

# 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 40855/40813) 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** **Guidelines on the use of ‘3 for 2’ and Standing Capacity in Exceptional Circumstances on School Bus Transport.**

**Aims** **The guidelines provide advice for all those involved in the administration, provision, regulation and use of school bus transport on :-**

- **the exceptional circumstances in which the ‘3 for 2’ seating concession (i.e. three children under 14 sharing a two-person seat) and standing may be used i.e.**

- in situations where the personal safety of a child/children may be at risk if they were left behind, for example, at an isolated stop or station,

- when a larger number of children or members of the public than planned for are travelling due to:

- an unexpected early school closure,
- a cancelled after-school activity,
- unforeseen fluctuation of passenger numbers at the start of the school year,
- a bus breakdown,
- failure of an onward connecting service,
- significant traffic congestion,
- severe weather conditions,
- civil disturbance, or
- any other unforeseen circumstance (to be defined).

- **the recording, reporting and monitoring of such use.**

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**

- **School bus passengers**
- **School bus drivers**
- **School bus transport providers e.g. private operators, Translink and the Education and Library Boards (ELBs)**
- **Department of the Environment (DOE), Department for Regional Development (DRD) and Department of Education (DE) staff**

**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) **The policy has been devised by DOE, in partnership with key stakeholder groups i.e. DRD, Translink, DE and the ELBs.**
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- (b) **The policy will be delivered by school bus transport providers and its operation monitored by their respective parent departments i.e. DRD and DE. As detailed in (a) these organisations have played a key role in the development of the policy. DOE will have an over-arching monitoring role.**
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**2.4 What linkages are there to other NI Departments/NDPBs in relation to this policy/legislation?**

**See answer to 2.3 above - DRD and DE/ELBs involved in devising and delivering the policy.**

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

**'The Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee Inquiry into Transport used for Children Travelling to and from School – Assessment of the Four Key Recommendations', DOE, September 2006.**

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**Responses to consultation on the Draft Guidelines – March 2007.**

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**'Safer Journeys to School', Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Northern Ireland Consumer Council and DRD, June 2006.**

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

**No**

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**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 Una Downey, ext 40855).**

### 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?**

|                    | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|
| Religious belief   |            | √         |
| Political opinion  |            | √         |
| Racial group       |            | √         |
| Age                | √          |           |
| Marital status     |            | √         |
| Sexual orientation |            | √         |
| Gender             |            | √         |
| Disability         |            | √         |
| Dependants         |            | √         |

#### **Please give details**

**As the policy is about the use (in exceptional circumstances only) of ‘3 for 2’ and standing on school buses there will be a higher participation by children. Evidence gathered in the development of assessment of the NI Assembly’s recommendations on school transport (see 2.5 above) suggests that school bus passengers are predominately (but not exclusively) children aged 4-18. While all children can legally stand on a bus, only children aged under 14 can legally sit ‘3 for 2’.**

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**There is no evidence that the policy impacts disproportionately on the other Section 75 groups.**

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#### **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?**

|                   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|
| Religious belief  |            | √         |
| Political opinion |            | √         |
| Racial group      |            | √         |

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Age                | √ |   |
| Marital status     |   | √ |
| Sexual orientation |   | √ |
| Gender             |   | √ |
| Disability         |   | √ |
| Dependants         |   | √ |

**Please give details**

**Again, this policy will impact primarily on school children aged 4-18. Only children under 14 can legally sit '3 for 2'.**

**It is expected that the policy, which includes extensive reporting and monitoring, will reduce '3 for 2'/standing use, thereby having a positive impact on this grouping.**

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**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   |     | √  |
| Political opinion  |     | √  |
| Racial group       |     | √  |
| Age                |     | √  |
| Marital status     |     | √  |
| Sexual orientation |     | √  |
| Gender             |     | √  |
| Disability         |     | √  |
| Dependants         |     | √  |

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

**A short consultation on the Guidelines was carried out in March 2007 with a number of stakeholder organisations which included NICCY and the Consumer Council.**

**In general it was welcomed that the routine use of '3 for 2' and standing on school buses would be abolished (Note: This was recommended in 2006 by NICCY, The Consumer Council and DRD in their research on 'Safer Journeys to School').**

**No equality issues in relation to the 'exceptional use' policy were highlighted.**

**NICCY suggested that the Department should directly seek the**

**views of children in any future consultations.**

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- 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**

**Please give details**

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**N/A**

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- 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:**

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**N/A**

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- 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**

**N/A**

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## 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.

| <b>Prioritisation Factors</b>                | <b>Significant Impact</b> | <b>Moderate Impact</b> | <b>Low Impact</b> |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Social Need.                                 |                           |                        | √                 |
| Effect on people's daily lives.              |                           |                        | √                 |
| Effect on economic, social and human rights. |                           |                        | √                 |
| Strategic significance                       |                           |                        | √                 |
| Financial significance                       |                           |                        | √                 |

#### **Please give details**

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**This policy is in support of an overarching policy being implemented by DRD and DE i.e. the abolition of the use of '3 for 2' and standing on school buses and deals only with the exceptional use of this additional capacity. As this use is expected to be minimal it is anticipated that the impact on the above factors will be low.**

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- 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**

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**It is not considered that a full EQIA is required as no adverse impact on the Section 75 groups or the factors indicated above has been identified.**

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

N/A

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

**Please give details**

N/A

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**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:** Road Safety Division

**Date:** 14 August 2007

**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](mailto:alex.boyle@doeni.gov.uk)

**UNA DOWNEY, EXT 40855**  
[una.downey@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:una.downey@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:**

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**Agency/Division notified date:** \_\_\_\_\_



| <b>Main Groups Relevant to the Section 75 Categories</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b><u>Category</u></b>                                   | <b><u>Main Groups</u></b>  |
| 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); transgendered 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  |