



Northern Ireland
Assembly

SECTION 75 SCREENING FORM

What is a policy?

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

These are effectively catch-all definitions which cover the Secretariat's policies, strategies, schemes, procedures, 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:

Draft Disability Action Plan 2016-21

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

New policy

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

The aim of the Draft Disability Action Plan 2016-21 is to set out how the Assembly Commission will meet its duties under section 49 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Equality and Good Relations Unit on behalf of the Assembly Commission

Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?

The Equality and Good Relations Unit, which sits within the Corporate Services Directorate, is responsible for devising the action plan and monitoring overall progress on behalf of the Assembly Commission. Individual business areas across the Assembly are responsible for delivering on actions relating to them as outlined in the action plan.

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.

When exercising its functions, the Assembly must have due regard to the need: **to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.**

The Assembly Commission must submit a disability action plan to the Equality Commission showing how it proposes to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions. The plan must contain certain key elements including an outline of the practical measures public authorities intend to take, the timescale over which these measures are to be implemented, performance indicators or targets and details of how the plan will be published.

During the preparation of the draft plan, the Equality and Good Relations Manager met disability groups as part of an informal consultation on the proposed measures and actions. The Draft Disability Action Plan was presented to the Assembly Commission on 3 March 2016, and it agreed to issue the action plan for full public consultation. The consultation ran for 14 weeks from 16 March 2016 to 10 June 2016 – this included two additional weeks to allow for the Easter period.

Advertisements were placed in the Belfast Telegraph, Newsletter and Irish News with details of how to respond to the consultation. Social media was also used to inform people that the consultation was under way. An email with details of the consultation was sent to all Members, party support staff and Secretariat staff, as well as to equality consultees from organisations across Northern Ireland. Reminder emails were also sent to these groups.

As well as engagement with the public, there was also engagement internally with relevant business areas across the Assembly.

There was one response to the consultation from the Cedar Foundation User Forum. The full response will be included in the Final Disability Action Plan 2016-21, which will be published on the Assembly website:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/disability-action-plan1/disability-action-plan-2016-21/>



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

4. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies? Please list:

Many of the actions in this plan cross-reference with a range of policies across the organization, for example, a range of HR, education and facilities policies; Digital First Strategy; and Engagement Strategy.

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

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

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

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	Click here to enter text.
Political opinion	Click here to enter text.
Racial group	Click here to enter text.
Age	Click here to enter text.
Marital status	Click here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	Click here to enter text.
Men and women generally	Click here to enter text.
Disability	<p>Information on disability is gathered from a range of sources:</p> <p>Annual disability audit – monitoring of staff takes place annually to establish the number of staff who consider that they have a disability. Staff are sent a link to a questionnaire, which they can fill in anonymously. In the 2016-17 audit, 9 members of staff responded to indicate that they had an impairment or disability.</p> <p>Census data – In the 2011 census, respondents were asked if their day-to-day activities were limited because of a long-standing health problem or disability; 21% of the usually resident population</p>

	<p>considered that their activities were limited.</p> <p>Audit of Inequalities – this provides a strategic picture of inequalities relevant to the role and functions of the Assembly Commission. Information on disability is captured within this audit: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-scheme-2016–2021/equality-scheme-2012-2016/</p> <p>The Commission published a five-year review of disability action plans covering the period December 2007 to March 2013. A further five-year review of Disability Action Plans will take place in 2018 to cover the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2018: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/disability-action-plan1/</p> <p>Minutes from external disability advisory group meetings: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/disability-advisory-group/</p> <p>Information on disability was gathered as part of the equality impact assessment (EQIA) on the Northern Ireland Assembly Digital First Strategy, for example, information regarding disability and digital accessibility and internet access: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-impact-assessment-on-the-northern-ireland-assembly-digital-first-strategy/</p>
Dependants	Click here to enter text.

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	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Political opinion	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Racial group	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Age	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Marital status	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Sexual orientation	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Men and women generally	Click here to enter text.	Impact level.
Disability	<p>Qualitative data was gathered in pre-consultation meetings with disability groups in the development of the 2016-21 Draft Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>One response was received as part of the public consultation, and this was from the Cedar Foundation User Forum. The forum commented on the need to include training around brain injury and communication difficulties; the need to make language in documents/meetings understandable; and the need to ensure that all types of disabilities are taken into account when communicating and</p>	Impact level.

	engaging with others. The full response will be published in the final action plan.	
Dependants	Click here to enter text.	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	Details of impact.	Impact level.
Political opinion	Details of impact.	Impact level.
Racial group	Details of impact.	Impact level.
Age	Details of impact.	Impact level.
Marital status	Details of impact.	Impact level.
Sexual orientation	Details of impact.	Impact level.

Men and women generally	Details of impact.	Impact level.
Disability	<p>The draft action plan contains a range of measures to address impacts. The link to the full action plan is available below. Some examples of actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore concept of Parliament for People with Disabilities; Provide guidance for visitors and staff on further disability access arrangements in relation to participation in Assembly business and events, eg, Committees, Plenary sessions, seminars; Develop proposals to progress a sign language policy; Continue to meet with external Disability Advisory Group. <p>http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/disability-action-plan1/disability-action-plan-2016-21/</p>	Impact level.
Dependants	Details of impact.	Impact level.

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		
Political opinion		
Racial group		

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		
Political opinion		
Racial group		

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 Draft Disability Action Plan was developed following internal consultation with relevant business areas across the Assembly, including Human Resources, the Communications Office, the Education Service and Outreach.

During the preparation of the draft plan, the Equality and Good Relations Manager met disability groups as part of an informal consultation on the proposed measures and actions. The Draft Disability Action Plan was presented to the Assembly Commission on 3 March 2016, and it agreed to issue the action plan for full public consultation. The consultation ran for 14 weeks from 16 March 2016 to 10 June 2016 – this included two additional weeks to allow for the Easter period.

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.
[Click here to enter text.](#)
- b) Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.

The purpose of the action plan is to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and to encourage participation by disabled people in public life, and the actions outlined in the plan support this.

Additional considerations

Multiple identities

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

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

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

While the Disability Action Plan is concerned with disability, the Commission recognises that none of the section 75 categories operates in silos and that people have multiple identities. Where issues identified in the action plan impact on other equality categories, appropriate action will be taken to ensure these issues are addressed.



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.

Click here to enter text.

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:
Following liaison with business areas, a progress update will be provided to Secretariat Management Group and the Assembly Commission every year.

A full update of directorate activity against action plan targets will be provided as part of the annual report to the Equality Commission.

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
Approved by:		

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.