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 Digital First Strategy includes the development of systems which allow information to be delivered in a digital medium as a first option rather than printing.
>
> The strategy has not previously been tabled at SMG/Assembly Commission meetings although papers on the development of the strategy have been tabled at both SMG and Assembly Commission.
>
> To this point consultation has been limited. Some internal consultation on print reduction was conducted as part of a general review of current print arrangements.

1. Policy Details

Name of the policy to be screened:
Digital First Strategy
_____

Is this policy new or revised?
New policy
_____

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes of the policy)
Digital First aims to develop the Assembly's systems, workflows and procedures so that information and content can be created once and then re-used whenever and wherever it is required and if necessary printed "Create Once. Publish Everywhere".

The objectives are:

To provide Members and Assembly staff with the information, support and technology to allow them to carry out their responsibilities effectively, efficiently and professionally.

To explore and exploit digital technology to streamline workflows and improve efficiency by maximising staff time and reducing print and associated costs and to improve the Assembly's environmental impact.

To use digital tools and information to engage, inform, facilitate and improve people's participation and engagement in Assembly business and the wider democratic process.

_____

Who initiated or wrote the policy?
Initiated by John Stewart, Director of Information and Outreach.
_____

Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?
Information and Outreach

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: Staff skill sets, organisational buy-in, buy in from MLAs

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 : MLAs and their staff, political parties

4. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies? Please list:

Engagement Strategy
Information Management Strategy
Environmental Strategy
IS Strategy
Printer Replacement Project
Data Protection Policy
Policy on use of IT Resources
IS Password Policy
IS Security 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?

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	None. Not applicable to this document
Political opinion	None. Not applicable to this document
Racial group	The 2011 Census of Northern Ireland found that 96.86% of the population have English as a main language followed by Polish (1.02%), Lithuanian (0.36%), Irish (0.24%), Portuguese (0.13%), Slovak (0.13%) and Chinese (0.13%). Other languages accounted for 1.13%. More information and consultation is required to fully ascertain the potential impact of Digital First on non-English speakers and ensure that all necessary mitigation is covered. The 2011 Census of Northern Ireland found that over 98% of the population, state their ethnic origin to be white. Non-white ethnic groups accounted for 1.7% of the total population. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity in different racial groups.
Age	It is envisaged that this strategy could have a negative differential impact upon the equality of opportunity for some age groups, particularly those aged 65 and over. Nevertheless, this potential negative differential impact is mitigated due to the fact that use of online, whilst being the primary channel for communicating, will not be the only way. Additional data and research would be required to fully assess the impact of this strategy.
Marital status	Therefore there is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity.
Sexual	There is no available data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) persons in Northern Ireland as no national

orientation	census has ever asked people to define their sexuality. That said, according to the 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 98% of people in Northern Ireland are heterosexual and 1% are homosexual. There is no evidence to suggest that this strategy would have a negative differential impact.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence to suggest that either gender would be disadvantaged.
Disability	It is understood that the various groups of stakeholders will include individuals with a number of disabilities (hidden or otherwise) and that some stakeholders may have multiple disabilities. For Staff, HR hold information on accessibility requirements and can advise on the impact of any changes required re training or additional support. For external stakeholders any potential negative differential impact will be mitigated as the use of digital/online, whilst becoming the primary channel for communicating; it will not be the only method. In addition an improved online service will be compliant with W3C double AA standard. That said more information and consultation is required to fully ascertain the potential impact and ensure that all necessary mitigation is covered.
Dependants	There is no evidence to suggest there would be a negative differential impact on the equality of opportunity.

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 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	Not applicable to this document	None
Political opinion	Not applicable to this document	None
Racial group	Further information and evidence will need to be collected to fully assess the impact	Minor
Age	Further information and evidence will need to be collected to fully assess the impact.	Minor
Marital status	Not applicable to this document	None
Sexual orientation	Not applicable to this document	None
Men and women generally	Not applicable to this document	None
Disability	We know from other policies and contact with relevant agencies that people want to access information in a number of formats and this includes those who have difficulty accessing information because of disabilities (hidden or otherwise). For example: They have a visual impairment; They cannot see text, images or moving pictures; They have a learning disability; They have mental health difficulties; They are deaf and use Sign Language as their primary means of communication; They cannot hear spoken information, nor use a voice telephone because they are deaf or hard	Major

	of hearing.; They have speech impairment and therefore find it difficult to use a phone; They have a communication disability; They have dexterity difficulties which make it difficult to hold a printed document or use a keyboard; They have a low standard of literacy; Multiple identities – i.e. some combination of the above.	
Dependants	Not applicable to this document	None

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	Not applicable to this document	None
Political opinion	Not applicable to this document	None
Racial group	Not applicable to this document	None

Age	Mitigation actions are difficult to quantify at this stage because potential equality impacts are unknown as there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment them.	Minor
Marital status	Not applicable to this document	None
Sexual orientation	Not applicable to this document	None
Men and women generally	Not applicable to this document	None
Disability	Mitigation actions are difficult to quantify at this stage because potential equality impacts are unknown as there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment	Major
Dependants	Not applicable to this document	None

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.

One aim of the strategy is to encourage good and consistent practice when producing information and making sure that information is freely available (via multiple platforms) and as accessibly as possible to all stakeholders (internal and external) which in turn gives the opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and enhance good relations.

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?

The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance. Discussions were held with the NIA Equality Manager and it was felt that as some of the key potential equality impacts are unknown, (because there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment), it would be appropriate to conduct an Equality Impact assessment in order to better assess them. It is also felt that further assessment would offer a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop further recommendations in respect of the strategy and its impact on affected individuals and representative groups.

Also as a high level policy which is likely to generate further policies or actions that are relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity the EIA would also be appropriate.

4   Disability Duties?

Consider whether the policy:

a) Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

   The policy itself is not meant to discourage disabled people from participating in public life or to be in any way negative towards disabled people. It recognises that there are likely to be issues for some people who will either struggle to use or will never be able to use digital services themselves and will always need help, for example, people who are very ill or have disabilities and are helped by a family member or carer. The strategy will address those requirements by focusing on accessibility for the digital information and access to that information and ensuring it is possible to provide suitable alternative formats when required.

b) Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.

   The strategy will focus on ensuring that information is created to be accessible to all and where it is necessary suitable alternative formats will be provided and stakeholders clearly advised on how to find and request this information.

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 we are aware of the need to mitigate the impact on those with multiple identities we do not currently have the necessary information. Further information and evidence will need to be collected to fully assess the impact

Part 3 Screening decision

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

An EQIA will be conducted.

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.

An EQIA will be conducted.

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

The policy is significant in term of its strategic importance, and it is a high level policy which is likely to generate further policies or actions that are relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

It is also felt that further assessment would offer 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.

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	3
Social need	2
Effect on people's daily lives	1
Relevance to a public authority's functions	2

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:

Changes to the following policies as a result of monitoring that will impact this strategy will be taken in consideration when monitoring the strategy:

Engagement Strategy
Information Management Strategy
Environmental Strategy
IS Strategy
Printer Replacement Project
Data Protection Policy
Policy on use of IT Resources
IS Password Policy
IS Security Policy

We will seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring for this strategy and any future screening.

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
TRACEY WILSON	Information Officer	10/12/2014

Approved by:		

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

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.