

GOOD RELATIONS STRATEGY SCREENING FORM

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.

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

1. Policy Details

Name of the policy

Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2016.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

New Good Relations Strategy and Revised Good Relations Action Plan. The Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan follows on from work carried out through the 2010-2011 Good Relations Action Plan which outlined a comprehensive programme of good relations work. The first Good Relations Action Plan was approved by the Assembly Commission on 21 January 2010, the second Good Relations Action Plan and Good Relations Strategy and was approved by the Commission at its meeting held on 25 September 2012.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

To enable the Assembly Commission to put in place measures which will promote good relations when it is providing the property, staff and services required for the Assembly to carry out its work.

To achieve this aim the Assembly Commission will:

- encourage dialogue and consultation on issues related to good relations to ensure diversity and understanding is promoted and appropriate initiatives/activities are fostered;

- promote equality and good relations in all aspects of its work by ensuring that all its services are delivered effectively and encourage diversity;
- ensure training is an integral part of the good relations strategy and work closely with our training providers and others, where applicable, in the development and delivery of good relations training; and
- put in place the necessary arrangements to allow for the collection of management information and data regarding good relations.

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

Yes No

If so, explain how.

Religious Belief, Political Opinion and Racial Group¹. The Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan have been developed in order to promote positive relationships between groups in the Section 75(2) categories. The Strategy was informed by an extensive consultation which included: an independent internal good relations research audit; an internal consultation exercise which included secretariat staff, MLAs and Party support staff; and a 13 week public consultation all of which sought to ensure that any community and race relations issues were identified and actioned within the current Strategy. Existing data held by the secretariat also informed the development of the Good Relations Strategy in addition to the relevant legislation and guidance.

Background

1. The Assembly Commission's legislative base emanates from the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It states "there shall be a body corporate known as the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ("the Commission") to perform:
 - (a) the functions conferred on the Commission by virtue of any enactment; and
 - (b) any functions conferred on the Commission by resolution of the Assembly."
2. 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's purposes.
3. The Assembly Commission may delegate any of its functions to the Speaker or a member of the staff of the Assembly and may determine its own procedures.
4. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is made up of the Speaker and five Assembly Members. Assembly Members are as follows:
 DUP, Mr Peter Weir, MLA
 Sinn Fein, Ms Caitríona Ruane, MLA

¹ Although this screening is primarily focused on Section 75(2), there will be read across to the other Section 75 grounds to ensure that the Good Relations Strategy helps to further promote and/or contribute to the anticipated outcomes for those of different identities.

UUP, Leslie Cree, MBE, MLA
SDLP, Mr Pat Ramsey, MLA
Alliance, Mrs Judith Cochrane, MLA

5. Under Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group in carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland.

This current Strategy sets out how the Assembly Commission proposes to fulfil this duty in relation to the functions for which it is responsible.

6. The Commission approved the 2010-2011 Good Relations Action Plan at its meeting on the 21 January 2010. This plan covered a one-year period. Following the conclusion of the 2010-2011 plan, a progress report² was issued to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in September 2011 setting out the progress made towards the actions detailed within the plan.

7. The 2010-2011 Good Relations Action Plan contained an action which stated that the Commission would “*Conduct an internal good relations audit with staff and Members*”. In 2010 Holywell Consultancy was commissioned to conduct the internal good relations audit following a formal procurement exercise. This audit was to measure the extent to which the Assembly was meeting its Good Relations Duty and to identify any actual or perceived barriers.

As part of the audit, Holywell Consultancy completed desk top research, which included the examination of various documents, including: the Northern Ireland Assembly Corporate Plan; the Engagement Strategy; the 2010-2011 Good Relations Action Plan; the 2010 Secretariat staff survey; the Dignity at Work Policy and the Assembly Commission Equality Scheme (2008-2011).

Holywell Consultancy conducted a Good Relations Staff Survey in November 2010, held focus groups with staff and conducted one to one interviews with Directors and Commission Members.

8. The current Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 incorporates recommendations arising from the Internal Good Relations Audit, conducted by Holywell Consulting, as recommended for inclusion by the Assembly Commission at its meeting of 19 April 2012. (see table 5)
9. In the development of the current Good Relations Strategy a pre-consultation was also conducted by the Commission and Corporate Support Unit with all

² <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Publications/Annual-Reports-to-the-Equality-Commission/>

Directorates across the Secretariat.

10. A draft version of the Good Relations Strategy, which contained the Commission's Good Relations Policy and its second Good Relations Action Plan, and which span a 4 year period in line with the Assembly's Corporate Strategy, was approved by the Commission for issue for public consultation.
11. Public consultation lasted for a 13 week period. The consultation document made clear that the Commission wished to consult as widely as possible and with this objective in mind, the following actions were taken:
 - (a) A postmaster email was issued to all Secretariat staff, MLAs and party support staff detailing information about the consultation document, signposting staff to the document and detailing how to respond. A link to the document was distributed directly to the Commission's Section 75 consultees and was made available to the public;
 - (b) A copy of the document was placed on the Assembly website;
 - (c) Advertisements were placed in the three main regional newspapers inviting the public to comment on the consultation report. These advertisements indicated how to access the consultation document and that it could be made available in alternative formats on request.
 - (d) Consultation meetings were held with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the NI Community Relations Council and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM).
12. All comments received through the process of consultation were analysed and the Commission issued responses to consultees through its Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 Consultation Results publication <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Commission/Commission-Good-Relation-Strategy.pdf>. In total nine consultee responses were received by the Commission. The Commission carefully considered the findings of this consultation exercise. The Commission believed the additional actions and revisions suggested by consultees would have a beneficial effect in terms of the implementation of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In light of the consultation comments received the Commission revised its Good Relations Action Plan.
13. The Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan was approved by the Commission at their meeting on 25 September 2012.
14. Prior to the approval of the Good Relations Strategy by the Commission, some policy areas contained within the Strategy were already undergoing the screening process. These included the:
 - Exhibitions Policy and Schedule(s). See Commission minutes: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Assembly-Commission/Minutes/08-May-2012-Special-Meeting/>

- Visitor Conduct and Behaviour Policy: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/EQIAs/visitor-conduct-and-behaviour-policy-Jan13.pdf>
- CCTV Policy
- Historic Anniversaries to be marked in the 2011-2015 Assembly Mandate. See Commission minutes: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Assembly-Commission/Minutes/08-May-2012-Special-Meeting/>
- The use of Art/Artefacts: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Assembly-Commission/Minutes/30-January-2013/>

Completed screening forms can be found at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Publications/Equality-Screening-and-Equality-Impact-Assessments-EQIAs/>

15.A decision has been taken not to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). Each of the policy areas contained within the Good Relations Action Plan will be screened separately as they are developed, so as a more detailed and in-depth analysis can be provided, as opposed to a high level Good Relations EQIA which would consider areas not yet developed as the Strategy spans a four year period.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?
Commission and Corporate Support Unit.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Who owns the policy?
The Assembly Commission owns the Good Relations Strategy.

Who Implements the policy?
Commission staff is responsible for ensuring that the Strategy is implemented as specified within the associated Action Plan. The Commission and Corporate Support Unit are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan across all of the Assembly Commission Directorates.

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

x Financial

The Good Relations Action Plan spans a four-year period and therefore Directorates will have annual implementation actions which may have associated costings.

x Legislative

We have not identified any legislative factors which would contribute to/detract from the intended high level aims of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's Good Relations Strategy.

(a) Secretariat Policies

A range of Secretariat policies also contribute to underpinning the current Strategy, such as the Dignity at Work Policy, Standards of Conduct Policy, the Assembly Commission Equality Scheme, the NI Assembly Engagement Strategy etc. Some of the policies contained within the current Good Relations Action Plan have been subject to Equality Screening and other policies scheduled to be developed will also be subject to Equality Screening in line with the Section 75 guidance produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Other, please specify:

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 : Assembly Members and all other existing and potential users of the building.

4. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies? Please list:

- Internal Good Relations Audit
- Northern Ireland Assembly Corporate Strategy 2012-2016
- Engagement Strategy for the NI Assembly 2009
- Good Relations Action Plan 2010-2011
- Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 Consultation Results
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Three signatures policy
- Art Advisory Group Terms of Reference
- Visitor Policy
- Exhibitions Policy
- Centenaries Screening Form
- CCTV Policy

5. 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.

Qualitative Information

Information from the following sources informed the development of the current screening form:

1	Northern Ireland Assembly Internal Good Relations Audit recommendations which were informed by one to one interviews, focus groups, an online survey with Secretariat staff and Commission Members.
2	Assembly Questions (both oral and Written) asked to the Assembly Commission since the beginning of the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016.
3	Findings of the Northern Ireland Assembly Staff Attitudes Survey 2012.
4	Questions to the Clerk/Director General.
5	Minutes of Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Meetings.
6	Good Relations Strategy Consultation Results Report. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Policies/Northern-Ireland-Assembly-Commission-Good-Relations-Strategy-2012-2016/ .
7	Consultee comments arising from meetings and consultations held during the development of policies contained within the Good Relations Action Plan e.g.

	Exhibitions Policy, Visitors Policy, Commemorative Anniversaries etc.
8	Meetings with other bodies e.g. the NI Arts Council. Museums, Arts and Galleries NI (MAGNI), Office of Public Works Dublin, Art Advisory Group and comments were sought from Political Parties in the development of the Exhibitions Policy.
9	Desk top research was completed on similar policies developed by other agencies e.g. in the development of the exhibitions policy, which is included in the Good Relations Action Plan, the following organisations policies were considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Portrait Gallery • Herefordshire Council • Turnpike Gallery • Brent Council • Staffordshire Moorelands District Council • Devon and Guild Craftsman • Royal United Hospital Trust, Bath • Belfast City Council • Scottish Parliament
10	MLA sponsored exhibitions: Data was examined concerning exhibitions displayed from 2008-2012 through the three signatures (cross community) policy.

Quantitative Information

Information from the following sources informed the development of the current screening form:

1	Data held on staff by defined categories e.g. Community Background, Age, Disability and Gender.
2	Data held on visitor numbers for 2012.
3	Data from an Ipsos MORI survey which was carried out in December 2009 and January 2010 to understand public attitudes towards the NI Assembly and to measure the level of public engagement with the Assembly on an on-going basis. The data was based on responses provided by the 1,025 participants in the Ipsos MORI survey who had visited Parliament Buildings.
4	Data from the Northern Ireland Assembly's Community Outreach Team who captured data on 'theme based events' in 2012.
5	NISRA Census of Population data.
6	2012 Staff Attitudes Survey.
7	Data held from Holywell internal good relations audit staff survey.

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

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	<p>The data shows that the workforce of the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat (56% Protestant, 39% Catholic and 5% no or other religion), building users such as visitors (21% of Catholics, 30% of Protestants and 30% of those with no religion) and potential visitors such as the wider Northern Ireland population (48% Protestant, 45% Catholic, 1% other religion and 6% no religion) is diverse in terms of religious belief.</p> <p>Qualitative data such as Questions to the Assembly Commission and Consultee comments arising from meetings and consultations held during the development of policies contained within the Good Relations Action Plan have provided insight into the needs of those of different religious belief i.e. ensuring Parliament Buildings reflects the diversity of the entire community while also being welcoming in order to enable full and fair access to, and engaging and participating in, the operations of the Northern Ireland Assembly.</p> <p>By its very nature, the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and Action Plan aims to promote Good Relations and so addresses the needs, experiences and priorities of those of different religious beliefs, including those with no religious belief.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The data shows that Parliament Building users such as MLAs and their support staff consist of those who consider themselves to be Unionists (e.g. DUP, TUV and the UUP), those who consider themselves to be Nationalists (e.g. Sinn Féin and the SDLP) and others. MLAs (8 Alliance Members, 38 DUP Members, 1 Green Party Member, 3 Independents, 29 Sinn Féin Members, 14 SDLP Members, 1 TUV Member, 1 UKIP Member and 13 UUP Members). The Public Attitudes Survey (2009) found that 38% of Unionists and 23% of Nationalists have visited Parliament Buildings. In terms of the population of Northern Ireland, 40% consider themselves as British only, 25% consider themselves as Irish only and 21% consider themselves as Northern Irish.</p>

	<p>Qualitative data such as Questions to the Assembly Commission highlighted the desire by both Unionists and Nationalists to have their identities reflected in Parliament Buildings. The Internal Good Relations Audit makes a number of recommendations regarding Good Relations (for example through the use of exhibition space) to ensure Parliament Buildings is welcoming for staff and visitors of different political opinion. The Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and Action Plan addresses the needs, experiences and priorities of staff, building users and visitors of different political opinion as identified in the Internal Good Relations Audit.</p>
<p>Racial group</p>	<p>The Census shows that the proportion of the population which belongs to minority ethnic groups has increased from 0.8% in 2001 to 1.8% in 2011.</p> <p>As part of the Good Relations Strategy public consultation exercise, NICEM suggested that “...<i>The often intimidating physical appearance and historic significance of Parliament Buildings can act as a barrier to full and fair access to the Assembly...NICEM welcomes initiatives such as the recent establishment of the Speaker’s Art Group and the proposed use of exhibition spaces to reflect the multicultural aspects of NI society as well as making the space more connected to and reflective of the community. In the consultation document, the Commission points out that it will display art by ethnic minority groups. As an umbrella organization, NICEM would be willing to engage with the Commission to signpost it to relevant ethnic minority groups</i>”. Signage attaching to exhibits should recognise that visitors may not be fluent in written English.</p> <p>The Speakers Art Group will engage with NICEM to discuss future displays of art. As part of the 2012 exhibition schedule an Arts Council Intercultural Exhibition was displayed in the Long Gallery from 11-22 June 2012 which provided exposure for up and coming minority ethnic artists who are currently living in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>A leaflet entitled “Your Assembly Your Say” is available in 11 different languages on the Assembly’s website and in hard copy on entrance to Parliament Buildings. The Assembly’s Information and Outreach Directorate is also looking into the transcription of tours into a range of languages.</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>The Assembly recognises the diverse age range of those likely to view exhibits, ranging from the very young to the very old. Signage and information will aim to accommodate these groupings, while any use of e? technology will recognise, for example, relatively low computer experience amongst some age groups.</p>

	<p>In addition, as part of the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 consultation, Opportunity Youth stated <i>“Opportunity Youth endorses the use of art and other creative industries as a method of promoting good relations and reflecting diversity within our community. Development of an exhibitions policy and an annual schedule for displays of works or artefact which symbolise Northern Ireland is a laudable ambition. Opportunity Youth believe that not only should the art represent all sections of society but the artists too. Opportunity Youth work with many young people considered disadvantaged in the community and within prisons who have found therapeutic recourse through participation in the arts. Projects have included mural painting, amateur dramatics and a train carriage restoration. Opportunity Youth believe officials should explore the possibility of commissioning and encouraging young people including those from within the prison population to produce art for display in the Northern Ireland Assembly.”</i></p> <p>The Assembly Commission responded that it will seek opportunities to display art from across the youth sector. The Commission and Corporate Support Unit will elicit comments from youth organisations to inform the next exhibitions schedule.</p>
Marital status	<p>There is no evidence any different needs, experiences and priorities of those of different marital status in relation the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission. No issues were raised by consultees as part of the Good Relations Strategy public consultation exercise.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>As with the comment posted by NICEM (see Racial Group above) and Disability Action (see Disability below), there may be opportunities to engage with minority groups, such as the LGB community to seek their views in relation to future exhibitions. The Commission and Corporate Support Unit will meet with LGB organisations to elicit further information.</p>
Men and women generally	<p>There is no evidence any different needs, experiences and priorities of men and women generally in relation the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission. No issues were raised by consultees as part of the Good Relations Strategy public consultation exercise.</p>
Disability	<p>As part of the Good Relations Strategy public consultation exercise, Disability Action suggested that <i>“The percentage of disabled people within the Northern Ireland population is higher than in Great Britain,</i></p>

	<p><i>due in part, to the conflict. Disability Action recommends the Commission to include people with disabilities works/artifacts in any planned exhibition". The staging of exhibits should duly recognise any potential mobility and sensory needs of those with a disability attending.</i></p> <p>Appendix 7 highlights that a number of exhibitions cover the area of disability. In addition, during 2012 an exhibition by visual artist Maurice Orr which celebrated disability arts, culture and sport as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Unlimited programme was displayed in the Great Hall, Parliament Buildings.</p> <p>The sound track for the exhibition together with multi-sensory interpretation provided, through braille and audio narrative, an understanding of art through many senses and a deeper understanding of disability access for all audiences.</p> <p>The exhibition was selected by the Arts Council as one of the ten best projects in the UK and was part of a programme of temporary exhibitions agreed by the Assembly Commission in 2012. Any future plans for exhibitions submitted to the Assembly Commission by the Speaker's Art Group will take account of disability arts.</p> <p>Parliament Buildings has disability access to the front and side of the building. Parking is available for those with disabilities visiting the building to view exhibitions. In addition, as part of our autism initiative, a quiet room is available and pre-visit discussions can take place with autism champions for those visitors with autism, or with carers of those with autism. Information on the Assembly's Autism Initiative is available on our website. The Assembly has also received an award from 'Action on Hearing Loss' and the building is accessible for those who are deaf or hearing impaired. A braille map of Parliament Buildings is also available which can be used by those who are blind or with visual impairments as part of our guided tour. A 'Changing Places' Facility is also available at Parliament Buildings.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>There is no evidence any different needs, experiences and priorities of those with and those without dependants in relation the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission. No issues were raised by consultees as part of the Good Relations Strategy public consultation exercise. However, Parliament Buildings is open to the public between 9am – 4pm, Monday to Friday and baby changing facilities and a 'Changing Places' Facility is available. The Stormont Estate is a public park and is open to the public from 7.30am to 6pm daily.</p>

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, you should consider your answers to the questions above.

In addition, the five screening questions below further assist you in assessing your policy and must be completed. Two 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.

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	The Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan aims to promote equality of opportunity for people of different religious backgrounds through engagement in a variety of actions which focus on service delivery, training, dialogue and specific projects in order to optimise good relations between staff and all users of Parliament Buildings.	Minor
Political opinion	The Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan aims to promote equality of opportunity for people of different political opinions through engagement in a variety of actions which focus on service delivery, training, dialogue and specific projects in order to optimise good relations between staff and all users of Parliament Buildings.	Minor
Racial group	The Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan aims to promote equality of opportunity for people with different racial backgrounds through engagement in a variety of actions which focus on service delivery, training, dialogue and specific projects in order to optimize good relations between staff and all users of Parliament Buildings. The Commission has responded to issues raised through the Good Relations Strategy public consultation as set on in its consultation results publication http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Commission/Commission-Good-Relation-Strategy.pdf and will continue to work with a range of stakeholders.	Minor
Age	The Commission recognises that none of the Section 75 categories operate as silos and that people have multiple identities. It is also recognised that where issues have been raised, or	None

	may in the future be raised, that we will revisit our action plan and amend as necessary. This action has already occurred as a result of the recent Good Relations public consultation.	
Marital status	See 'age'.	None
Sexual orientation	See 'age'.	None
Men and women generally	See 'age'.	None
Disability	See 'age'.	None
Dependants	See 'age'.	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 Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2016 has prioritised the promotion of Good Relations between persons with different religious beliefs. The strategy and action plan has been developed as a result of extensive consultation both internally and externally. However, as a working document further actions can be added to the Good Relations Action Plan
Political opinion	Yes – At a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 5 February 2013 the motion/proposal set out below was agreed. “That the Assembly Commission tasks officers to bring back a report, within 3 months, following consultation with Assembly Parties, reviewing the number of days upon which the Union Flag flies from Parliament Buildings and detailing a range of options and how a process of public consultation could be carried out and arrangements for carrying out an EQIA.” This issue will be looked at apart from, and in addition to, the current Good Relations Screening.	
Racial group		No – The Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2016 has prioritised the promotion of Good Relations between persons from different racial groups. The strategy and action plan has been developed as a result of extensive consultation both internally and externally. However, as a working document further actions can be added to the Good Relations

		Action Plan e.g. the translation of tour scripts into various languages is currently being considered.
Age		No – the Good Relations Strategy is primarily focused on good relations, however there will be a read across to the other Section 75 grounds where applicable.
Marital status		No – the Good Relations Strategy is primarily focused on good relations, however there will be a read across to the other Section 75 grounds where applicable.
Sexual orientation		No – the Good Relations Strategy is primarily focused on good relations, however there will be a read across to the other Section 75 grounds where applicable.
Men and women generally		No – the Good Relations Strategy is primarily focused on good relations, however there will be a read across to the other Section 75 grounds where applicable.
Disability		No – the Good Relations Strategy is primarily focused on good relations, however there will be a read across to the other Section 75 grounds where applicable.
Dependants		No – the Good Relations Strategy is primarily focused on good relations, however there will be a read across to the other Section 75 grounds where applicable.

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	<p>The Good Relations Strategy is focused on the development of positive relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial groups through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dialogue and consultation on issues related to good relations to ensure diversity and understanding is promoted and appropriate initiatives/activities are fostered; - the promotion of equality and good relations in all aspects of our work by ensuring that all our services are delivered effectively and encourage diversity; - ensuring that training is an integral part of the good relations strategy and by working closely with our training providers and others, where applicable, in the development and delivery of good relations training; and - putting in place the necessary arrangements to allow for the collection of management information and data regarding good relations. <p>Each policy area detailed within the Good Relations Action Plan has an anticipated outcome. Actions taken to achieve outcomes will be monitored throughout the life of the action plan.</p>	Minor impact on screening (major positive impact on good relations)
Political opinion	See 'Religious Belief'.	Minor impact on screening (major positive impact on good relations)
Racial group	See 'Religious Belief'.	Minor impact on screening (major positive impact on good relations)

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	As an evolving area the Action Plan will be regarded as a work in progress and amended and updated as necessary. The Good Relations Strategy provides targeted actions which are designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups which contribute to ensuring that the entire community can have full and fair access to, and engage and participate in, the operations of the Northern Ireland Assembly.	enter details
Political opinion	As an evolving area the Action Plan will be regarded as a work in progress and amended and updated as necessary. The Good Relations Strategy provides targeted actions which are designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups which contribute to ensuring that the entire community can have full and fair access to, and engage and participate in, the operations of the Northern Ireland Assembly.	enter details
Racial group	As an evolving area the Action Plan will be regarded as a work in progress and amended and updated as necessary. The Good Relations Strategy provides targeted actions which are designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups which contribute to ensuring that the entire community can have full and fair access to, and engage and participate in, the operations of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Good Relations Strategy provides opportunities to work with minority ethnic communities and to reflect the diverse nature of our society.	enter details

5 Disability Duties?

Consider whether the policy:

- a) Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
No
- b) Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.

The Commission's disability duties are embedded within the current Good Relations Strategy as we recognise that people have multiple identities and we also recognise all other categories of multiple identity. For example, the Exhibition's Policy, as coming under the Good Relations Action Plan, has highlighted through past and planned exhibitions, specific disabilities in order to contribute towards the promotion of better positive attitudes towards disabled people.

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).

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

See table above.

Part 3 Screening decision

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

The Good Relations Strategy and associated Action Plan have been based on the findings of extensive consultation with staff, Members, Parties, users and the public. Consultee findings were discussed by the Assembly Commission and as a result some actions contained within the Action Plan were revised. An independent company also undertook research in the form of an 'internal good relations audit' and the recommendations emanating from this research also underpinned the development of the current Strategy. The strategy also took account of the impact of the Secretariat's current policies, surveys and existing legislation relating to good relations.

Each of the policy areas contained within the Action Plan will be screened separately as they are developed so as a more detailed and in-depth analysis can be provided as opposed to a high level Good Relations EQIA which would consider areas not yet developed as the Strategy spans a four year period.

This policy is considered to be a promotional policy which aims to have a positive impact on people of different religious, political and racial groups. The Action Plan is **will be regarded as a work in progress and amended and updated as necessary** to reflect any further consultation comments received and any issues emerging from the Commission's engagement with representative groups, staff, visitors, and the public.

It has therefore been decided not to conduct an equality impact assessment.

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 and EQIA (*minor*), provide details of the reason for the decision with proposed changes/amendments for an alternative policy to be introduced.

See above part 3, point 1. It has been concluded that this policy has 'minor' impacts as *"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."* Extensive public and internal consultation has already taken place on this policy and no 'major' issues as defined at part 2 were raised.

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

N/A

4. 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	Click
Social need	Click
Effect on people's daily lives	Click
Relevance to a public authority's functions	Click

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 are required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

Implementation and Review of the Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan.

As part of the development of the 2012-2016 Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan extensive internal and external exercises were undertaken, this identified issues to be included within the Action Plan. The Strategy will be measured against the fulfilment of its aims, objectives and outcomes.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan will be conducted on an on-going basis by the Commission and Corporate Support Unit. The Unit will produce 6 monthly monitoring reports which will detail whether individual Directorates are progressing towards the fulfilment of their anticipated outcomes. Where specific actions are new and have other implications, Directorates may have to put a paper to either the Senior Management Group (SMG) and/ or the Assembly Commission. This paper will provide Members with a background to the proposed action, discuss the implications such as equality, FOI, legal, financial, staffing requirements and will have an associated screening form attached with a set of recommendations. In addition an annual progress report will be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland detailing the progress made towards objectives.

Monitoring will also take place as part of the Assembly Commission's internal audit processes and any associated risk will be recorded on the Secretariat's Risk Register. It should also be noted that Assembly Written and Oral Questions to the Assembly Commission may be tabled in relation to any area which can include good relations.

Future data gathering

In order to gather data to inform planned and future actions, Secretariat staff will work with its in-house Research and Information Services (RaISE) to put forward a paper to SMG with proposals on how to collect and compare data from visitors relating to the area of good relations across a range of service provisions.

In order to further enhance consistency and effectiveness, RaISE will also look to establish a central system whereby any research conducted, or being conducted, as part of the secretariat business can be recorded.

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:	Date
Cross Directorate Good Relations Panel: -	
Adviser to the Speaker	
Private Secretary to the Speaker	
Senior Researcher	
Outreach Manager	
Assembly Clerk	
Deputy Editor, Hansard	
Assistant Assembly Clerk	
Legal Advisor	
Head of Internal Audit	
Security Manager	
Environmental Services Manager	
Research Officer	
Equality Manager	

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 team.

The Equality team will make the completed screening template available on our website as soon as possible following completion, and approval, and it will also be made available on request.

Appendix 1

Revised Good Relations Action Plan

Aim 1 Dialogue and Consultation

The Commission will encourage dialogue and consultation on issues related to good relations to ensure diversity and understanding is promoted and appropriate initiatives/activities are fostered. This will be achieved by:

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale ¹⁸	Anticipated Outcome
1.1 Good Relations Policy and Action Plan.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	September 2012.	Implementation of Policy and Action Plan.
		September 2012.	Communication of Policy and Action Plan to all staff.
		October 2012.	Staff training updated to cross-reference with Policy and Action Plan.
1.2 Equality and Good Relations Working Group.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	2013.	Continued meetings discussing equality and good relations issues
1.3 The Commission engages with Holywell consultants to discuss outcomes arising from the internal good relations audit research.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	April 2012.	The production of a series of actions on how to take forward good relations within the NI Assembly, under the responsibility of the Commission. Good Relations Action Plan is updated to include actions.
1.4 To continue implementation of the NIAC Equality Scheme to ensure employees understand their obligations concerning equality and good relations.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	On-going.	Compliance with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998.

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale ¹⁸	Anticipated Outcome
1.5 Speaker's Art Group: Development of an Exhibitions Policy and yearly exhibitions schedule.	Office of the Speaker.	May 2012 and annual schedule thereafter.	To present a yearly plan to the Commission, for approval, of exhibitions in the Great Hall.
1.6 Consider Art works/artefacts which symbolise the diverse nature of our society*.	Office of the Speaker/Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	November 2012.	Officials to explore availability of existing art works/artefacts for long term loan for consideration by the Commission, before giving any consideration to procurement of new items.
1.7 The Speaker, assisted by the Speaker's Engagement and Liaison Group, makes proposals to the Commission on the marking of Commemorative Anniversaries*.	Office of the Speaker.	April 2012 and annually thereafter.	A list of historic anniversaries to be marked is agreed. An annual programme of events is agreed by the Commission to mark historic anniversaries and commemorations.
1.8 The Commission to agree a range of events and initiatives to promote the 80th anniversary of the construction of Parliament Buildings.	Office of the Speaker.	November 2012	A range of events and initiatives to promote Parliament Buildings will have been undertaken to target under-represented groups and the wider public.
1.9 To answer Assembly Questions for written and oral answer applicable to equality and good relations.	Information and Outreach.	Written Questions – Daily basis Oral Questions – Quarterly basis.	To answer written and oral questions as set out in Commission and Corporate Support Unit guidance.
1.10 To respond to and publish staff equality and good relations questions as received through the 'Director General's suggestion box'.	Information and Outreach.		Where practicable to respond to questions within one week.
1.11 To conduct a staff survey every two years which includes questions regarding equality and good relations issues.	Information and Outreach.	Every two years, as proposed by Internal Communications Working Group (ICWG) and Senior Management Group	Identification of equality and good relations issues to be addressed. Issues arising to be addressed or forwarded to the appropriate Directorate for consideration.

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale ¹⁸	Anticipated Outcome
		(SMG).	
1.12 To organise three teachers' conferences per year for teachers.	Information and Outreach.	Annually.	Teachers from different schools come together to learn about the work of the Assembly and meet MLAs
1.13 To organise with the Participative Democracy Partnership, Youth Action NI, Save the Children Fund and Public Achievement the 'Youth Work is Political' Conference.	Information and Outreach.		Increase in Youth Workers knowledge of the way the Assembly works.
1.14 Establish a community link networking body.	Information and Outreach.	April 2012 and on-going after establishment.	A better understanding will be created on the work of the NI Assembly by community and voluntary organisations. Information is gathered from the community and voluntary sector to inform the work of the NI Assembly and contribute to our thinking on good relations as appropriate.
1.15 The Assembly delivers its education programme in a format which provides for schools from different backgrounds to learn together*.	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	Schools from different backgrounds will have had the opportunity to learn together and about each other.
1.16 Participate in the Balmoral Show*.	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	People from different rural backgrounds and the agricultural sector will have had the opportunity to discuss political issues.
1.17 To participate in the Northern Ireland Assembly and Business Trust (NIABT)*.	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	People from different backgrounds in the business sector will have had the opportunity to learn together and share opinions on issues of mutual interest. The good

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale ¹⁸	Anticipated Outcome
			relations duty will have been considered and factored in as a qualifying/high priority criterion for membership.
1.18 Hold focus meetings with sectoral and voluntary groups to inform committee business.	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	We will have provided different groups with opportunities to work together to inform Committee decisions/deliberations.
1.19 Provide legal advice to the NI Assembly Commission, and to staff, in relation to obligations under S75(2) of the NI Act 1998.	Legal and Governance Services.	On-going.	Legal Services continue to provide advice on an on-going basis.

Aim 2 Promotion of Good Relations

The Commission will promote equality of opportunity and good relations in all aspects of its work by ensuring that all its services are delivered effectively and encourage diversity. This will be achieved by:

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
2.1 Public display of Speaker's gifts.	Office of the Speaker.	On-going.	The display of Speaker's gifts within public areas in Parliament Buildings.
2.2 Participation of external groups in Speaker's events within Parliament Buildings.	Office of the Speaker.	On-going.	Participation and inclusion of external groups in identified events held at Parliament Buildings.
2.3 Consider the good relations resource requirements.	Assembly Commission.	November 2012.	Agreement has been reached regarding the resource requirements needed for the delivery of this four-year action plan.
2.4 Identification of good relations champions (Commissioners and staff members).	Secretariat wide.	2013.	A core team is formed to ensure good relations is central within the working of the Assembly.

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
2.5 Training and development of good relations champions*.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	2013.	On-going good relations learning takes place.
2.6 Refresher good relations training is offered to all staff*.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	2013.	Mainstreaming of good relations is understood and its impact on the organisation.
2.7 Ensure good relations training is made available to Party staff.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	2013	The implications of good relations are understood.
2.8 Provide advice and guidance to the NI Assembly Commission, and to staff, on how to incorporate equality and good relations into Directorate Business Plans*.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	New Directorate Plans covering the 2012-2013 Period and subsequent Directorate Business Plans.	Promotion of good relations into secretariat Directorates.
2.9 To develop a Language Policy*.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	During the current mandate.	Development of a clear and concise policy with measurable standards.
2.10 Continue to utilise applicable codes and guidance from the Equality Commission NI as it relates to the recruitment of staff.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	On-going.	Commission policies continue to reflect best practice in recruitment and continue to ensure equality of opportunity for all potential job applicants.
2.11 Development of a NI Youth Assembly.	Information and Outreach.	Recruitment Autumn/Winter 2012. (Subject to a tender process and the successful awarding of a contract). In place by April/May 2013 (N.B. this entire process is subject to Commission approval).	To encourage greater engagement of young people in the work of the NI Assembly. To make the Assembly more accessible to young people and to give young people of NI an opportunity to have their voices heard on issues being considered by the NI Assembly.
2.12 Develop opportunities for shared learning and space e.g.	Cross-Directorate.	On-going.	Opportunities to promote good relations as part of public

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
exhibitions/displays/ Education/Youth Assembly.			engagement.
2.13 To develop a visitors policy to Parliament Buildings.	Facilities/Keeper of the House.	September 2012.	A protocol is in operation for access to Parliament Buildings.
2.14 Identify best practice from other sources and adopt practice following consultation with Section 75 groups and internal stakeholders.	Corporate Services Directorate.	On-going.	Best practice implemented and communicated.
2.15 Advertisement of committee inquiries and the committee stage of Bills in each of the main daily newspapers offering opportunities to all sections of the community to submit evidence.	Clerking and Reporting.	On-going.	Improved access opportunities for people to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes.
2.16 Plans in place to encourage Committees to actively engage with the community by meeting regularly outside Parliament Buildings.	Clerking and Reporting.	On-going.	Improved opportunities for all sections of the community to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes.
2.17 Establishment of a charities policy.	Information and Outreach.	2013 and annually thereafter.	Commission chooses charity for 2012-2013 period
2.18 Use exhibition spaces to reflect the multi-cultural aspects of Northern Ireland society.	Information and Outreach.	2013.	Display work undertaken by various groups and in particular minority ethnic groups.
2.19 Continued operation of a work experience programme.	Information and Outreach.	2013.	Target 16-24 year olds as noted in Engagement Strategy. Working with providers through established relationships.
2.20 Continued operation of a pilot alternative placement programme with Stranmillis College (Primary school level).	Information and Outreach.	2013.	To allow the Assembly to ensure that its current education programmes continue to be compatible with teacher training best practice.

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
2.21 Continued use of 'social media' to engage with people of NI and hear their views on the Assembly and political issues.	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	We will have listened to the people of NI and provided different groups with a democratic understanding and the opportunity to develop mutual positions in a shared (cyber) space.

Aim 3 Training and Development

The Commission will ensure training is an integral part of the good relations strategy. The Commission will work closely with its training providers and others, where applicable, in the development and delivery of good relations training. This will be achieved by:

Action	Directorate/Area	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
3.1 When providing training, equality issues will be accounted for (HR Office responsibility) and the recording of equality training/refresher training will be recorded in Personal Development Plans (PDP) by all staff.	Corporate Services Directorate (HR and Commission Support and Corporate Services).	2013.	On-going learning in relation to equality takes place.
3.2 Monitoring of mandatory staff training which includes the promotion of good relations as part of the induction process for any external appointments that occur.	Corporate Services Directorate.	2012.	Induction training monitored and reported on.

Aim 4 Management Information and Data

The Commission will put in place the necessary arrangements to allow for the collection of management information and data regarding good relations. This will be achieved by:

Action	Directorate	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
4.1 Develop and implement a programme plan system to collect and collate data across Directorates.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	October 2012.	A structured and common approach to data collection and monitoring developed. A central data collection and monitoring framework implemented.
4.2 To conduct a Good Relations EQIA.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	2013.	Information detailed on actions to be taken and timetabled within the Good Relations Plan.
4.3 Continue to hold meetings with representatives from the LGBT sector.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	On-going.	Information is provided to the Commission in order to inform appropriate strategies and policies.
4.4 Revise Commission and Senior Management Group template submissions to include screening forms as a mandatory criterion.	Commission and Corporate Support Unit.	April 2012.	Submit proposals to Senior Management Group and Assembly Commission.
		May 2012.	Draft and circulate screening guidance to staff.
		On-going.	Direct staff to screening training.
4.5 Continue to consider opportunities for the Assembly Bursary Programme, through the Master's Degree programme with Queens University Belfast, to assist in the development of Assembly Policies.	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	The in-house resource of university students will have been used in a way which can provide closer stakeholder input to shape and inform Assembly policies and the delivery of our services.
4.6 To monitor user comments collected from feedback processes in place for all	Information and Outreach.	On-going.	Feedback is used, where appropriate, to help inform decisions and build the promotion

Action	Directorate	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
engagement activities.			of equality and good relations into the delivery of services.
4.7 Continued implementation of fully compliant procurement policies and practices.	Corporate Services.	On-going.	Commission policies continue to reflect best practice in public procurement, and in doing so, provides opportunities for economic and social well-being of the community.
4.8 Maintain an inventory and monitor the condition of all artefacts belonging to the Assembly.	Facilities.	1 April 2012 and annually thereafter.	An assurance that all artefacts belonging to the Assembly are kept and maintained in an appropriate manner.
4.9 The Commission will continue to monitor its Workforce composition and complete annual monitoring returns in accordance with statutory requirements.	Corporate Services	Annually	The Commission will consider strategies for attracting under-represented groups when appropriate and will take into account Equality Commission guidance and advice.