



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, functions, and practices, whether written or unwritten. 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 and Good Relations 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.

1. Policy Details

Name of the policy to be screened:

Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement and Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Is this policy new or revised? (Please append policy to screening form)

revised policy

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

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (Assembly Commission) is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to the principle that recruitment should be solely on the basis of merit.

We welcome applications from all eligible applicants, irrespective of religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or people with dependants or without.

The appointment process will be fair and applied consistently to ensure equality of opportunity.

Recruiting the right individuals is crucial to organisational performance. Good recruitment helps us to recruit the right people, for the right roles, at the right time. It ensures that we have the relevant skills and abilities to meet our current and future needs.

The purpose of the Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement is to set out how the Assembly Commission intends to attract and retain people with talent and experience from diverse backgrounds.

There are currently nine documents in the Staff Handbook, which relate to recruitment and selection. They are:

- a. Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement;
- b. Internal Recruitment Policy;
- c. External Recruitment Policy;
- d. Guidance for Applicants – Internal Recruitment;
- e. Guidance for Applicants – External Recruitment;
- f. Guidance for Panel Members – Internal Recruitment;
- g. Guidance for Panel Member – External Recruitment;
- h. Guidance for External Candidates on Completing an Application Form on iTrent; and

i. Human Resources Office – Procedure for Managing Merit Lists.

The new Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement and Recruitment and Selection Procedures streamlines the number of recruitment and selection documents to the following four documents:

- A **Recruitment Policy** which will contain all policy related information currently contained in documents ‘a’ and ‘b’ and ‘c’ as listed above.
- A **Recruitment Procedure** which will contain all recruitment procedural information currently contained in documents ‘a’ and ‘b’ and ‘c’ above and will also cover document ‘i’;
- A **Guide for Applicants** which will combine documents ‘d’ and ‘e’ and ‘h’ as listed above; and
- A **Guide for Selection Panel Members** which will combine documents ‘f’ and ‘g’ as listed above.

The revised Policy introduces the Recruitment and Selection Framework. The Recruitment and Selection Framework sets out a variety of selection options to meet recruitment needs. Assessing against different criteria, using different methods, tailored to specific posts gives the best possible chance of finding the best person for the job, improving organisational performance and increasing diversity and inclusion.

This approach builds on an individual’s natural strengths and talents, giving job applicants greater opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for a specific role. It also enables recruiting managers to tailor criteria and selection methods to vacancies, maximising their ability to match the best person to each role. The diagram below provides a summary of each element within the Recruitment and Selection Framework:

Experience – the knowledge or mastery of an activity or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it.

Ability – the aptitude or potential to perform to the required standard.

Technical – the demonstration of specific professional skills, knowledge or qualifications.

Assembly Skills and Behaviours – There are five Assembly Skills and Behaviours that apply to all job roles and all grades within the Secretariat.

Strengths – the things we do regularly, do well and that motivate us.

Not all elements are relevant to every role, so the makeup of the Recruitment and Selection Framework should be different for different types of job to improve the chances of getting the best person for the job.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Human Resources Office

Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?

Corporate Services

Was consultation carried out as part of this screening exercise?

Yes No

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 revised Policy Statement and Procedures have been subject to consultation with SMG and Trade Union Side. There have been five papers tabled at SMG regarding the review of Recruitment and Selection:

1. Methodology on the Review of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's ('the Assembly Commission') approach to Recruitment and Selection and Induction presented at the SMG meeting on 22nd August 2018.
2. Paper on the Review of Recruitment and Selection and Induction presented to SMG on 22 May 2019. There were further meetings with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors on 23 September 2019 and 2 October 2019.
3. Implementation of Proposals arising out of the Review of Recruitment and Selection and Induction – Mapping of Cabinet Office 'Strengths' to the Assembly Skills and Behaviours presented to SMG meeting on 15 August 2019.
4. Implementation of Proposals arising out of the Review of Recruitment and Selection and Induction – proposed changes to recruitment policies and procedures on 23 October 2019.
5. Final draft Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement and Recruitment and Selection Procedure on 12 February 2020.

Consultation has also taken place with Assembly Commission staff including a Recruitment and Selection Survey that was issued to staff in October 2018.

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: [Click here to enter text.](#)

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 : External applicants for recruitment competitions

4. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies? Please list:

Equal Opportunity 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?

Information is held on the gender, age and community background of the workforce (employed by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission) who are impacted by this policy.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	<p>Quantitative data on the workforce composition - data includes the gender and community background of staff. Appendix 1 – Annual Equality Monitoring return 2019. As at 01.02.20, the staff composition was as follows:</p> <p>Community Background Protestant – 181 Roman Catholic – 121 Non Determined – 14</p> <p>Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 3 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.</p>
Political opinion	<p>Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 3 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</p>

Racial group	We do not gather information on race for staff but the Policy and Procedures apply to all applicants for recruitment with the Assembly Commission.																						
Age	<p>The policy applies to all staff. The quantitative data on the workforce composition at 01.02.20 was as follows:</p> <p>Age</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Years</th> <th>Head Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20-24</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30-34</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35-39</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-44</td> <td>61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45-49</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-54</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>55-59</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-64</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 +</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>316</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Years	Head Count	20-24	1	30-34	14	35-39	46	40-44	61	45-49	58	50-54	55	55-59	40	60-64	32	65 +	9		316
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Marital status	Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 3 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	We do not hold information on sexual orientation for staff but the Policy and Procedures apply to all applicants for recruitment with the Assembly Commission.																						
Men and women generally	<p>Policy applies to all staff. The quantitative data on the workforce composition at 01.02.20 was as follows:</p> <p>Male – 176 Female – 140</p>																						

	<p>Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 3 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.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>28 staff completed the Annual Disability Audit in 2019 to indicate that they consider that they have a disability. This information has been collected from staff however there may be other staff with disabilities who have not responded to the audit. Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 3 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.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>This information is not held in respect of staff. Procedure applies to all applicants and a number of measures detailed at Part 2 Section 3 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.</p>

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 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.	None
Political opinion	By advertising using the Irish language, it may encourage diversity among applicants.	None
Racial group	As above	None
Age	As above	None
Marital status	As Above	None
Sexual orientation	As above	None
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.	None

	<p>When planning the competition, consideration will be given to whether the post could be worked on a flexible basis. If so, the Information for Applicants will advise applicants that we are happy to talk about flexible working with the successful applicant. This may assist those with caring responsibilities who are more likely to be female.</p>	
Disability	<p>The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (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 invited to interview.</p> <p>An applicant does not have to have a registered disability to apply under the GIS.</p> <p>If an assessment or test is used as a shortlisting tool then applicants applying under GIS will not be required to complete the assessment or test and will be offered a guaranteed interview, provided that they demonstrate in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the post.</p> <p>In instances where an assessment or test forms part of the selection process and is not a shortlisting tool, then all applicants must meet the minimum standard required including those applying under GIS.</p> <p>Applicants with a disability should also indicate on the application form if they feel they require any reasonable adjustments, and if so, what those adjustments are, to enable them to participate in the selection process. A representative from the Human Resources Office will contact the applicant to discuss their requirements.</p>	None
Dependants	<p>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</p>	None

	<p>responsibilities are not indirectly discriminated against for taking time out of the workplace</p> <p>When planning the competition, consideration will be given to whether the post could be worked on a flexible basis. If so, the Information for Applicants will advise applicants that we are happy to talk about flexible working with the successful applicant. This may assist those with caring responsibilities.</p>	
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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 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	N/A	None
Political opinion	N/A	None
Racial group	N/A	None

3 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	<p>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.</p> <p>All external recruitment notices are advertised in the English language, the title of the post and the sentence advising applicants on how to access more information on the post also appear in the Irish language. All other documentation regarding the competition is in the English language. This is designed 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.</p> <p>Information for Applicants – The Information for Applicants document includes the equality statement.</p> <p>Monitoring Form - The Commission monitors applications for employment</p>	

	<p>in terms of Community Background. Applicants are asked to note that this information is regarded as part of the application and must be completed. Recruitment is monitored to ensure that the equal opportunity policy is effectively implemented.</p> <p>Composition of the Selection panel – The Selection panel will be balanced in terms of gender and Community background.</p> <p>Recruitment and Selection training – All Selection panel members will be trained in recruitment and selection which includes training on equality legislation and best practice.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Stages of selection – The sift indicators, minimum standard for shortlisting criteria, the interview questions, scoring scale and indicators 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 are redacted from the form before the forms are given to the panel. The criteria must be objective and job related and each applicant is</p>	
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	asked the same lead questions and allowed approximately the same time to answer questions to ensure equality of opportunity.	
Political opinion	As above	
Racial group	As above	

4. 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 revised Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement and Recruitment and Selection Procedures have been discussed with SMG. TUS has been consulted and has agreed the revised Policy and Procedures.

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.

<p>Click here to enter text.</p> <p>No level of impact on multiple Section 75 categories has been identified during screening</p>

Part 3 Screening decision

1. Through screening, an assessment is made of the likely impacts – either major, minor or none – of the policy on equality of opportunity and/or good relations for the relevant categories. Completion of screening should lead to one of the following three outcomes; please mark an x in the appropriate box:

'Screened out' ie the likely impact is none and no further action is required

'Screened out' with mitigation ie the likely impact is minor and measures will be taken to mitigate the impact or an alternative policy will be proposed

'Screened in' for an equality impact assessment (EQIA) ie the likely impact is major and the policy will now be subject to an EQIA

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

No level of impact on multiple Section 75 categories has been identified during screening

3. If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, but the policy has minor equality impacts, please provide details of the reasons for this decision and of any proposed mitigating measures or proposed alternative policy.

Click here to enter text.

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

Click here to enter text.

5. Timetabling and prioritising for EQIA

Complete this section only if your business area/directorate plans to conduct two or more EQIAs.

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.

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 Policy and Procedures.

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
Diane Lamont	Senior HR Manager	04.02.20
Approved by:		
Sinead McDonnell	Head of HR	05.02.20

The policy lead should sign and date the policy under the 'screened by' heading. It should then be countersigned by an approver. The Approver should be the senior manager responsible for the policy which would normally be Head of Business. In instances where a screening decision concludes that an EQIA is required then the screening form should be countersigned by the Director instead of the Head of Business.

There are of course a range of issues which may fall within the scope of being novel, contentious or politically sensitive and could only be taken forward following consultation with the Assembly Commission. Where policy screening highlights novel, contentious or politically sensitive issues, once approved by the Director, should be forwarded to the Clerk/Chief Executive for review, prior to proceeding to SMG and the Assembly Commission.

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO INFORM THE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION

1. Please provide details of any measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups.

2. In developing this policy / decision were any changes made as a result of equality issues raised during :

- (a) pre-consultation / engagement;
- (b) formal consultation;
- (c) the screening process; and/or
- (d) monitoring / research findings.

If so, please provide a brief summary including how the issue was identified, what changes were made, and what will be the expected outcomes / impacts for those affected.

3. Does this policy / decision include any measure(s) to improve access to services including the provision of information in accessible formats? If so please provide a short summary.

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.