Count	Percentage
All usual residents aged 16+ years	1,431,540	
Married	680,831	47.6
Single	517,393	36.1
Same-sex civil partnership	1,243	0.1

Marital Status	Count	Percentage
Separated	56,911	4.0
Divorced	78,074	5.5
Widowed or surviving partner	97,088	6.8

**Table 8 - Marital Status of residents aged 16+ years, Census 2011**

75. There is no evidence to suggest that this strategy would have any differential impact based on the Section 75 category for marital status.

#### **Sexual orientation**

76. There is no available data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) persons in Northern Ireland as no national census has ever asked people to define their sexuality. According to the 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 98% of people in Northern Ireland are heterosexual and 1% are homosexual.
77. There is no evidence to suggest that this strategy would have a negative differential impact on equality of opportunity based on sexual opportunity. The NI Assembly's Equality Office will continue to consult with groups representing LGB & T persons, as part of its formal Section 75 duties.

## Gender

78. On Census Day 2011, 51% of usual residents were female and 49% were male. Figures from the Office of National Statistics show that the figures for having used or never having used the internet are broadly similar to the overall figures for the population as a whole.

	Male		Female	
	%age	Number	%age	Number
Use Internet	88.7	22,171,000	84.8	22,081,000
Never Used	11.1	2,767,000	15.1	3,926,000

**Table 9 - Used or never Used the internet by Males and Females - Source: Quarterly Update 2013 (Q4) Office of National Statistics**

79. It is considered that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for men and women generally.

## Disability

80. According to the 2011 Census for Northern Ireland, 21% of the population consider themselves to have a disability / limiting long-term illness.

81. The most common long-term conditions among the resident population were: a mobility or dexterity problem (11%); long-term pain or discomfort (10%); shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (8.7%); chronic illness (6.5%); and an emotional, psychological or mental health condition.

82. The Office for National Statistics 2014 (Q1) Quarterly Update on Internet Access in Northern Ireland shows that 151,000 people that classified themselves as being disabled (Equality Act Disabled<sup>15</sup>) had never accessed/used the internet, 188,000 had used the internet within the last 3 months:

	Within the last 3 months		Between 3 months and a year ago		More than a year ago		Never	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
Equality Act disabled <sup>15</sup>	188	53.7	3	1.0	7	2.0	151	43.2
Not Equality Act disabled <sup>2</sup>	916	85.2	13	1.2	5	0.4	139	12.9

**Table 10 - Frequency of Internet use by the disabled, NI, Q1 2014 (Source: ONS)**

<sup>15</sup> Equality Act disabled refers to those who self-assess that they have a disability in line with the Equality Act definition of disability. These figures are UK figures. The Equality Act does not apply in Northern Ireland instead we have Section 75.

83. Disability is a significant factor as to whether an individual has ever used the internet. The Consumer Expert Group (CEG)<sup>16</sup> as part of the [Digital Britain Report](#) outlined the specific issues that face disabled people using the Internet - lack of skills, lack of interest, not having the equipment, risks of being online.
84. The report also shows that people with particular disabilities face issues that are specific to their disability. These include the complexity and cost of assistive technology and the lack of easily understandable information and training for their needs.
85. Although the Assembly cannot address all of the barriers that disabled stakeholders may face. We do work with a number of charities and other organisations through our External Disability Advisory Group. We will continue to engage with them as the strategy develops to try and ensure we can mitigate or eliminate impacts.
86. The Assembly currently undertake the following mitigation actions:

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<sup>16</sup> The National Plan for Digital Participation - <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/downloads/what-we-do/previous-projects/access-and-inclusion/National-Plan-Digital-Participation-Final.pdf>



- The NI Assembly website and the Education Service website adheres to W3C web usability standards, ensuring that it is accessible to people with disabilities.
- The NI Assembly website is now fully responsive and therefore more accessible to all users regardless of the devices being used to access the site.
- The website includes an [Accessibility Section](#)
- The Assembly makes information available in alternative formats (braille, easy read, audio, large print etc.) including hard copy when requested for those people who are not able to access content online or who have difficulty accessing information via their PC, Tablet or Smartphone.

87. We are also engaging with other legislatures and Parliaments in the UK who are working on similar digital strategies and initiatives with particular regard to digital accessibility. We will continue to engage with them as the strategy develops to try and ensure we can mitigate or eliminate impacts.

88. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil its duties to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and the need to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life ('the disability duties'). It focuses on measures focused on the Commission's responsibilities and policies designed to meet our obligations under disability legislation which covers internal and external users.

89. A 5 year review of the Disability Action Plans was published by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ("the Commission") for the period [15 December 2007 - 31 March 2013](#). The Assembly completed 97% of the actions and measures for the 2008-2011 plan, 96% for 2011-12 and 87.5% for 2012-16 (the plan runs to 2016 and the outstanding actions are due to be completed prior to the end of this period). Full results can be found on the [Assembly website](#).

### Dependants

90. Persons with Dependents are generally classified as persons with personal responsibility for:

- the care of a child; the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

### Care of a Child<sup>17</sup>

91. On Census Day 2011, there were a total of 238,071 households with dependent children in Northern Ireland. This figure represents a third (33.8%) of all households.

### Care of Person with a Disability

92. A total of 213,980 residents (11.8%) provide unpaid care<sup>18</sup> in Northern Ireland to those with a long-term physical or mental health disability (all ages). The duration of care ranges between one hour and 50 or more hours per week.

### Care of a Dependent Older Person

93. A total of 32,328 residents of all ages provide some form of unpaid care (ranging from one hour to 50 hours per week) to those aged 65 years or over. Please note that this figure excludes residents living in communal establishments (paid care).
94. It is considered that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity in relation to those with dependants.

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<sup>17</sup> The Census definition of a dependent child is "a person in a household aged 0 - 15 (whether or not in a family) or a person aged 16-18 who is a full-time student and in a family with parent(s)."

<sup>18</sup> 'Provision of unpaid care' - the term 'care' covers any unpaid help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental health or disability.

## **EQIA Step 4 - Consideration of Measures**

95. The EQIA has identified a number of measures to address the differential impact Section 75 groups currently face and these are set out in more detail in this section. In general, the proposed Digital First Strategy is about adopting digital tools and techniques we take for granted in our personal lives to make the business of the Assembly better. Using tools and techniques that will help us communicate more effectively; share and manage knowledge more robustly; develop more efficient working practices and improve and open up the work of the Assembly to all of our stakeholders.
96. The Commission recognises that none of the Section 75 categories operate as a silo and that people have multiple identities. It is also recognised that the Digital First Strategy is a living document and can and will be monitored and amended if and when issues are raised.
97. Subject to the findings of the consultation, it is the conclusion of this EQIA that, with the adoption of these proposals, the risk of an adverse impact arising from the Digital First Strategy falling into one or more of the Section 75 categories would be mitigated adequately.

## Summary of Section 75 Categories and Mitigating Measures

Section 75 Category	Mitigating Measures
Religious Belief	Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different Religious Belief.
Political Opinion	Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different Political Opinion.
Gender (Men and Women generally)	Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different Genders (Men and Women generally).
Marital Status	Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different marital status.
Sexual Orientation	Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different sexual orientation.
Dependants	Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those

Section 75 Category	Mitigating Measures
	with dependants.
Age	<p>The Assembly will make information available in alternative formats including hard copy when requested for those people who are not able to access content online via their PC, Tablet or Smartphone.</p>
Disability	<p>The NI Assembly websites adhere to W3C web usability standards ensuring that it is accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>NI Assembly website is now fully responsive and therefore more accessible to all users regardless of the devices being used to access the site.</p> <p>The website includes an accessibility section.</p> <p>The NI Assembly makes information</p>

Section 75 Category	Mitigating Measures
	<p>available in alternative formats (braille, easy read, audio, large print etc.) including hard copy when requested for those people who are not able to access content online or who have difficulty accessing information via their PC, Tablet or Smartphone.</p> <p>Discussions with other legislatures and parliaments in the UK who are working on similar digital strategies and initiatives with particular regard to digital accessibility.</p>
Racial Group	<p>Draft language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. Through this consultation we wish to identify any mitigating measures that have not been considered in this current document.</p>

98. There is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity or good relations for the following Section 75 categories as a result of this strategy:

- Religious belief
- Political opinion
- Gender (Men and Women generally)
- Marital status
- Sexual Orientation
- Dependants

#### **Religious Belief**

99. Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different Religious Belief.

100. It is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on people of different Religious Belief.

101. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary.

#### **Political Opinion**

102. Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different political opinion.



103. It is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on people of different political opinions.

104. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary.

**Gender (Men and Women generally)**

105. Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different gender.

106. It is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on people of different gender.

107. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary.

**Marital Status**

108. Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different marital status.

109. It is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on people of different marital status.

110. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary.

### **Sexual orientation**

111. Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those of different sexual orientation.

112. It is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on people of different sexual orientation.

113. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary.

### **Dependants**

114. Data collected identified that there were no issues to mitigate for those with dependants.

115. It is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have an adverse impact on people with dependants.

116. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary.

## **Age**

117. It is accepted that older people (60 years plus) are less likely to be online than most young age groups. Therefore through the Assembly Outreach team and the work of Assembly Community Connect we can partner with organisations who can support engagement with our older and aging population that build their confidence in interacting with us.

118. The Assembly will continue to make information available in alternative formats including hard copy when requested for those people who are not able to access content online via their PC, Tablet or Smartphone.

119. Through the process of consultation we wish to identify any impacts which have not been considered in this current document.

## **Disability**

120. The objectives of the Digital First Strategy do not exclude any section of the community; it is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have a directly adverse impact on people with disabilities. However, through the process of consultation we wish to identify any impacts which have not been considered in this current document.

121. As stated earlier the Assembly cannot address all of the barriers that disabled stakeholders may face. We do undertake the following mitigation actions:

- The NI Assembly website and the Education Service website adheres to W3C web usability standards, ensuring that it is accessible to people with disabilities.
- The NI Assembly website is now fully responsive and therefore more accessible to all users regardless of the devices being used to access the site.
- The website includes an [Accessibility Section](#)
- The Assembly makes information available in alternative formats (braille, easy read, audio, large print etc.) including hard copy when requested for those people who are not able to access content online or who have difficulty accessing information via their PC, Tablet or Smartphone.

122. We will continue to talk to the other legislatures and parliaments in the UK with particular regard to digital accessibility to ensure we can mitigate or eliminate impacts.

123. We will also continue to work with disability charities and other organisations through our External Disability Advisory Group and

will continue to talk to them as the strategy develops again to try and ensure we can mitigate or eliminate any impacts.

### **Racial Group**

124. The objectives of the Digital First Strategy do not exclude any section of the community; it is deemed that the Digital First Strategy will not have a directly adverse impact on racial groups.

125. The Assembly does not currently produce or publish its procedural information in any languages other than English except for sections of Hansard (Official Reports) where Members have used other languages in the Chamber.

126. The figures show that the proportion of those for who English is their main language do not appear to indicate the potential for differential impacts.

127. The Assembly Commission does not yet have an agreed Language Policy. However, draft language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. As a live document, the Digital First Strategy will be monitored and amended as necessary should the language policy be implemented or changed.

128. Through the process of consultation we wish to identify any impacts and any mitigating measures that have not been considered in this current document.

## **EQIA Step 5 - Formal Consultation**

129. The next stage of the EQIA process involves formal consultation with interested parties to obtain:

- views on the assessment of impacts;
- any further information which could be useful in assessing the impacts;
- comments and suggestions on the mitigating measures
- comments and suggestions with regard to the consultation process.

### **Principles of consultation**

130. The Commission's equality scheme includes a commitment to ensure that the accessibility and format of every method of consultation contributes to removal of barriers to the consultation process. The equality scheme makes clear that all consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the policy; in the case of the review of the policy on the Digital First Strategy, this will include all users of Parliament Buildings and the public in general.

The Commission anticipates that the EQIA may attract a significant response and welcomes comments from any individual or organisation with an interest in the policy.

#### **Publication of information**

131. The Commission's equality scheme ensures that, as a matter of course, all consultees of the scheme will be notified (by email or post) of the EQIA being consulted on.

132. Information about the EQIA (including all relevant background documents) will be placed on the Northern Ireland Assembly website and attention will be drawn to the consultation process through social media. A standard response form will be available to assist individuals and organisations to respond, but responses will be accepted in any format (e.g. letter, email, telephone, SMS).

133. The Commission is also committed to making information available in alternative formats on request and ensuring that consultees who require alternative formats have equal time to respond. Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language; the Commission

has arrangements in place to provide alternative formats in a timely manner.

134. As much background information as possible has been included within this report. If there is any information which has not been provided, the Commission will make every effort to do so on request. If any consultee has difficulty accessing the background information, the Commission will consider providing summaries in other formats.

135. A public notice drawing attention to the consultation will be placed in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter in the first week of the consultation period. This will indicate that the documentation is available on the website and will provide details of how to respond.

### **Opportunities to respond**

136. A standard response form will be provided to assist respondents and it is envisaged that this will be the primary means by which members of the public and equality scheme consultees will respond. The response form can be returned by email or can be downloaded and sent by post.



## **Timescale**

137. The consultation period in respect of this EQIA will last for fourteen weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves in order to form a view.

138. The closing date for responses is 8 October 2015.

## **Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA**

139. At the end of the consultation period, the EQIA report will be revised to take account of all comments received from consultees. The final EQIA report will then be submitted to the Commission to assist them to make a final decision on the review of the policy. The Commission's decision will be incorporated into a summary report which will set out the consideration given to the impact of alternative policies and mitigating actions.

140. The final summary report will be made available on the Northern Ireland Assembly website and consultees will be notified of the availability of the report. This will complete Step 6 of the EQIA process.

## Monitoring

141. The final stage in the EQIA process is the establishment of a system to monitor the impact of the policy. The results of the monitoring must be reviewed on an annual basis and must be published in the Commission's annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.
142. If the monitoring and analysis of results over a two year period show that there has been a greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Commission will take steps to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups.
143. Full details of the proposed monitoring framework will be included in the final EQIA report.



## Appendix A - Screening Form



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## SECTION 75 SCREENING FORM

### **What is a policy?**

The Equality Commission has defined 'policies' as 'all the ways a public authority carries out, or proposes to carry out, its function relating to Northern Ireland'. The Act defines 'functions' as including powers and duties.

These are effectively catch-all definitions which cover the Secretariat's policies, strategies, schemes, procedures and functions. You should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies as well as external policies. If you are in doubt please contact the Equality Unit for advice.

### **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 to 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.

### **Background to the Policy/Strategy/Procedure to be screened.**

Include details of any consultations which have been conducted and whether the policy has previously been tabled at SMG/Assembly Commission meetings.

The Digital First Strategy includes the development of systems which allow information to be delivered in a digital medium as a first option rather than printing.

The strategy has not previously been tabled at SMG/Assembly Commission meetings although papers on the development of the strategy have been tabled at both SMG and Assembly Commission.

To this point consultation has been limited. Some internal consultation on print reduction was conducted as part of a general review of current print arrangements.

## 1. Policy Details

**Name of the policy to be screened:**

Digital First Strategy

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**Is this policy new or revised?**

New policy

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**What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes of the policy)**

Digital First aims to develop the Assembly's systems, workflows and procedures so that information and content can be created once and then re-used whenever and wherever it is required and if necessary printed "Create Once. Publish Everywhere".

The objectives are:

To provide Members and Assembly staff with the information, support and technology to allow them to carry out their responsibilities effectively, efficiently and professionally.

To explore and exploit digital technology to streamline workflows and improve efficiency by maximising staff time and reducing print and associated costs and to improve the Assembly's environmental impact.

To use digital tools and information to engage, inform, facilitate and improve people's participation and engagement in Assembly business and the wider democratic process.

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**Who initiated or wrote the policy?**

Initiated by John Stewart, Director of Information and Outreach.

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**Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?**

Information and Outreach

## 2. Implementation factors

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, are they

- ☒ Financial
- ☒ Legislative
- ☒ Other, please specify: Staff skill sets, organisational buy-in, buy in from MLAs

## 3. 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 : MLAs and their staff, political parties

## 4. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies? Please list:

Engagement Strategy  
Information Management Strategy  
Environmental Strategy  
IS Strategy  
Printer Replacement Project  
Data Protection Policy  
Policy on use of IT Resources  
IS Password Policy  
IS Security Policy

## 5. Consideration of available data/research *(This means any data or information you currently hold in relation to the policy or gathered during policy development).*

Evidence to inform the screening process may take many forms and should help you to decide who the policy might affect the most. It will also help ensure that your screening decision is informed by relevant data.

**What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) do you hold to inform your decision making process?**

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	None. Not applicable to this document
Political opinion	None. Not applicable to this document
Racial group	<p>The 2011 Census of Northern Ireland found that 96.86% of the population have English as a main language followed by Polish (1.02%), Lithuanian (0.36%), Irish (0.24%), Portuguese (0.13%), Slovak (0.13%) and Chinese (0.13%). Other languages accounted for 1.13%. More information and consultation is required to fully ascertain the potential impact of Digital First on non-English speakers and ensure that all necessary mitigation is covered.</p> <p>The 2011 Census of Northern Ireland found that over 98% of the population, state their ethnic origin to be white. Non-white ethnic groups accounted for 1.7% of the total population. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity in different racial groups.</p>
Age	It is envisaged that this strategy could have a negative differential impact upon the equality of opportunity for some age groups, particularly those aged 65 and over. Nevertheless, this potential negative differential impact is mitigated due to the fact that use of online, whilst being the primary channel for communicating, will not be the only way. Additional data and research would be required to fully assess the impact of this strategy.
Marital status	Therefore there is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity.
Sexual	There is no available data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) persons in Northern Ireland as no national



orientation	census has ever asked people to define their sexuality. That said, according to the 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 98% of people in Northern Ireland are heterosexual and 1% are homosexual. There is no evidence to suggest that this strategy would have a negative differential impact.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence to suggest that either gender would be disadvantaged.
Disability	<p>It is understood that the various groups of stakeholders will include individuals with a number of disabilities (hidden or otherwise) and that some stakeholders may have multiple disabilities.</p> <p>For Staff, HR hold information on accessibility requirements and can advise on the impact of any changes required re training or additional support.</p> <p>For external stakeholders any potential negative differential impact will be mitigated as the use of digital/online, whilst becoming the primary channel for communicating; it will not be the only method. In addition an improved online service will be compliant with W3C double AA standard.</p> <p>That said more information and consultation is required to fully ascertain the potential impact and ensure that all necessary mitigation is covered.</p>
Dependants	There is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity.

## 6. Current Assessment of Impact

Having looked at the data/information referred to above at point 5, what does this tell you are the needs, experiences and priorities for the people who fall into the groups below, in relation to your policy? And what is the actual or likely adverse impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by the policy. **(See appendix 1 for information on levels of impact).**

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities and details of policy impact	Level of Impact
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Religious belief	Not applicable to this document	None
Political opinion	Not applicable to this document	None
Racial group	Further information and evidence will need to be collected to fully assess the impact	Minor
Age	Further information and evidence will need to be collected to fully assess the impact.	Minor
Marital status	Not applicable to this document	None
Sexual orientation	Not applicable to this document	None
Men and women generally	Not applicable to this document	None
Disability	<p>We know from other policies and contact with relevant agencies that people want to access information in a number of formats and this includes those who have difficulty accessing information because of disabilities (hidden or otherwise). For example:</p> <p>They have a visual impairment;</p> <p>They cannot see text, images or moving pictures;</p> <p>They have a learning disability;</p> <p>They have mental health difficulties;</p> <p>They are deaf and use Sign Language as their primary means of communication;</p> <p>They cannot hear spoken information, nor use a voice telephone because they are deaf or hard</p>	Major

	<p>of hearing.;</p> <p>They have speech impairment and therefore find it difficult to use a phone;</p> <p>They have a communication disability;</p> <p>They have dexterity difficulties which make it difficult to hold a printed document or use a keyboard;</p> <p>They have a low standard of literacy;</p> <p>Multiple identities – i.e. some combination of the above.</p>	
Dependants	Not applicable to this document	None

If you do not have enough data to tell you about potential or actual impacts you may need to conduct a pre-consultation to generate more data and to distinguish what groups are potentially affected by your policy.

## Part 2 Screening Questions

1 Are there any steps/actions which could be taken to reduce any adverse impact as addressed in question 6?		
Section 75 category	Issue	Mitigating Measure
Religious belief	Not applicable to this document	None
Political opinion	Not applicable to this document	None
Racial group	Not applicable to this document	None

Age	Mitigation actions are difficult to quantify at this stage because potential equality impacts are unknown as there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment them.	Minor
Marital status	Not applicable to this document	None
Sexual orientation	Not applicable to this document	None
Men and women generally	Not applicable to this document	None
Disability	Mitigation actions are difficult to quantify at this stage because potential equality impacts are unknown as there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment	Major
Dependants	Not applicable to this document	None

**2. Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations in what you are proposing to do?**

Please provide reasons.

One aim of the strategy is to encourage good and consistent practice when producing information and making sure that information is freely available (via multiple platforms) and as accessibly as possible to all stakeholders (internal and external) which in turn gives the opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and enhance good relations.

### 3. Consultation

Tell us about who you have talked to about your proposals, either internally or externally, to help you decide if the policy needs further or no further equality investigation?

The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance. Discussions were held with the NIA Equality Manager and it was felt that as some of the key potential equality impacts are unknown, (because there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment), it would be appropriate to conduct an Equality Impact assessment in order to better assess them. It is also felt that further assessment would offer a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop further recommendations in respect of the strategy and its impact on affected individuals and representative groups.

Also as a high level policy which is likely to generate further policies or actions that are relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity the EIA would also be appropriate.

### 4 Disability Duties?

Consider whether the policy:

- a) Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

The policy itself is not meant to discourage disabled people from participating in public life or to be in any way negative towards disabled people. It recognises that there are likely to be issues for some people who will either struggle to use or will never be able to use digital services themselves and will always need help, for example, people who are very ill or have disabilities and are helped by a family member or carer. The strategy will address those requirements by focusing on accessibility for the digital information and access to that information and ensuring it is possible to provide suitable alternative formats when required.

- b) Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.

The strategy will focus on ensuring that information is created to be accessible to all and where it is necessary suitable alternative formats will be provided and stakeholders clearly advised on how to find and request this information.

## Additional considerations

### Multiple identities

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).*

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

While we are aware of the need to mitigate the impact on those with multiple identities we do not currently have the necessary information. Further information and evidence will need to be collected to fully assess the impact

## Part 3 Screening decision

1. If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment (*none*), please provide details of the reasons.

An EQIA will be conducted.

2. If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, but the policy has minor equality impacts which can be mitigated/provided by an alternative policy, and therefore does not require an EQIA (*minor*), provide details of the reason for the decision with proposed changes/amendments for an alternative policy to be introduced.

An EQIA will be conducted.

3. If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment (*major*), please provide details of the reasons.

The policy is significant in term of its strategic importance, and it is a high level policy which is likely to generate further policies or actions that are relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

It is also felt that further assessment would offer 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.

#### 4. Timetabling and prioritising for EQIA

##### 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	3
Social need	2
Effect on people’s daily lives	1
Relevance to a public authority’s functions	2

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 CCSU in timetabling. Details of the Equality Impact Assessment Timetable will be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please provide details

[Click here to enter text.](#)

## Part 4 Monitoring

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

The Equality Commission for NI (ECNI) recommends that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly for adverse impact.

See ECNI Monitoring Guidance for use by Public Authorities (July 2007) pages 9-10, paragraphs 2.13 – 2.20

What data is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

<p>What are these policies? Please list:</p> <p>Changes to the following policies as a result of monitoring that will impact this strategy will be taken in consideration when monitoring the strategy:</p> <p>Engagement Strategy Information Management Strategy Environmental Strategy IS Strategy Printer Replacement Project Data Protection Policy Policy on use of IT Resources IS Password Policy IS Security Policy</p> <p>We will seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring for this strategy and any future screening.</p>
---

## Part 5 - Data Protection

1. If applicable, has legal advice been given due consideration?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

2. Has due consideration been given to information security in relation to this policy?

Yes ☒ No ☐

## Part 6 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
TRACEY WILSON	Information Officer	10/12/2014



Approved by:		

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. A copy of the completed screening template and any other relevant associated documentation should be forwarded to the Equality Manager.

The Equality Manager will make the completed screening template available on the NIA website as soon as possible following completion, and approval of the screening form.

## Appendix 1

## Screening Questions

### Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, you should consider your answers to the questions above.

In addition, the screening questions above further assist you in assessing your policy and must be completed. Some of these questions require you to assess the level of impact of the proposed policy on “equality of opportunity” and “good relations”. The scale used when assessing this impact is either “None”, “Minor” or “Major”. The following paragraphs set out what each of these terms mean.

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

If your 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 your 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.