**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 procedures have been subject to consultation with Trade Union Side. SMG approved the introduction of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme in Nov 2011.The Commission decided in May 2015 that recruitment advertisements should include the title of the post and a sentence on how to access information about the post in the Irish language with the rest of the process being in the English language. |

1. **Policy Details**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of the policy to be screened:**External Recruitment Procedures\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Is this policy new or revised?**Revised\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes of the policy)** The Assembly Commission is committed to the principle that recruitment in the Assembly Secretariat should be solely on the basis of merit, and should provide equality of opportunity to all eligible applicants, irrespective of gender, marital or family status, religious belief, political opinion, disability, race, sexual orientation or age. The Appointment process should therefore be fair and applied consistently. These procedures have been developed to support this policy statement provide detail on how external recruitment is administered. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Who initiated or wrote the policy?** HR Office wrote the procedures in consultation with Trade Union Side.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?**Corporate Services Directorate |
|  |

1. **Implementation factors**

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

Yes [ ]  No [x]

If yes, are they

[ ]  Financial

[ ]  Legislative

[ ]  Other, please specify: Click here to enter text.

1. **Main stakeholders affected**

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

[x]  Staff

[x]  Service users

[ ]  other public sector organisations

[x]  voluntary/community/trade unions

[x]  Other, please specify : Any potential applicants

1. [**Other policies with a bearing on this policy**](#Onefour)

|  |
| --- |
| **What are these policies? Please list:**Internal Recruitment Procedures, Equal Opportunity policy |

1. **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  | Quantitative data on the workforce composition - data includes the gender and community background of staff. Appendix one – Annual Equality Monitoring return 2014.As at 1.1.16, the staff composition was as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Protestant | Roman Catholic | Non Determined | Total |
| 198 | 133 | 14 | 345 |

Six external recruitment competitions took place during the period 2012-2014. There were seven posts available but only six applicants were appointed. The community background of applicants, interviewees and appointees are included in the following table:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Protestant | Roman Catholic | Non determined  | Total |
|  | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |  |
| Applicants | 79 | 37% | 125 | 58% | 11 | 5% | 215 |
| Interviewees | 19 | 40% | 28 | 60% | 0 | 0% | 47 |
| Appointees | 2 | 33% | 4 | 67% | 0 | 0% | 6 |

Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 2 of this document which have been built into the procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for each of Section 75 categories – advice taken from the Assembly’s Equality Manager. Having reviewed qualitative information e.g. complaints received following recruitment exercises, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact with respect to any Section 75 categories. |
| Political opinion | Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 2 of this document which have been built into the procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for each of Section 75 categories Having reviewed qualitative information e.g. complaints received following recruitment exercises, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact with respect to any Section 75 categories |
| Racial group  | As above |
| Age  | Quantitative data on workforce composition – data includes age of staff.As at 1.1.16, the staff composition was as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AGE | TOTAL |
|
| 20-24 | 2 |
| 25-29 | 8 |
| 30-34 | 41 |
| 35-39 | 66 |
| 40-44 | 67 |
| 45-49 | 61 |
| 50-54 | 43 |
| 55-59 | 38 |
| 60-64 | 16 |
| 65+ | 3 |
| TOTAL | 345 |
|  |  |

 |
| Marital status  | Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 2 of this document which have been built into the procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for each of Section 75 categories Having reviewed qualitative information e.g. complaints received following recruitment exercises, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact with respect to any Section 75 |
| Sexual orientation | As above |
| Men and women generally | Staff composition as at 1.1.16:Male – 200Female – 145Six external recruitment competitions took place during the period 2012-2014. There were seven posts available but only six applicants were appointed. The gender of applicants, interviewees and appointees are included in the following table:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Male | Female | Total |
|  | Number | % | Number  | % |  |
| Applicants | 113 | 53% | 102 | 47% | 215 |
| Interviewees | 27 | 57% | 20 | 43% | 47 |
| Appointees | 4 | 67% | 2 | 33% | 6 |

Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 2 of this document which have been built into the procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for each of Section 75 categories – advice taken from the Assembly’s Equality Manager. Having reviewed qualitative information e.g. complaints received following recruitment exercises, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact with respect to any Section 75 categories. |
| Disability | 12 staff completed the Annual Disability Audit in 2014 to indicate that they consider that they have a disability. Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 2 of this document which have been built into the procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for each of Section 75 categories – advice taken from the Assembly’s Equality Manager. Having reviewed qualitative information e.g. complaints received following recruitment exercises, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact with respect to any Section 75 categories. |
| Dependants | Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 2 of this document which have been built into the procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for each of Section 75 categories Having reviewed qualitative information e.g. complaints received following recruitment exercises, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact with respect to any Section 75 categories. |

1. **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** |
| Religious belief  | By advertising using the Irish language, it may encourage diversity among applicants. SOC Code considered and welcome statement included if community background imbalance in current staff make up when compared to SOC Code.  | Impact level. |
| Political opinion  | By advertising using the Irish language, it may encourage diversity among applicants.  | Impact level. |
| Racial group  | n/a | Impact level. |
| Age  | n/a | Impact level. |
| Marital status  | n/a | Impact level. |
| Sexual orientation | n/a | Impact level. |
| Men and women generally | SOC Code considered and welcome statement included if gender imbalance in current staff make up when compared to SOC Code. Removal of timeframe e.g. x number of years’ experience gained within the last X years, for gaining experience unless strong justification based on the role to ensure that females are not indirectly discriminated against for taking time off for caring responsibilities | Impact level. |
| Disability | The Guaranteed Interview Scheme has been developed for applicants with a disability or long term health condition which is expected to last for at least 12 months and which means that they cannot meet all of the shortlisting criteria. Applications under GIS who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria on their application form will be offered a guaranteed interview. The application form also asks applicants to indicate if they feel they require any reasonable adjustment to enable them to participate in the selection process. Human Resources Office will then contact the applicant to discuss their requirements and make reasonable adjustments as appropriate. | Impact level. |
| Dependants | Removal of timeframe e.g. x number of years’ experience gained within the last X years, for gaining experience unless strong justification based on the role to ensure that those with caring responsibilities are not indirectly discriminated against for taking time out of the workplace | Impact level. |

**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 | None | No specific impact on any section 75 group – applies to all |
| Political opinion  | None  | As above |
| Racial group  | None | As above |
| Age | None | As Above |
| Marital status  | None | As above |
| Sexual orientation | None | As above |
| Men and women generally  | None | As above |
| Disability | None | As above |
| Dependants  | none | As above |

**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.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Job Advertisements** - All job advertisements include the statement “The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment. All applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit.”Before advertising a post, the Human Resources Office will consider the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code for the post and whether a welcome statement is required in the advertisement. The revised procedure has also introduced that in addition to all external recruitment notices being advertised in the English language, the title of the post and the sentence advising applicants on how to access more information on the post will also appear in the Irish language. All other documentation regarding the competition will be in the English language. This has been introduced at the request of the Assembly Commission to encourage applications from those with different political opinion and race and these groups are covered by Section 75. The policy also includes advertising in 3 NI daily newspapers, appropriate recruitment websites and the Assembly’s websites. This ensures that the post is advertised to all parts of the community and encourages applications from applicants from different political opinions.
2. **Information for Applicants –** The Information for Applicants document includes the equality statement. The document also provides information on disability and the Guaranteed Interview Scheme as well as how to request reasonable adjustment to enable participation in the selection process.
3. **Monitoring Form -** The Commission monitors applications for employment in terms of Community Background, Sex, Disability, Race and Age. Applicants are asked to note that this information is regarded as part of the application and must be completed. The use and confidentiality of Community Background information is protected by the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. It will be used only for monitoring, investigations or proceedings under the requirements of the 1998 Order. Recruitment is monitored to ensure that the equal opportunity policy is effectively implemented.
4. **Alternative formats –** applications are online, however if a potential applicant requires the application form in an alternative format due to a disability, HR Office will make the necessary arrangements.
5. **Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)** - the GIS has been developed for applicants with disabilities or those with a long term impairment or health condition, that is expected to last for at least 12 months and which means that they cannot meet all of the shortlisting criteria. In these instances, provided that they have demonstrated in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the post,the applicant will be offered a guaranteed interview. This will benefit applicants with disabilities and this group is covered by Section 75
6. **Composition of the Selection panel** – The Selection panel will be balanced in terms of gender and Community background.
7. **Criterion based interview training** – All Selection panel members will be trained in criterion based interviewing which includes training on equality legislation and best practice.
8. **Conflict of Interest form** – The Selection panel are asked to identify any conflict of interest and Human Resources Office consider any conflicts and provide advice to ensure the fairness of the process.
9. **Stages of selection** – The sift indicators, minimum standard for shortlisting criteria, the interview questions, scoring scale and indictors for lead questions must all be agreed before the Selection panel has sight of the application forms. The application forms are standardized and no additional information is accepted – this ensures that all applicants are given the same opportunity to provide the relevant information. Applications are anonymized at sift stage and the forms are reviewed and any information which could identify any Section 75 category e.g. gender, community background, political opinion, disability are redacted from the form before the forms are given to the panel. To ensure that there is no potential for discrimination on the basis of age, the applicants are not asked for their date of birth on the application form. The criteria must be objective and job related and each applicant is asked the same lead questions and allowed approximately the same time to answer questions to ensure equality of opportunity.
10. **Reasonable Adjustments** – Applicants are asked if they require any reasonable adjustments to assist them at any stage of the selection process and will have the opportunity to discuss any requests for adjustments with a member of the HR Office who will then arrange adjustments as appropriate.

.  |

**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?

|  |
| --- |
| Consultation has taken place with Trade Union Side as well as the Equality Manager. It was decided that no further equality investigation. |

|  |
| --- |
| **4** **Disability Duties?** |
| Consider whether the policy:1. Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

The procedure does not discourage disabled people from participating in public life and the Guaranteed Interview Scheme proactively promotes participation and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.1. Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.

The procedure encourages disabled people to apply for posts by introducing the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.  |

**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.

|  |
| --- |
| None |

**Part 3 Screening decision**

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

|  |
| --- |
| There is no evidence that the procedure impacts specifically on any of the section 75 categories. |

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.

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

**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  | 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 is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

|  |
| --- |
| What are these policies? Please list:Monitoring data on applicants will be reviewed annually to help identify any future adverse impact from the procedure |

**Part 5 - Data Protection**

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

Yes [x]  No [ ]  N/A [ ]

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

Yes [x]  No [ ]

**Part 6 - Approval and authorisation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screened by:**  | **Position/Job Title**  | **Date** |
| Diane LamontKaren MartinÁine Kerr | Senior HR ManagerDeputy Head of HRSenior HR Manager | 11.1.16 |
| **Approved by:** |  |  |
| Sinead McDonnell | Head of HR | 11.1.16 |

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**

1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

**In favour of ‘minor’ impact**

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of none**

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
2. 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.