



Northern Ireland
Assembly

SECTION 75 SCREENING FORM

Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

<http://www.equalityni.org/S75duties>

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It may also require proactive measures to be taken to maintain and secure equality of opportunity.

Section 75 (1) requires the Assembly Commission in carrying out its functions, powers and duties to have *due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between –*

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the Commission is also required to:

- a) have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different
- religious belief
 - political opinion; or
 - racial group
- b) meet legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order.

What is a policy?

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland state in their guidance¹ that the term ‘policy’ is used to denote any strategy, policy (proposed/amended/existing) or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten.

The Commission’s Equality Scheme reflects the Equality Commission’s definition of a policy and this should be applied in determining what needs to be screened. The Equality Scheme states:

“In the context of Section 75, ‘policy’ is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written

¹Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, A Guide for Public Authorities’ April 2010, page 30. A policy may include planning decisions, service changes, corporate strategies, policy development, practices, guidelines, procedures and protocols; board papers

or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g. ‘draft’, ‘pilot’, ‘high level’ or ‘sectoral’.”

If you are in doubt, please contact the Equality and Good Relations Unit for advice. Equality Screening guidance notes are also available on Assist.

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.

Policy Details

<p>Name of the policy to be screened/description: Establishment of a Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland</p> <hr/>
<p>Is this policy an existing, new or revised policy? (Please append policy to screening form) New policy</p> <hr/>
<p>What is it trying to achieve? (brief outline of intended aims/outcomes of the policy)</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>The Assembly Commission’s involvement in the development and establishment of a Youth Assembly (YA) started more than 10 years ago. In summary, following some developmental work by officials, initial proposals for the development of a Youth Assembly were presented to stakeholders, including young people. Those draft proposals were presented to the OFMDFM junior Ministers and the Minister for Education in March 2011, who supported the establishment of a Youth Assembly. The proposals were then presented to the Assembly Commission which approved, in principle, the establishment of a Youth Assembly and a public consultation on the proposals. That consultation took place from May to September 2011, with responses overwhelmingly supporting the proposal to establish a Youth Assembly. For a variety of</p>

reasons, not least the very difficult economic climate at the time and therefore difficulties with funding, that pilot Youth Assembly did not proceed.

Modified versions of the proposals continued to be presented, however, none were taken forward. Since the development of the 2010-11 proposals, there have been consistent calls from the youth sector and others, including political parties and individual MLAs, for the establishment of a Youth Assembly. In the most recent UNCRC report from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2016, para 30) the Committee expressed concerns that, in the UK, children's views are not systematically heard in policymaking on issues that affect them and that a youth parliament is still to be established in Northern Ireland.

Current development

The current development process originates in the Assembly Commission's request in March 2018 for a paper setting out options for a Youth Assembly and the formal expression of it in the Assembly Commission's corporate strategy 2018 to 2023 and Corporate Plan 2019 to 2023, the latter of which commits to "establish and support the delivery of a Youth Assembly".

In June 2019, the Assembly Commission considered options for a Youth Assembly and agreed that an Assembly-supported, but youth led, Youth Assembly was its preferred option. Detailed proposals were then prepared, agreed by the Assembly Commission in May 2020 and announced in July 2020.

The main framework of the proposals was for a Youth Assembly comprising 90 members; 54 drawn from the 18 constituencies (3 per constituency); 36 from the community to ensure equality and diversity across the Section 75 categories, and young people in care and those living in material deprivation ("Section 75+"). The core age range of those members will be 13 to 17 (and, but **only** if required, an upper age limit of 21 to ensure equality and diversity). There will be two plenary sittings of the Youth Assembly annually and the body will have up to four Committees, which will meet more regularly. Plenary sittings are likely to take place in Parliament Buildings and will be presided over by the Speaker in the Assembly Chamber. Committees may also meet in Parliament Buildings, but it is expected that they will also meet in other locations.

Recruitment Proposals for the Youth Assembly

Building on the consultation that had already taken place in the development of the proposals agreed by the Commission, officials engaged extensively from August 2020 to January 2021 with more than 130 external organisations and individuals.

A Co-Design Panel of young people was established to help co-design proposals for the process of recruiting members of the Youth Assembly. A Youth Assembly Advisory Group, chaired by the Speaker, was also established to provide advice and guidance from the youth sector and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the arrangements

needed to establish, implement and review the operation of the Youth Assembly during its initial two-year pioneer phase.

In addition, officials commissioned the Assembly’s Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in the core age range of 13 to 17, to ensure that the membership of the Youth Assembly would be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic. Based on the RaISe report, the membership profile of a fully inclusive and representative Youth Assembly is as shown in the following table.

Membership Profile of the YA based on RaISe Report (February 2021)

Category	Percentage of the youth population (13 to 17)	Equivalent Number(s) of Members of the YA*
Marital Status	0.2%	0
In Care*	2.8%	3
Racial Group*	3%	3
LGBTQ+*	4.2%	4
Disability*	5%	5
Young Carers*	7.4%	7
Free School Meals*	27%	24
Religious belief*	49.1%C. 38.8%P. 11.2% None. 0.9% Other.	44C. 35 P. 10 None. 1 Other.
Male Female*	51.3%M. 48.7%F.	46M. 44F.
Age	Age range 13 to 17	90
Political opinion	There is no official source for this information.	N/A

* Greater than or equal to 0.5 rounded up

The Co-Design Panel held a series of meetings during December 2020 and January 2021 to discuss recruitment to the Youth Assembly, following which its findings were drawn together in a report that the Panel agreed.

In summary, the Co-Design Panel was in favour of:

- A “random selection” approach to the selection of members;
- Applicants demonstrating their interest in devoting time and effort to the work of the Youth Assembly;
- An open, fair and transparent application process;
- All young people in the age range being able to apply; and
- Young people knowing the level of commitment expected of them if selected.

Reasons for being in favour of random selection included that it would enable a Youth Assembly to be set up much sooner than if elections were involved; that it would avoid a “popularity contest”; that it would take pressure off and encourage young people with anxiety or mental health issues, or who felt excluded, to take part; and also that it would be best in the current public health situation.

Based on the Co-Design Panel’s findings, and allied to the information in the RalSe report, officials then developed a proposal for a detailed recruitment process that will use a system of “enhanced random selection”. The process will be anonymised, objective, robust and fair and it will ensure that the YA’s membership is representative of the Northern Ireland youth demographic in respect of inclusivity, proportionality, geographic spread, and Section 75+ categories.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland was consulted on the proposed recruitment process and was content with the proposals.

The proposed recruitment process was then presented to the Advisory Group, which in turn provided its views and some very useful and practical advice at a meeting on 3 March 2021. The Group very much welcomed the engagement with young people, the Co-Design Panel report and unanimously endorsed the suggested process of enhanced random selection. The YA Team subsequently considered the Group’s advice and refined the proposed recruitment process.

The proposed recruitment process has, therefore, been co-designed based on extensive engagement with young people and has been unanimously endorsed by the Advisory Group.

The process that is proposed is anonymised, objective, robust and fair and it will ensure that, insofar as is possible, the Youth Assembly’s membership is representative of the Northern Ireland youth demographic (aged 13 to 17) in respect of inclusivity, proportionality, geographic spread, and Section 75+ categories.

A young person will be eligible to apply for selection to the Youth Assembly if they:

- Live in Northern Ireland;
- Are aged 13 to 17 at the closing date for applications; and
- Confirm that they have an understanding of the role of the YA and will make the commitment necessary to undertake the role of a member.

The process will involve encouraging young people in the core age range to apply to become a member of the Youth Assembly. This will be crucial to the success of the process and will be done by way of an awareness raising campaign, starting two to three weeks prior to the application process opening. Awareness raising will continue until the period for applications (again two to three weeks) ends to ensure that there is the best possible response.

The application process itself will be primarily online and will use the Assembly's existing online recruitment platform, iTrent. This is a tried and tested platform that assures protection of personal data and GDPR compliance. Just as importantly, iTrent mitigates the potential for bias during the process because it assigns a reference number to each applicant rather than divulging names, thus ensuring applicant anonymity.

In addition, iTrent also has the benefit of allowing for dynamic monitoring of applications whilst the application process is ongoing. For example, a snapshot can be taken to identify whether there are any constituencies or Section 75+ categories that are underrepresented in submitted applications, and awareness raising can then be targeted at young people in those areas or categories.

It is important to highlight the fact that arrangements will be put in place to ensure that any young person who is unable to access the online process will still be able to apply, thus maximising inclusivity. For example, a young person will be able to post, email or telephone their details to officials who will then enter the young person's details into the online system. Equally, where it is reasonable and practicable to do so, arrangements will be made to provide alternative formats of the material associated with the recruitment process and to cater for languages other than English.

Young people wishing to apply to become a member will be provided with an application pack that will provide details of the background to and proposed structure of the Youth Assembly. They will also be given an idea of what might be expected of them and what they can expect in return, should they be selected as a member.

They will then have to complete and submit an application either online or in alternative format as noted in paragraph 23. The application itself will require the young person to provide contact details, address, date of birth, gender and religious belief. They will also be asked for any Section 75+ details that they wish to provide (this will not be mandatory, but young people will be advised that providing as much information as possible may widen their chance of being selected) and confirmation that they understand the purpose of the Youth Assembly, what might be required of them and that they are prepared to make the necessary commitment. Needless to say, a privacy notice will be provided and all personal data will be held in line with data protection requirements.

Once applications have been received, they will be checked to ensure eligibility, after which all those that are eligible will go forward to two phases of enhanced random selection. To facilitate that, the information in each application will be exported in an anonymised format from iTrent to an Excel spreadsheet, which in turn will allow for applications to be filtered on the basis of constituency and Section 75+ categories and for them to be put into random selection software.

The first phase of enhanced random selection revolves round selection on the basis of constituency, which will help ensure geographic spread. All of the applications will be

filtered by constituency, after which three young people are selected by random selection software from each of the 18 constituencies, thus providing 54 members.

However, the enhanced nature of the selection means that it will be a requirement of the process to ensure that there is representation in respect of gender and religious belief i.e. the three members from a constituency cannot all be of the same gender or religious belief. In other words, if two male young people are randomly selected then the third selection for that constituency must be female. The same procedure will apply to religious belief. This process will mitigate the chances of generating individual constituency imbalance at this stage of the selection process. If an imbalance should occur across the body of the 54 members selected from constituencies, then that imbalance will be rectified at the second phase of enhanced random selection.

The second phase of enhanced random selection will provide the remaining 36 members and will ensure Section 75+ representation and an overall balance in the membership profile. All of the eligible applications remaining after the constituency selections have been made will be part of this phase.

The profile of the young people selected to fill the 54 constituency places will be examined to determine to what extent it meets the representation of the Section 75+ categories, as shown in the RaSe report. If that profile does not meet the relevant representation, the Section 75+ categories will be ranked in the following order, priority being given to the smallest or “hardest to reach” group, namely:

1. In Care
2. Racial Group.
3. LGBTQ+.
4. Disability.
5. Young Carers.
6. Free School Meals.

Young people will then be selected by random selection software to meet the representation required against each of those categories. However, the two largest Section 75+ categories, gender and religious belief, may require greater numeric rebalancing when compared with the six smallest categories. Therefore, gender and religious belief will be monitored concurrently while applicants are being selected to satisfy other Section 75+ categories. For example, it may be necessary to search the pool of candidates for a young person with a disability who is also female and catholic or male and protestant, as the case may be.

Again, all details will be anonymised and selection will be random and made only on the basis of data. That selection will be carried out, insofar as is possible, to reach the ideal situation in which five members are drawn from each constituency. However, this may vary slightly because of the location of the applicants from the relevant Section 75+ categories, particularly those in the smaller groupings.

It is worth re-emphasising, however, that the members of the Youth Assembly will represent their own lived experience and the views of young people in general: they are not there specifically to represent a constituency or a Section 75+ category and they will not know the basis on which they have been selected.

The random selection of the further 36 members should ensure a fully inclusive and balanced membership that is representative of the demographic of young people in the core age range in Northern Ireland. However, in the unlikely eventuality that representation of any of the smaller Section 75+ categories is not met, provision exists to extend the age range to 21 and to seek nominations from relevant organisations.

Once the two phases of enhanced random selection are complete, the young people selected will be contacted and offered a position as a member of the Youth Assembly. That offer will be made via email/post and each young person will be asked to confirm acceptance and commit to the role. Once acceptance is received, the young person will be formally notified of their appointment as a member of the Youth Assembly.

The applicants who have not been selected will also be informed. However, although they may be disappointed, that is not necessarily the end of their involvement with the Youth Assembly. It is proposed that those young people can choose to have their names remain on a Youth Assembly Consultation Forum (Consultation Forum).

The purpose of the Consultation Forum will be twofold. First, it will act as a pool from which vacancies can be filled should they occur, whether by way of a young person declining to accept an offer to be a member or subsequently leaving. If such a vacancy does arise, a young person of as similar a personal profile as possible, taking into account the overall membership profile of the Youth Assembly, will be selected from the pool, again by enhanced random selection. Secondly, the Consultation Forum can provide a consultation base of engaged young people from whom the YA can seek views.

It is important to re-emphasise that the recruitment process has been co-designed based on extensive engagement with young people. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has indicated that it is content with the proposed recruitment process and the Advisory Group has given its unanimous endorsement. The process is anonymised, objective, robust and fair. It will ensure that, insofar as is possible, the Youth Assembly's membership is representative of the Northern Ireland youth demographic (aged 13 to 17) in respect of inclusivity, proportionality, geographic spread, and Section 75+ categories.

Finally, it is envisaged that the process of co-design will continue during the pioneer phase of the Youth Assembly and that may well include refining the recruitment process for future Youth Assembly mandates.

Are any of the Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy/decision? Please explain how.

It is the express intention of the Assembly Commission that the recruitment procedures of young people to the Youth Assembly will seek to include as wide a range of young people as possible. No Section 75 category, other than political opinion, for which no data exists in the age range, would be excluded from participation, indeed steps have been taken to reach out to all Section 75 groups and those young people who are looked after and those living material deprivation. It is intended that the Youth Assembly will positively affect all Section 75 groups for the age group 13-17 years.

Extensive engagement has been undertaken with key organisations representing young people generally and marginalised young people such as LGBTQ groups, rural young people, minority ethnic groups, care-experienced young people and children with disabilities. In addition, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) has been closely involved in discussions.

Awareness raising activities (including a survey for all young people on their views on a Youth Assembly) have been undertaken via email, mailshot and social media, all of which seek to reach out to schools, colleges and statutory and voluntary youth sector groups and individuals.

The recruitment process itself has been co-designed with a group of young people from a range of organisations, including voluntary youth sector, youth charities and umbrella groups including those who work with children with disabilities, marginalised young people and LGBTQ young people.

Involvement of young people in the co-design process and subsequently the Youth Assembly itself, will provide opportunities for young people to work within a diverse group from different community backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and with a range of interests and views.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Education Service, Northern Ireland Assembly

Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?

Parliamentary Services

Was consultation carried out as part of this screening exercise?

Yes No

Background to the Policy to be screened.

Include details of any pre- consultations/consultations which have been conducted and whether the policy has previously been tabled at SMG/Assembly Commission meetings.

Preceding Papers/Discussions:

Papers were presented to the Assembly Commission in June 2019 outlining the the work that had been carried out to develop options for the creation of a youth assembly, including significant engagement with stakeholders, a review of the approach adopted in other legislatures and the options to be considered by the Commission. The Commission agreed that a detailed paper should be prepared on its preferred option of an Assembly Commission-supported Youth Assembly.

Building on the consultation and discussions with stakeholders that had already taken place in preparing the options paper, an Internal Steering Group, consisting of Assembly Secretariat staff from Clerking, Communications, Outreach and Engagement, and the Education Service, was established to help develop the detail around this model. An operational structure and model was duly developed and further discussions were then held with the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Koulla Yiasouma, who provided additional input and guidance.

A detailed paper was then produced and submitted to the Assembly Commission in May 2020. That paper set out the framework for a Youth Assembly, namely a Youth Assembly comprising 90 members; 54 drawn from the 18 constituencies (3 per constituency); 36 from the community to ensure equality and diversity across the Section 75 categories, young people in care and those living in material deprivation (“Section 75+”). The core age range of those members will be 13 to 17 (and, but **only** if required, an upper age limit of 21 to ensure equality and diversity). There will be two plenary sittings of the Youth Assembly annually and the body will have up to four Committees, which will meet more regularly. Plenary sittings are likely to take place in Parliament Buildings and will be presided over by the Speaker in the Assembly Chamber. Committees may also meet in Parliament Buildings, but it is expected that they will also meet in other locations.

The Assembly Commission agreed the paper and its proposals were announced publicly by the Speaker in July 2020. Officials then engaged with over 130 external organisations and individuals, including the statutory, public, and community and voluntary sectors; colleagues in other jurisdictions and the Assembly Secretariat; and held further discussions with the NICCY.

A Co-Design Panel of 40 young people was established to help co-design proposals for the process of recruiting members of the Youth Assembly. Young people across Northern Ireland were also given the opportunity to share their views on plans for a Youth Assembly in an online survey.

A Youth Assembly Advisory Group, chaired by the Speaker, was also established to provide advice and guidance from the youth sector and other relevant stakeholders in

relation to the arrangements needed to establish, implement and review the operation of the YA during its initial two-year pioneer phase.

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: It is expected that Covid-19 restrictions will have an impact in the short to medium term on some aspects of the delivery of the Youth Assembly. Mitigation measures will be put in place e.g. online meetings.

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 : Young people in general.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are these policies and who owns them? Please list:

1. Child protection/safeguarding policy (Human Resources)
2. Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Equality Scheme 2016-2021 (Equality and Good Relations Unit)
3. Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Disability Action Plan 2016-2021 (Equality and Good Relations Unit)
4. Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Good Relations Action Plan 2016-2021 (Equality and Good Relations Unit)
5. Communications policies (Communications Office)
6. Finance - Travel and Subsistence policy (Finance Office)
7. Health and Safety at work policy (Building Services)
8. Security/Conduct and behaviour of Visitors (Usher Services)
9. Visitors' policy (Events Office)
10. Procurement policies (Procurement office)

- 11. Information Assurance Policy (Information Standards)
- 12. Data Protection Policy (Information Standards)
- 13. Records and Email Management Policy (Information Standards)
- 14. Retention and Disposal Policy (Information Standards)
- 15. Dignity at Work policy (Corporate Services)
- 16. IS policies (IS Office)

Consideration of available data/research (*This means any data or information you currently hold in relation to the policy or have 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? For example, is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. That report shows that, in terms of religious belief, the population comprises 49.1% Catholic, 38.8% Protestants, 0.9% other religions and 11.2% no religious belief. That will equate to a membership profile of the Youth Assembly of 44 Catholics, 35 Protestants, 10 no religious belief and 1 other religious belief.
Political opinion	The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. That report shows that there is no official dataset for this category in the core age range. In addition, the work of the Youth Assembly is not intended to be party political.

Racial group	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. That report shows that, in terms of racial group, the White ethnic group accounts for 97% of those aged 10–17 years. The remaining 3% of this age cohort is composed of Asian (1.5%), Black (0.3 %), Mixed (1.1 %) and Other ethnicities (0.1%). Traveller children comprise 0.3% and Roma children 0.08% of the pupil population in Northern Ireland schools. The above equates to a Youth Assembly membership profile of 3 members from the non-White ethnic groupings.</p>
Age	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. The report shows that young people in the age group 13-17 account for 6.1 per cent of the Northern Ireland population. The intention is that all 90 members of the Youth Assembly will be in the core age range.</p>
Marital status	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. The legal minimum age for marriage in Northern Ireland is sixteen (with parental permission) and eighteen (without parental consent). Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the overwhelming majority of young people aged 13 – 17 will be single. The marital status of young people, aged 19 and under, from Census 2011, indicates that the overwhelming majority were single (99.6%).</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly's</p>

	<p>Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. The report indicates that around 1.2% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian Gay or Bisexual (LGB). The estimate for those aged 16–24 is higher at 4.2% per cent. The age of consent is sixteen in Northern Ireland and there are no reliable estimates in respect of sexual orientation for those aged under 16. The above equates to a Youth Assembly membership profile of 4 members.</p>
Men and women generally	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly’s Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. The report shows there were a total of 114,586 young people aged 13–17 living in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2019.</p> <p>Broken down by gender this equates to 58,792 males (51.3%) and 55,794 females (48.7%), which in turn equates to a Youth Assembly membership profile of 46 males and 44 females. There are no official figures for young people who designate other than as male or female.</p>
Disability	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly’s Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. The report shows that 5% of those within the age range have disability that limits their activities, which equates to a membership profile for the Youth Assembly of 5 members.</p>
Dependants	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. Officials therefore commissioned the Assembly’s Research and Information Service (RaISe) to produce a report to establish the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in that age range. The report shows that 7.4 % of those within the age range are young carers, which equates to a membership profile for the Youth Assembly of 7 members.</p>

Current Assessment of Impact

Having looked at the data/information you have collected in the question above, 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	The policy is designed to be inclusive of all religions and none. The RaSe report shows that, in terms of religious belief in the age range, the population comprises 49.1% Catholic, 38.8% Protestants, 0.9% other religions and 11.2% no religious belief. That will equate to a membership profile of the Youth Assembly of 44 Catholics, 35 Protestants, 10 no religious belief and 1 other religious belief.	None
Political opinion	The work of the Youth Assembly is not intended to be party political and young people aged 13 to 17 can apply to become a member regardless of political opinion. In addition, there is no official dataset for this category.	None
Racial group	To ensure diversity and representation, selection of members will match, as far as possible, the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in the core age range of 13 to 17, as shown in the RaSe report. That report shows a Youth Assembly membership profile of 3 members from the non-White ethnic groupings. Officials will work with individuals and organisations who represent and support young people in minority ethnic groups to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to apply. Where it is reasonable and practicable to do so, arrangements will be made for languages other than English and alternative formats of material associated with the recruitment process.	None
Age	The Youth Assembly is open to applications from all young people aged 13-17 living in Northern Ireland.	None

	Officials will ensure that the opportunity is communicated to all young people through appropriate online and off-line channels including schools, colleges, youth organisations and social media.	
Marital status	According to available data, it can be assumed that the overwhelming majority of young people aged 13-17 will be single. However, the Youth Assembly is open to applications from all young people aged 13-17 living in Northern Ireland, regardless of their marital status.	None
Sexual orientation	<p>LGB young people often self-exclude from school (EANI, 2018) and therefore miss out on opportunities. The Education Authority’s Audit of Inequalities (2018) found that:</p> <p><i>“48.4% of LGB people had experienced bullying as a result of their sexual orientation; a majority of LGB research respondents (66.5%) said that they did not feel welcomed or valued within the school; and 61.3% experienced a negative or very negative impact on their emotional wellbeing.”</i></p> <p>To ensure diversity and representation, selection of members will match, as far as possible, the demographic of the Northern Ireland youth population in the core age range of 13 to 17. The RaISe report shows that 4.2% of that age range are LGBTQ+, which equates to a Youth Assembly membership profile of 4 members.</p> <p>Officials will work with organisations who represent and support LGBTQ+ young people to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to apply and are supported to do so.</p>	None
Men and women generally	The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. The RaISe report shows	None

	<p>there were a total of 114,586 young people aged 13–17 living in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2019.</p> <p>Broken down by gender this equates to 58,792 males (51.3%) and 55,794 females (48.7%), which in turn equates to a Youth Assembly membership profile of 46 males and 44 females. There are no official figures for young people who designate other than as male or female.</p>	
Disability	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. The RalSe report shows that 5% of those within the age range have disability that limits their activities, which equates to a membership profile for the Youth Assembly of 5 members.</p> <p>The selection process does not seek to judge ability or capability and the process will be designed in a structured way that enables young people of all abilities to apply and reasonable adjustments will be made if necessary.</p>	None
Dependants	<p>The intention is that the membership of the Youth Assembly will be fully inclusive and representative of all the Section 75+ categories in that demographic of young people aged between 13 and 17 in Northern Ireland. The RalSe report shows that 7.4 % of those within the age range are young carers, which equates to a membership profile for the Youth Assembly of 7 members. Officials will work with organisations who represent and support young carers and those with children to ensure they are aware of the opportunity to apply and are supported to do so.</p>	None

If you do not have enough data to tell you about potential or actual impacts, you may need to generate more data to distinguish what groups are potentially affected by your policy.

Part 2 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?		
Section 75 category	Issue	Minor/major/none?
Religious belief	It is considered that this policy will have no adverse impact on equality of opportunity for those in this category. It is the express intention of the Assembly Commission that the recruitment procedures of young people to the Youth Assembly (as outlined above) will seek to include as wide a range of young people as possible. No young people in Section 75 categories, and also those who are looked after and those living in material deprivation, would be excluded from participation. It is intended that the Youth Assembly will positively affect all Section 75 groups in the core age range.	None
Political opinion	As above	None
Racial group	As above	None
Age	As above	None
Marital status	As above	None
Sexual orientation	As above	None

Men and women generally	As above	None
Disability	As above	None
Dependants	As above	None

2 Are there any actions which could be taken to reduce or mitigate any adverse impact which has been identified or opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the section 75 categories?		
Section 75 category	Issue	Mitigating Measure
Religious belief	No adverse impacts have been identified. Indeed it is intended that the Youth Assembly will positively affect young people aged 13 to 17 in all Section 75 categories, and also those who are looked after and those living in material deprivation.	None
Political opinion	As above	None
Racial group	As above	None
Age	As above	None
Marital status	As above	None

Sexual orientation	As above	None
Men and women generally	As above	None
Disability	As above	None
Dependants	As above	None

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	It is believed that the policy will not have any adverse impact on good relations between people of different religious or no beliefs. Indeed, it is hoped that the policy may improve such relations.	None
Political opinion	The work of the Youth Assembly will not be party political, and it is believed that the policy will not have any adverse impact on good relations between people of different political or no opinion.	None
Racial group	It is believed that the policy will not have any adverse impact on good relations between people of different racial groups. Indeed, it is	None

	hoped that the policy may improve such relations.	
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4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	It is intended that this policy will provide opportunities to promote good relations between people of different religious beliefs. The establishment of this, the first Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland, will provide opportunities for young people of all backgrounds to work together and learn from each other. The recruitment process is designed to ensure equality and diversity across all Section 75 categories and to ensure that the 90 members of the Youth Assembly are representative of the general population for the core age group.	
Political opinion	The work of the Youth Assembly will not be party political. This policy will provide opportunities to promote good relations, including between people of different political opinions. The establishment of this, the first Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland, will provide opportunities for young people of all backgrounds to work together and learn from each other. The recruitment process is designed to ensure equality and diversity across all Section 75 categories and to ensure that the 90 members of the Youth Assembly are representative of the	

	general population for the core age group.	
Racial group	It is intended that this policy will provide opportunities to promote good relations between people of different racial groups. The establishment of this, the first Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland, will provide opportunities for young people of all backgrounds to work together and learn from each other. The recruitment process is designed to ensure equality and diversity across all Section 75 categories and to ensure that the 90 members of the Youth Assembly are representative of the general population for the core age group.	

Consultation

Tell us about who you have talked to about your proposals, either internally or externally and who you have formally or informally consulted, to help you decide if the policy needs further equality investigation?

Extensive engagement and consultation has taken place since 2018, both internally and externally, in the design and development of the proposals.

In the process to identify options and then more detailed proposals for a Youth Assembly, officials have engaged with well over 150 individuals and organisations, including the statutory, voluntary youth sectors; colleagues in other jurisdictions; the Assembly Commission; Assembly Commission staff; Government Departments; schools; and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Koulla Yiasouma.

Officials established a Co-Design Panel of 40 young people to help co-design proposals for the process of recruiting members of the Youth Assembly, and that Panel's findings have been reflected in these proposals.

People of all ages were given the chance to sign up to a Youth Assembly mailing list to receive information about the Youth Assembly. Over 700 people have done so to date and they were also given the opportunity to share their views in an online survey.

In addition, a Youth Assembly Advisory Group was established to provide the Speaker, as Chairperson of the Commission, with advice and guidance from the youth sector and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the arrangements needed to establish, implement and review the operation of the Youth Assembly during its first two-year term (the pioneer phase). The Group is chaired by the Speaker and comprises senior Assembly officials, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Professor Laura Lundy of QUB, a world-renowned expert on children's rights and their participation in the decision-making process, and representatives (including young people) from the Education Authority, the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and YouthAction.

Senior Assembly officials have been consulted through the organisation's Senior Management Group.

The Assembly Commission has been consulted and it is the body ultimately responsible for the proposals. The Commission's composition and processes have their genesis in statute and the composition of its membership is proportionate to the votes cast by the electorate in Assembly elections. The Commission is thus representative of the political opinion of the Northern Ireland electorate.

Officials have also taken advice from the Assembly's Equality Manager and from the Equality Commission in developing these proposals.

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 does not discourage disabled people from participating in public life and it does not fail to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. Indeed, the policy expressly ensures that disabled people have an opportunity to participate in public life, and it is hoped that it will positively encourage their participation and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

- b) Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.
The policy expressly ensures that disabled people have an opportunity to participate in public life, and it is hoped that it will positively encourage their participation and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

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).

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

There is no empirical data to show the impact of this policy on young people aged 13-17 with multiple identities. However, this policy expressly seeks to ensure the full and fair representation of young people in the Section 75 categories and also those who are looked after and those who are living in material deprivation. It is not considered that there are any potential adverse impacts on people with multiple identities. Indeed, it is hoped that the policy will help to create greater awareness and understanding of, and more positive attitudes to, people with multiple identities.

Part 3 Screening decision

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'** i.e. the likely impact is none and no further action is required
- 'Screened out' with mitigation** i.e. 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)** i.e. the likely impact is major and the policy will now be subject to an EQIA

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

The reason for not conducting an equality impact assessment is that, based on the information given in all of the above sections, including consideration of available data/research, the current assessment of impact and the screening questions, the overall level of impact is considered to be none and therefore no further action is required. Therefore, the policy is screened out and an EQIA is not necessary.

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.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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.

Please detail how you will monitor the effect of the policy?

The policy will be subject to ongoing monitoring by officials in the Assembly Education Service. In particular, the processing of data and the outcome of the enhanced random selection process will be closely monitored. Ultimately, the effect of the policy will be judged on whether the recruitment process has ensured that the membership profile of the Youth Assembly has been successfully achieved. Monitoring will also be undertaken in relation to communication and awareness raising activities.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that the members selected to the Youth Assembly will also wish to review the process with a view to co-designing the recruitment process for the Youth Assembly's subsequent terms.

The monitoring information gathered will be considered and reviewed by the Youth Assembly Advisory Group, the Senior Management Group and the Assembly Commission, and, if necessary, the policy refined/amended. In such circumstances, screening would also be revisited.

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

Data required to help ensure the effective monitoring of the policy will include:

- Number of applications overall.
- Number of applications broken down by Section 75+ groups.
- Final membership profile in relation to the demographic for age 13-17 based on the figures in the RaSe report.
- Success or otherwise of the Youth Assembly.

In addition, general feedback on the operation of the policy and associated processes will be welcomed from all stakeholders, particularly young people.

All data will be collected and retained in line with any relevant Assembly Commission policies or processes e.g. Data Protection Policy, Retention and Disposal Policy, Information Assurance Policy, GDPR etc.

As part of monitoring, we will seek to identify further key stakeholders and will continue to respond to any issues they or others may raise after this screening form has been published.

Part 5 - Data Protection

If applicable, has legal advice been given due consideration?

Yes No N/A

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
Lucy McClelland	Youth Assembly Manager	11/03/2021
Approved by:		
Simon Burrowes	Head of Public Engagement	15/03/2021

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.

Extensive engagement and consultation has taken place since 2018, both internally and externally, in the design and development of the proposals.

In the process to identify options and then more detailed proposals for a Youth Assembly, officials have engaged with well over 150 individuals and organisations, including the statutory, voluntary youth sectors; colleagues in other jurisdictions; the Assembly Commission; Assembly Commission staff; Government Departments; schools; and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Koulla Yiasouma.

Officials established a Co-Design Panel of 40 young people to help co-design proposals for the process of recruiting members of the Youth Assembly, and that Panel's findings have been reflected in these proposals.

People of all ages were given the chance to sign up to a Youth Assembly mailing list to receive information about the Youth Assembly. Over 700 people have done so to date and they were also given the opportunity to share their views in an online survey.

In addition, a Youth Assembly Advisory Group was established to provide the Speaker, as Chairperson of the Commission, with advice and guidance from the youth sector and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the arrangements needed to establish, implement and review the operation of the Youth Assembly during its first two-year term (the pioneer phase). The Group is chaired by the Speaker and comprises senior Assembly officials, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Professor Laura Lundy of QUB, a world-renowned expert on children's rights and their participation in the decision-making process, and representatives (including young people) from the Education Authority, the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and YouthAction.

Senior Assembly officials have been consulted through the organisation's Senior Management Group.

The Assembly Commission has been consulted and it is the body ultimately responsible for the proposals. The Commission's composition and processes have their genesis in statute and the composition of its membership is proportionate to the votes cast by the electorate in Assembly elections. The Commission is thus representative of the political opinion of the Northern Ireland electorate.

Officials have also taken advice from the Assembly's Equality Manager and from the Equality Commission in developing these proposals.

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.

No changes were made.

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.

Arrangements will be put in place made to ensure that any young person who is unable to access the online process will still be able to apply, thus maximising inclusivity. For example, a young person will be able to post, email or telephone their details to the YA Team who will then enter the young person's details into the online system. Equally, where it is reasonable and practicable to do so, arrangements will be made for languages other than English and alternative formats of material associated with the recruitment process.

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.