**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.

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| In 2013, a Gender Steering Group was established to consider gender issues in relation to Secretariat staff. The group, comprising senior members of staff from across business areas, considered a wide range of data, research and literature, and a survey of staff attitude and experiences was conducted. Results of the staff survey formed part of a findings report presented to SMG and the Assembly Commission in 2014. A Gender Action Working Group then progressed the development of an action plan for Secretariat staff. An eight-week staff consultation ran from November 2015 to January 2016. |

1. **Policy Details**

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| **Name of the policy to be screened:**  Gender Action Plan  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Is this policy new or revised?**  New  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes of the policy)**  The plan aims to develop and implement policies and actions to promote gender equality within the organisation  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Who initiated or wrote the policy?**  Gender Action Plan Working Group  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?**  Cross-directorate |

1. **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.

1. **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.

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

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| **What are these policies? Please list:**  HR policies;  Organisational Development plan;  Learning and Development policies; |

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

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

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

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| --- | --- |
| **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 | The age profile of all Commission employees as at 1 Jan 2016 is:  **Age Range No. of staff** 20-24 2  25-29 8  30-34 41  35-39 66  40-44 67  45-49 61  50-54 43  55-59 38  60-64 16  65+ 3  **Total 345** |
| Marital status | Click here to enter text. |
| Sexual orientation | Click here to enter text. |
| Men and women generally | Figures as of 1 January 2016 give a total of 345 Assembly Commission employees:  Female 145  Male 200  The Assembly’s Gender Steering Group explored gender issues within the Secretariat, and a report was prepared: ‘Gender Action Plan Steering Group Report Findings’. This report informed the development of the Gender Action Plan.  The Gender Group reviewed a wide range of local, European and International literature on gender equality in order to identify current and best practice, including:   * Gender Action Plans and research from other legislatures, QUB, Bar Council, European Commission and Opportunity Now; research on transgender issues; and research considered by the Assembly and Executive Review Committee as part of its ‘Women into Politics’ Review.   The Group held a Gender Guest Speaker session, where guest speakers shared their knowledge of gender issues and best practice with Group members.  A number of research papers were commissioned by the group and completed by RaISe in order to obtain further data on the impact of gender within the organisation:  ‘Improving the Balance at Senior Levels through Learning and Development’  ‘Gender Composition of the NIA Secretariat Workforce’  ‘Perceptions of Barriers to Gender Equality in the NIA Secretariat’  Issues raised have been taken account of in the Gender Action Plan. |
| Disability |  |
| Dependants | Click here to enter text. |

1. **Current Assessment of Impact**

Having looked at the data/information referred to above at point 5, what does this tell you are the needs, experiences and priorities for the people who fall into the groups below, in relation to your policy? And what is the actual or likely adverse impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by the policy. **(See appendix 1 for information on levels of impact).**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **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 | The action plan aims to address gender equality and will impact on both men and women positively. A staff survey was conducted in 2014, and while the majority of staff felt they were treated equally and had not experienced any issues because of their gender, some barriers and difficulties were identified:  - The lack of females at senior management level and in decision-making groups; - The gender imbalance in certain business areas, namely HR, Ushering and Assembly Clerks in the Business Office and Bill Office; -Unacceptable behaviours and particularly inappropriate comments and attitudes relating to gender (experienced by both males and females); -Balancing working and caring responsibilities, including negative attitudes towards those with caring responsibilities; - Carrying out duties because of stereotyping and gender roles; and - Paternity provision | This policy is intended to be proactive in its approach |
| Disability | Click here to enter text. | Impact level. |
| 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**

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| **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 | A range of actions have been identified in order to mitigate the impact of the issues outlined above. These are contained in the Secretariat Gender Action Plan 2016-18 | This policy is intended to be proactive in its approach |
| Disability | Details of impact. | Impact level. |
| Dependants | Details of impact. | Impact level. |

**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.

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| The action plan aims to promote gender equality and opportunities for both men and women with the Secretariat. |

**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?

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| --- |
| Members of staff from across the organisation, including TUS, sit on the Gender Action Working Group and were consulted about decisions regarding the action plan. Staff were asked their views on gender issues in a staff survey issued in 2014, and there was an eight-week staff consultation on the action plan. The group held a gender workshop in March 2015 to identify key issues and priorities for the action plan, and a guest speaker event was held so that group members could benefit from the learning and best practice in other organisations. In addition, the Assembly’s Secretariat Management Group and the Assembly Commission have been provided with quarterly updates on the development of the action plan. Pre-consultation and consultation discussions were also held with the Equality Commission, and the Commissioner for Public Appointments was invited to comment on the draft action plan. |

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| **4** **Disability Duties?** |
| Consider whether the policy:   1. Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.   Click here to enter text.   1. Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.   Click here to enter text. |

**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.

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| The Gender Action Working Group recognises that section 75 categories are interlinked, so multiple identities will be considered as actions are progressed. |

**Part 3 Screening decision**

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

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| No major impacts were identified during development of an action plan or through consultation |

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.

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| Click here to enter text. |

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

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| Click here to enter text. |

**4. Timetabling and prioritising for EQIA**

**Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.**

If the policy has been **‘screened in’** for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority criterion** | **Rating (1-3)** |
| Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations | Click |
| Social need | Click |
| Effect on people’s daily lives | Click |
| Relevance to a public authority’s functions | Click |

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the CCSU in timetabling. Details of the Equality Impact Assessment Timetable will be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide details

Click here to enter text.

**Part 4 Monitoring**

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the Commission to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

The Equality Commission for NI (ECNI) recommends that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly for adverse impact.

See ECNI Monitoring Guidance for use by Public Authorities (July 2007) pages 9-10, paragraphs 2.13 – 2.20

What data is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

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| What are these policies? Please list:  Where relevant, data will be collected as specific actions are implemented. Updates on progress will be provided to the Assembly’s Secretariat Management Group and the Assembly Commission. |

**Part 5 - Data Protection**

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

Yes  No  N/A

1. 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**

**(PLEASE NOTE : THIS IS NOT PART OF THE SCREENING TEMPLATE BUT MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED WITH THE SCREENING)**

1. Please provide details of any measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups. Please include any use of the Equality Commissions guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

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1. 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 effected.

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1. 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.

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**Appendix 1 Screening Questions**

**Introduction**

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, you should consider your answers to the questions above.

In addition, the screening questions above further assist you in assessing your policy and must be completed. Some of these questions require you to assess the level of impact of the proposed policy on “equality of opportunity” and “good relations”. The scale used when assessing this impact is either “None”, “Minor” or “Major”. The following paragraphs set out what each of these terms mean.

If your conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then you may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If your conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If your conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

* measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
* the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of a ‘major’ impact**

1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
3. Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
4. Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

**In favour of ‘minor’ impact**

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
3. Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of none**

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
2. The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.