

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 Events in Parliament Buildings and its Grounds Policy (2014)

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? Revised.

Additional Background Information

This policy has been approved by the Assembly Commission (the Commission) and supersedes previous regulations issued in: 1999 (Tours); 2001 (Functions); and the interim regulations issued on March 2008.

This revised policy takes account of developments and trends over the intervening periods and therefore, better reflect the business needs of Members and the Commission. Furthermore, this policy for the first time brings together all event related regulations into a single reference document for improved understanding.

For the purpose of this policy the word "event" means function and/or tours requiring hospitality. Tours refers to tour bookings only. All events (excluding certain officials as detailed in the policy under 1.1.1) will require a triple signature form to be submitted by MLA, while tours require only one Member's signature.

The Events Policy will provide all necessary information to the sponsoring MLAs and to the thousands of guests that come through Parliament Buildings each year, as well as assisting the Events Office with managing such a large volume of visitors. A table showing the visitor's numbers can be seen below.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Functions Only	28,585	23,856	30,329	32,233	38,077
Functions with Tours	4,362	4,029	6,586	6,681	7,825
Tours Only	9,666	8,467	9,232	8,906	12,785
Tours with Hospitality	10,802	7,997	7,236	5,551	5,521
Education Programme	14,380	14,843	16,935	16,214	14,873
Totals	67,795	59,205	70,318	69,585	79,081

Visitor Numbers

This policy refers to the booking process for tours and functions and the regulations that apply to all events held within Parliament Buildings and its grounds. This Policy does not relate to the content of the tour script nor does it determine which groups can or cannot hold a function within Parliament Buildings. This Policy sets out an expectation that functions will ensure their content is fitting with the dignity of the building and that their event is not obstructive to other Assembly Business. The Events Office is on hand to offer all event organisers advice and guidance prior to and on the day off their event.

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

The purpose of this policy is to solidify all previous regulations relating to the booking and facilitating of tours and functions into one document for ease of understanding to MLAs, their staff and the organisers using the services of the Events Office, as well as clearly defining the role and responsibility that the Events Office staff play in facilitating tours and functions within the Events Office.

It updates regulations that have become obsolete as the Assembly has evolved.

This policy also outlines the booking procedure for events and tours – this procedure applies to MLAs and/or the Assembly Officials outlined under 1.1.1 in the Policy only and therefore, the focus of this Policy is on the processes used by the Events Office to ensure that all bookings are treated equally and that no one MLA, Minister, or Committee who makes the booking could be perceived to have received preferential treatment.

The role of the Events Office is widely advertised to all MLAs and this is further

demonstrated by the fact that all members who responded to the Members' Survey in 2011 and 2012 stated they were aware of the services provided by the Events Office, with 100% of Members commenting that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the services of the Events Office.

Following the booking of an event or tour, the policy then details the procedures and regulations that the event organisers and guests to Parliament Buildings are expected to adhere too. The Events Office will make adjustments for visitors due to disability or religious observation (e.g. sourcing kosher food etc.) where possible.

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

Yes 🛛 No 🗆

If so, explain how. All categories should gain from the policy.

Who initiated or wrote the policy? The Events Office wrote this policy in consultation with Security & Ushering Services, Facilities and the Speaker's Office.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

This policy will be owned by the Facilities Directorate and implemented by the Events Office; however other offices and the MLAs will have a role in ensuring that aspects of this policy are implemented as shown below.

This Policy will be applied to all tours and events held within Parliament Buildings and its grounds equally and as such it will be the responsibility of the Events Office to ensure that the organisers and those aforementioned persons who confirm these bookings are aware of these regulations. The Events Office holds full responsibility for ensuring that the process for booking a tour or event is adhered too. Staff are aware of questions to ask at time of booking to ensure it conforms with this policy.

It is the Events Office responsibility to hold pre planning meetings with the event organiser after a Member has confirmed their sponsorship. Pre planning meetings provides the Events Office with the opportunity to find out more information about the nature of the event and those attending it. If issues arise from a pre planning meeting, for example that there will be a large numbers of wheelchair users attending, then it is the responsibility of the Events Office to notify the Health and Safety Office, Ushering Services and the Building Management Office so they can implement their corresponding regulations alongside this Policy.

The NI Assembly has a responsibility to ensure that all guests are able to enter and exit Parliament Buildings in a safe manner. This will mean that organisers who are expecting large numbers of guests with mobility issues will have to supply as much information as early as possible so that the necessary procedures can be implemented to ensure safe evacuation of all guests in line with the Health and Safety Regulations of the NI Assembly.

It is the responsibility of the MLAs to ensure that they gain the necessary three signatures demonstrating cross designation on a confirmation booking before the event can take place.

There is also a responsibility on MLAs and the event organisers themselves to ensure that the event adheres to this Policy and they do not knowingly flaunt the regulations listed within it.

2. Implementation factors

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

🛛 No 🖂	Yes
J INO ⊵	res

If yes, are they

□ 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
- \boxtimes other public sector organisations
- voluntary/community/trade unions
- Other, please specify : All visitors to the Assembly

4. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies? Please list:

(1) Conduct and Behaviour of Visitors Policy - owned by the Facilities Directorate

(2) Cancellation Policy – owned by the Facilities Directorate

- (3) Charity Policy owned by the Information and Outreach Directorate
- (4) Exhibition Policy owned by the Clerk/Director-General's Office

- (5) Health and Safety Policy owned by the Facilities Directorate
- (6) Information Assurance Policy owned by Information and Outreach Directorate
- (7) Security Policy, Procedures and Advice owned by Facilities Directorate
- (8) Fire Precautions Procedures owned by Facilities Directorate

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.

Evidence/Information to inform this policy came from a variety of sources -

- 1. Monitoring information, such as tour and function feedback forms
- 2. Members' Surveys
- 3. Previous Comments

NOTE: Following approval for circulation a consultation exercise will be conducted to further inform the policy.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on a group due to their religious belief if this document is implemented and operated.
Political opinion	All bookings are made by a Member or their office and are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. The Members' Survey of 2011 stated that 93.1% of the MLAs who responded were aware of the services that the Events Office provided and that 90% of these MLAs used these services. 100% of the Members and their staff were either satisfied or very satisfied with Events Office. Due to the political nature of the NI Assembly, there are more MLAs with certain political opinion than others, however this does not mean that the group they are hosting is necessarily of the same political opinion. The breakdown of all bookings in 2012 can be seen in the graph below.

	Overall bookings 2012 30.0 27.8 25.0 22.7 20.0 7.6 15.0 7.6 7.6 7.3 8.7 11.1 10.0 7.6 5.0 0.2 0.0 1.3 0.0 0.2 0.1 0.2 0.2 0.2 0.3 0.2 0.4 0.2 0.5 0.2 0		
Racial group	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on any one due to their racial group if this document is implemented and operated.		
Age	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on a group due to their age if this document is implemented and operated.		
Marital status	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on a group due to their marital status if this document is implemented and operated.		
Sexual orientation	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on a group due to their sexual orientation if this document is implemented and operated.		

Men and women generally	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on a group due to their gender if this document is implemented and operated.
Disability	Parliament Buildings is DDA compliant and accessible to people with disabilities. Therefore, all bookings made a by Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office comply with the regulations as laid out in the Health and Safety Policy. This may mean that adjustments are made to accommodate disabled individuals or groups in conjunction with the Events Office, Security and Ushering Office and the Health and Safety Office in order to offer the same level of service to any group regardless of any requirements arising from a disability. The Events Office have taken on feedback from a range of groups including RNIB, Action on Hearing Loss, Disability Action, the National Autistic Society as well as disability groups and wheelchairs users. Feedback taken from these people have led to staff taking on additional training (outlined in Section 6) and the Events Office purchasing equipment such as 'hearing helpers' to assist tour guides in communicating effectively to those with hearing impairments. Feedback, both positive and negative, is taken by the Events Office, shared with other business units and considered carefully to improve the service provided by the Events Office and the Assembly wider.
Dependants	All bookings made by a Member or Member's office are taken by the Events Office regardless of the organisation being hosted. There is currently no information that indicates that the regulations laid out in this policy will disadvantage or have a negative impact on anyone with or without dependents if this document is implemented and operated properly.

6. 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	As discussed under Section 5, bookings made by Members are treated equally regardless of the organisation being hosted. If the organisation indicates that they have special dietary requirements due to religious beliefs, then the Events Office will notify Support Services to ensure that any special requirements can be provided during the event.
Political opinion	To negate any politically sensitive events being hosted in Parliament Buildings, all events that use a function room require a confirmation booking form with three MLA signatures demonstrating cross designation support. This policy is standard for all events held in a function room in Parliament Buildings.
Racial group	As discussed under Section 5, bookings made by Members are treated equally regardless of the organisation being hosted. If the organisation indicates that they require translators well in advance of their event or tour, the Assembly can assist them with arranging a translator for the group, however, there will be a cost associated with this service.
Age	Discussed under Section 5
Marital status	Discussed under Section 5
Sexual orientation	Discussed under Section 5
Men and	Discussed under Section 5

women generally	
Disability	 As a 'front line' service it is important that the Events Office staff are aware of the needs, experiences and priorities of those with disabilities. The Events Office staff have been trained to engage with people with a range of disabilities and to communicate them with in an appropriate manner. This includes the following training: 2 members of staff with Sign Language (1 basic) as well as providing 'hearing helpers' Staff trained with RNIB to assist partially sighted guests along the line of route for tours as well as providing the tour script in Braille Member of staff is an 'Autism Champion' Staff have been trained to use the Evacuation Chairs to assist those in wheelchairs during an emergency evacuation At time of booking, Events Office Staff ask questions relating to access or disability requirements so that appropriate rooms can be booked and also to provide additional times for the completion of tours to ensure that the same quality service is provided to those with disability as those without. The Events Office, where possible, gather as much information in advance so that other relevant business units can be informed, provision of appropriate car parking spaces, ramps, quiet rooms, additional staff etc. to be arranged in time.
Dependants	Discussed under Section 5

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 <u>none</u> 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 <u>major</u> 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 <u>minor</u> 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;
- 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	Issues relating to dietary requirements due to religious beliefs are clearly identified in this policy.	None
Political opinion	Issues relating to Political opinion are clearly identified by the use of the triple signature confirmation booking form.	None
Racial group	Issues relating to dietary requirements are clearly identified in this policy.	None
Age	n/a	None
Marital status	n/a	None
Sexual orientation	n/a	None
Men and women generally	n/a	None
Disability	Arrangements are in place to accommodate people with disabilities e.g. braille marker tours, hearing helpers, loop system, Changing	None

	Places room, accessibility, textphone etc.	
Dependants	n/a	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 – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Political opinion		No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Racial group		No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Age		No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events

	Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Marital status	No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Sexual orientation	No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Men and women generally	No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Disability	No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Dependants	No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not

	invite guests to attend events.

people of c	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	As with all public activities events at Parliament Buildings has the potential to bring people together from a wide range of backgrounds, therefore promoting good relations, however, the groups invited to attend Parliament Buildings is decided by the event organiser and not the Events Office.	Minor	
Political opinion	As with all public activities events at Parliament Buildings has the potential to bring people together from a wide range of backgrounds, therefore promoting good relations, however, the groups invited to attend Parliament Buildings is decided by the event organiser and not the Events Office.	Minor	
Racial group	As with all public activities events at Parliament Buildings has the potential to bring people together from a wide range of backgrounds, therefore promoting good relations, however, the groups invited to attend Parliament Buildings is decided by the event organiser and not the Events Office.	Minor	

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between peo of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Political opinion		No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.
Racial group		No – tours and functions in Parliament Buildings are booked by Members who are aware of the services provided by the Events Office. The Events Office promotes its service but do not invite guests to attend events.

5	Dis	sability Duties?	
Сс	Consider whether the policy:		
	 a) Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fa to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. 	Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.	
		Parliament Buildings is DDA complaint and has the necessary systems in place to facilitate disabled visitors. These systems are communicated through the NI Assembly website and this policy will allow for advance notice of disabled guests to be given so that any possible adjustments (such as the provision of car parking) to be made to ensure appropriate disabled access.	
k	b)	Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.	
		with the same ease as all guests who partake in the tours and functions therefore giving them the same positive attitude towards Parliament Buildings as the Events Office hope all guests leave with.	

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.

As above

Part 3 Screening decision

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

At this point no impacts have been identified; however, consultation will take place to gather the views of others to ensure no barriers to fair participation exist.

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.

n/a

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?

What are these policies? Please list:

In order to monitor the impact of this decision/policy on equality, Good Relations and the disability duties the Events Office will continue to monitor:

- Feedback processes including consultation; function feedback; tour feedback; general feedback received post functions/tours
- Booking Trends
- Complaints
- Relevant feedback from other business units as result of the implementation of other policies connected to this

This policy will be monitored and reviewed in line with amendments made to other policies which impact on this policy.

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
Louise Close	Outreach Manager	22/08/13
Seamus McAleer	Deputy Head of Ushering Services	22/08/13
Paul Trainor	Deputy Support Services Manager	22/08/13
Maria Magennis	Events Manager	22/08/13
Neil Porter	Events Office Supervisor	22/08/13
Following the panel, the screening document was continually reviewed in conjunction with the Equality Manager until the point of approval by the NIA Commission		
Maria Bannon	Equality Manager	11/11/14
Approved by:		
Stephen Welch	Director of Facilities	13/11/14

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.