

DOE SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING ANALYSIS FORM

Section 1

Introduction

This form is intended to help you to consider whether a new policy (either internal or external) or legislation will require a full equality impact assessment (EQIA). Those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full EQIA.

The form will provide a record of the factors taken into account if a policy is screened out, or excluded for EQIA. It will provide a basis for consultation on the outcome of the screening exercise and will be referenced in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission. Copies of completed forms should be retained on file within business areas (**and a copy sent to the Equality Unit**) and reference should be made to the outcome of the screening exercise and subsequent consultation in any submission made to the Minister.

Background

The Legal Background

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department is required 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;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

The main groups within each of the nine categories, highlighted above, are identified at Appendix 1.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department is also required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

Advice on Completion of the Screening Form

It is important that the screening form is completed carefully and thoughtfully. Your Divisional or Agency Equality Officer and the Department's Equality Unit in room 413A Clarence Court (ext 40203/40813) will be happy to assist with all aspects of the screening process and will help with the completion of the form, if required.

Further advice on the screening process can be accessed at Section 4 of the Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties.

Policies included for EQIA

If, after screening, it is decided that a policy will require a full EQIA, a decision will be required on the priority and timing of the assessment. The screening form should be noted accordingly, signed off and copied to the Equality Unit for inclusion in the EQIA programme.

Policies excluded for EQIA

If a decision is taken to screen out the policy or where there is ambiguity about the equality implication of the proposal, the screening form should be signed off by a senior officer responsible for the policy and a copy sent to the Equality Unit. Copies of all screening out forms will be placed on the Department's website.

Section 2 – Policy to be Screened

Definition of Policy

There have been some difficulties in defining what constitutes a policy in the context of Section 75. To be on the safe side it is recommended that you consider changes to or any new initiatives, proposals, schemes or programmes as policies. The policies covered in the Equality Scheme EQIA programme are a reasonable guide both to the nature of external departmental policies and the level at which they should be considered.

The revised Guidance from The Equality Commission emphasises that the Statutory duties apply to **internal** policies (relating to people who work for the organisation) as well as **external** policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the organisations).

It is important to remember that even if a full EQIA has been carried out in respect of an “overarching” policy or strategy, it will still be necessary for the policy maker to consider if a further EQIA needs to be carried out in respect of those policies cascading from the overarching strategy.

OFMDFM Guidance on Legislative Procedures (Primary and Subordinate) sets out clearly the stages at which equality of opportunity considerations should be taken into consideration in the development of legislation.

Overview of Policy Proposals

The aims and objectives of the policy must be clear and well defined. You must take into account any available data or evidence that will enable you to come to a decision on whether or not a policy may or may not have a differential impact on any of the S75 categories. Evidence may be qualitative and or quantitative and may include research or internal information and or experience in relation to service and customer monitoring exercises. Where appropriate, arrangements should be made to obtain any data necessary to assist screening. The Equality Unit or Central Statistics & Research Branch (Stephanie Harcourt ext 40878 or Michael Bennett ext 40916) are available to provide advice on data requirements.

2.1 Please insert below a brief description of the policy/legislation, including the title and all the main aims and objectives

Title	Planning Service Web Management Policy
Aims	Through technology, to provide online information and services to Planning Service's customers and stakeholders which meets their needs and which reflects best practice.

It is essential that all the aims/objectives of the policy be clearly and fully defined.

2.2 On whom will the policies/legislation impact? Please specify

The policy is internal and will impact primarily on staff who update the Agency's website. The website itself has been screened by the NICS accessibility audit (in line with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)) and has passed this (double-A). Fundamentally the policy document outlines the change in approach to updating content on the Agency website, in line with the approach more commonly being taken across NICS and in turn outlines the responsibilities of staff and what will be expected of them in relation to copyright, DPA, DDA and FOI/EIR, to ensure the integrity of the website structure is maintained and the quality, accessibility and timeliness of content does not degrade.

2.3 Who is responsible for (a) devising and (b) delivering the policy, eg is it DOE, a Whitehall Department or EU? What is the relationship and have they considered this issue and any equality issues?

- (a) **DOE Planning Service Communications Team and ICT web development have devised the policy**
- (b) **DOE Planning Service Communications Team and ICT are responsible for delivering the policy**

2.4 What linkages are there to other NI Departments/NDPBs in relation to this policy/legislation?

The policy sets out the roles and responsibilities, processes, procedures, support, guidance and training in relation to the new method of updating the new websites using the Livelink content management system. It also outlines staff responsibility for ensuring content on the website remains up to date and accessible in line with DPA, DDA, Copyright, FOI/EIR and in conjunction with the WCM manuals advises them how to create content in line with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Livelink is the NICS strategic Content Management solution and

has been adopted for use already by many NICS departments and agencies. (DOE, NIEA, DFP)

In researching the policy we looked at existing policies by DFP DSD and some English Councils. Best Practice in information management was also researched to ensure topics such as DDA, DPA, FoI and Copyright were covered in the policy

2.5 What data are available to facilitate the screening of this policy/ legislation?

N/R

2.6 Is additional data required to facilitate screening? If so, give details of how and when it will be obtained.

N/R

See Appendix 4 of the Equality Commission Practical Guidance on EQIA which provides a list of Sources of S75 data or speak to Central Statistics and Research Branch (Stephanie Harcourt, ext 40878, or Michael Bennett, ext 40916) or Equality Unit (Alex Boyle, ext 41194, or Laura McAleese, ext 40203).

Section 3 – Screening Analysis

In cases where there is no available quantitative evidence, you will need to take a pragmatic, common sense judgement as to whether the policy/legislation you are screening may have a particular/differential impact on any of the groups. Discussions with Equality Unit, Statistics Branch and organisations representing the Section 75 Groups will be important and helpful at this stage in obtaining qualitative evidence of impacts. Every effort should be made to ensure that assessments are evidence based.

The following criteria must be considered when screening.

3.1 Is there any indication or evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by the following Section 75 groups?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X

Please give details

3.2 Is there any indication or evidence that any of the following Section 75 groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age	✓	
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X

Please give details

There can be a correlation between age, confidence and competence using IT systems, although it is appreciated that this is not always the case.

The policy outlines clearly lines of responsibility and support and anyone who has not been trained will not be expected to use the Livelink system. Anyone who *has* received training will further be supported by the ICT web team and Communications team and various user manuals, so staff with a lack of confidence / competence, for whatever reason, will be supported.

3.3 Have consultations with the relevant representative organisations or individuals within any of the Section 75 categories, indicated that policies of this type create problems specific to them?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X

Please give details of any consultations carried out, and any problems identified.

For information – consultations were held with section 75 representative groups in relation to the introduction of accessibility audits for NI Gov websites. As such, sites tested under this audit benefit from the adjustments requested as a result of these consultations

This site has been audited for accessibility and passed. The site is Browsealoud enabled, has been tested for colour contrast, tabbing and the text size can be adjusted. External customers as well as staff within relevant section 75 groups can avail of these functions.

3.4 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or community relations by altering the policy, or by working with others, in Government, or in the larger community in the context of this policy?

Yes No X

Please give details

Not relevant in the context of this internal policy. The opportunity

to publish on the website may be limited by grade, simply as a control to ensure those placing content on the website are senior enough to take management responsibility for the information being updated. Training and support is available for all staff. A note will be placed on the website to notify customers that they can request publications in alternative formats.

- 3.5 It may be that a policy/legislation has a differential impact on a certain Section 75 group, as the policy has been developed to address an existing or historical inequality or disadvantage. If this is the case, please give details below:**

Not applicable

- 3.6 Please consider if there is any way of adapting the policy to promote better equality of opportunity or good relations.**

Please give details

Policy has included and considered the provision of training, technical support, editorial support, legislative support and written support.

- 3.7 In relation to Departmental obligations under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), please consider if there is any way of adapting the policy to show due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and/or encourage participation by disabled people in public life.**

Please give details

The policy will help ensure that all content on the Planning Service website is accessible to people with disabilities in line with Cabinet office guidelines. This will be covered in the training to ensure that staff know how the website has been built, including how it has completed and passed its accessibility audit. The policy also makes it clear that staff tasked with updating the website are responsible for ensuring all content is accessible. A Managing Editor role has been created and part of their remit is to ensure that staff are trained in advance of updating, and supported in order to ensure they fulfil their obligations regarding content.

Section 4

EQIA Recommendation

You should consider carefully in this section whether full EQIA is necessary, particularly where answers to any questions in Section 3 are affirmative.

- 4.1 Full EQIA procedures should be carried out on policies considered to have significant implications for equality of opportunity. Please fill in the following grid in relation to the policy/legislation.

Prioritisation Factors	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact
Social Need.			X
Effect on people's daily lives.			X
Effect on economic, social and human rights.			X
Strategic significance			X
Financial significance			X

Please give details – The policy covers a change in the approach to updating a website which is to replace the existing website. Therefore

There will be no change in impact on any of the factors listed above.

- 4.2 **In view of the considerations in Section 3 and 4 do you consider that this policy/legislation should be subject to a full EQIA? Please give reasons for your considerations. If you are unsure, please consult with affected groups and revisit the screening analysis accordingly. Yes/No/Unsure**

No -

4.3 If an EQIA is considered necessary please comment on the priority and timing in light of the factors in table 4.1.

Not applicable

4.4 If an EQIA is considered necessary is any data required to carry it out/ensure effective monitoring?

Please give details

Not applicable

Section 5

Endorsement

I can confirm that the proposed policy has been screened for equality of opportunity and good relations implications and has been screened out for equality impact assessment/requires a full equality impact assessment.

Signed:



Agency/Division:

Planning Service, Corporate Services, Secretariat, Communications Team

Date:

25 February 2009

PLEASE FORWARD A COPY OF THE COMPLETED FORM TO:

**DOE EQUALITY UNIT
ROOM 413A
CLARENCE COURT
10-18 ADELAIDE STREET
BELFAST
BT2 8GB**

QUERIES TO: ALEX BOYLE, EXT 41194
alex.boyle@doeni.gov.uk

LAURA McALEESE, EXT 40203
laura.mcaleese@doeni.gov.uk

Section 6

For Completion by Equality Unit

Date

Screening result recorded: _____

Placed on website: _____

Screening out completed: _____

Screening to be reconsidered: _____

Give reasons:

Agency/Division notified date: _____



Main Groups Relevant to the Section 75 Categories	
<u>Category</u>	<u>Main Groups</u>
Religious belief	Protestants; Catholics; people of non-Christian faiths; people of no religious belief
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party
Racial Group	White people; Chinese; Irish Travellers; Indians; Pakistanis; Bangladeshis; Black Africans; Black Caribbean people; people with mixed ethnic group
Gender	Men (including boys); women (including girls); trans-gendered people
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people
Age	For most purposes, the main categories are: children under 18, people aged between 18-65, and people over 65. However, the definition of age groups will need to be sensitive to the policy under consideration
“Persons with a disability”	Disability is defined as: A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
“Persons with dependants”	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with an incapacitating disability; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person
Sexual orientation	Heterosexuals; bi-sexuals; gays; lesbians