



Northern
Ireland
Office

SECTION 75

EQUALITY SCREENING FORM

**Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement
UK Government approach to the 25th
anniversary**

Version: July 2022

SECTION 75 – THE LEGAL BACKGROUND

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the NIO 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
 - men and women generally
 - persons with a disability and persons without
 - persons with dependants and persons without.
2. In addition, and without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The NIO is also required to meet our legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order.
3. A list of the main groups identified as being relevant to each of the Section 75 categories is at **Annex A** of this document.

INTRODUCTION

4. This form should be read in conjunction with the Equality Commission’s Section 75 guidance “A Guide for Public Authorities” April 2010, available on the Equality Commission’s website (www.equalityni.org). **Staff should complete a form for each new or revised policy for which they are responsible (see page 4 for a definition of a policy in respect of Section 75).**
5. The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations and so determine whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is necessary. Screening should be introduced at an early stage when developing or reviewing a policy.
6. The lead role in the screening of a policy should be taken by the policy decision-maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy and should involve in the screening process:
- other relevant team members;
 - those who implement the policy;
 - staff members from other relevant areas of work; and
 - key stakeholders.

7. A flowchart which outlines the screening process is attached at **Annex B**.
8. The first step in the screening exercise is to gather evidence to inform the screening decisions. Relevant data may be either quantitative or qualitative or both (this helps to indicate whether or not there are likely equality of opportunity and/or good relations impacts associated with a policy). Relevant information will help to clearly demonstrate the reasons for a policy being either 'screened in' for an EQIA or 'screened out'.
9. The absence of evidence does not indicate that there is no likely impact but if none is available, it may be appropriate to consider subjecting the policy to an EQIA.
10. Screening provides an assessment of the likely impact, whether 'minor' or 'major', of its policy on equality of opportunity and/or good relations for the relevant categories. In some instances, screening may identify the likely impact is none.
11. The Equality Commission has developed a series of four questions, included in Part 2 of this screening form with supporting sub-questions, which should be applied to all policies as part of the screening process. They identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

SCREENING DECISIONS

12. Completion of screening should lead to one of the following three outcomes. The policy has been:
 - i. 'screened in' for equality impact assessment;
 - ii. 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted; or
 - iii. 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

SCREENING AND GOOD RELATIONS DUTY

13. The Equality Commission recommends that a policy is 'screened in' for EQIA if the likely impact on **good relations** is 'major'. While there is no legislative requirement to engage in an equality impact assessment in respect of good relations, this does not necessarily mean that EQIAs are inappropriate in this context.

FURTHER INFORMATION

15. In addition to the Equality Commission's published guidance, further information on equality, including a copy of the NIO Equality Scheme, can be found on the NIO Intranet under the [Governance, Sponsorship and Public Appointments Hub](#). If you

have any questions regarding the screening exercise or Section 75 in general please contact the Governance Team.

16. When you have completed the form please retain on file in the branch for record purposes, and send a copy to the s75 equality advisor.

PART 1 – POLICY SCOPING

DEFINITION OF POLICY

1.1. 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 any new initiatives, proposals, schemes or programmes as policies or changes to those already in existence. It is important to remember that even if a full EQIA has been carried out in 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.

OVERVIEW OF POLICY PROPOSALS

1.2. The aims and objectives of the policy must be clear and terms of reference well defined. You must take into account any available data 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.

SCOPING THE POLICY

1.3. 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 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.

1.4. Remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the NIO), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the NIO).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY

Name of the policy	Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement – UK Government approach to the 25th Anniversary
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	<p>New Policy</p> <p>This screening has been completed on the NIO's proposed approach to developing a programme of events and activities to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement ('BGFA25').</p>
What is it trying to achieve (intended aims/outcomes)?	<p>The NIO's programme to mark BGFA25 aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build understanding of the Agreement among those that are less engaged with it by emphasising its benefits and its contribution to peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland ● Create space to mark the anniversary and where appropriate celebrate aspects of it, in a way that is sensitive to the political context in Northern Ireland; and ● Offer the opportunity for civic reflection on Northern Ireland's journey over the past quarter century and to look to the quarter century ahead.
Are there any s75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The UK Government considers that the whole community in Northern Ireland benefits from the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the framework for peace and prosperity it provides; ● Young people may be a particular beneficiary of an anniversary programme of activity that contains a youth-focused element targeted at the post-agreement generation; and ● Targeted messaging on the Agreement's benefits may enhance

	understanding of it among certain s.75 categories that are assessed as less likely to engage with a programme of activity and ensure equality of opportunity.
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	The Northern Ireland Office
Who owns and who implements the policy?	The Northern Ireland Office will coordinate a programme of activity for the UK Government in accordance with this policy. It may also collaborate with partners to support the delivery of this policy.

IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?	Yes.
If yes, are they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial - legislative - other (please specify) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political - The current political climate in Northern Ireland and ongoing lack of the devolved institutions may impact the tone and scale of any BGFA25 programme, and we will have to keep this under active review to ensure equality of opportunity. ● Financial - Although the NIO's programme has been carefully costed and represents value for money, there remains a risk that, given current inflationary pressures, that the availability of funding impacts the delivery of the programme.

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff - service users - other public sector organisations - voluntary/community/trade unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The general public in Northern Ireland ● Northern Ireland Ministers and departments
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- other (please specify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary and community organisations • Public sector organisations, including local authorities • International organisations and governments, which may include the US and Irish Governments
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OTHER POLICIES WITH A BEARING ON THIS POLICY

What are they?	<p>Any policies or programmes led by international organisations or governments to mark the anniversary</p> <p>Programmes of activity to mark the 25th anniversary led by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that NIO seeks to engage with as part of this policy</p>
Who owns them?	<p>Other governments such as the US or Irish Governments</p> <p>Relevant HEIs engaged with by NIO</p>

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

1.5. Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Please ensure that your screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the s75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census results demonstrate that 42.3% of residents identify as being of a Catholic religious belief, 16.6% Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 11.55% Church of Ireland, 2.35% Methodist, 6.85% other Christian. 17.3% were of no religion and 1.6% did not state a religion.</p> <p>2021 Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey data shows that 77% of Catholics, 67% of Protestants and 67% of those with no religion agree that the Agreement remains the best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes.</p>

	<p>Conversely, 4% of Catholics, 23% of Protestants and 15% of those with no religion felt that the Agreement was no longer a good basis for governing Northern Ireland and should either be substantially changed or removed altogether.</p> <p>For historical purposes, the Northern Ireland Referendum and Election Study in 1998 showed 98% of Catholic respondents to have supported the Agreement, compared to 76% of those with no religion, and 53% of Protestants.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election returned 27 Sinn Féin MLAs, 25 DUP MLAs, 17 Alliance MLAs, 9 UUP MLAs, 8 SDLP MLAs, 2 Independent Unionist MLAs, 1 TUV MLA and 1 People Before Profit MLA. 37 MLAs designated as Unionist, 35 MLAs designated as Nationalist, and 18 designated as Other.</p> <p>The 2021 NILT found that 32% of respondents identified themselves as Unionist, 26% as Nationalist and 38% as Neither</p> <p>The 2021 NILT has also found that 87% of those that identify as Nationalist, 61% of those who identify as Neither and 60% of those that identify as Unionist agree that the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement remains best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes.</p> <p>In contrast, 27% of Unionists, 4% of Nationalist and 12% of those that identify as Neither agree that the Agreement was no longer a good basis for governing Northern Ireland and should either be substantially changed or removed altogether.</p>
Racial group	<p>According to the 2021 Northern Ireland Census, 96.55% of respondents described themselves as White, 0.76% as Mixed, 0.52% as Indian, 0.5% as Chinese, 0.42% as Black African, 0.28% as Other Asian, 0.23% as Filipino.</p>
Age	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census identifies 22.86% of the population as under 18, 33.98% aged between 18 and 45, 25% aged between 45-64 and 17.46% aged over 65.</p> <p>2021 Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey data shows 54% of 18-24 and 25-34 year olds, 67% of 35-44 year olds and, 70% of 45-54 year olds and 55-64 year olds and 76% of those aged 65+ agree that the Agreement remains best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes.</p> <p>Conversely, 11% of 18-24 year olds, 13% of 25-34 year olds, 11% of 35-44 year olds, 17% of 45-54 year olds, 20% of 55-64 year olds and 15% of those aged 65+ felt that the</p>

	<p>Agreement was no longer a good basis for governing Northern Ireland and should either be substantially changed or removed altogether.</p> <p>However, 33% of 18-24 year olds, 32% of 25-34 year olds, 21% of 35-44 year olds, 13% of 45-54 year olds, 9% of 55-64 year olds and 9% of those aged 65+ reported they 'don't know' which of the specified statements were closest to their view.</p>
Marital status	The 2011 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 47.7% of the population were married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership, 36.1% of the population were single, and 16.2% were separated, divorced or widowed.
Sexual orientation	The 2021 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey found that 93% of the population identify as heterosexual, 4% as bisexual and 2% as gay or lesbian.
Men and women generally	<p>According to the 2021 Northern Ireland Census results, 50.81% of the population are female and 49.19% are male.</p> <p>The 2021 NILT survey found that 72% of men and 60% of women agreed that 'the Agreement remains best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is', or with 'some changes'.</p>
Disability	The 2011 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 79.3% of the population consider their day-to-day activities are not limited by a long-term health problem or disability, compared to 20.7% who responded that it was limited a little or a lot.
Dependants	The 2011 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 66.1% of households have no dependent children, and 33.9% of households had one or more dependent children. 88.2% of the population provided no unpaid care, and 11.8% of the population provided unpaid care.

NEEDS, EXPERIENCES AND PRIORITIES

1.6. Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the s75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	Although the Census results indicate a greater proportion of the population identify as Catholic than other religions in

	<p>Northern Ireland, our 25th anniversary programme will not have a specific religious aspect.</p> <p>NILT data shows that some religious groups may be more supportive of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement than others and may therefore be more likely to engage with our programme.</p> <p>However, the programme will be inclusive of all faith communities and will encourage religious groups to build on our core programme by undertaking their own activity to mark the 25th anniversary as they deem appropriate.</p>
Political opinion	<p>Our programme will seek to speak to all communities in Northern Ireland and take a balanced approach to the anniversary, by giving space for civic reflection and discussion.</p> <p>NILT data shows that some political opinions are more likely to be supportive of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement than others and may be more likely to engage with our programme.</p> <p>We will also consider our use of language and the design of our messaging and programming, to ensure it is sensitive to the range of political views on the Agreement.</p>
Racial group	<p>The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.</p>
Age	<p>Our programme of activity will be inclusive of all age groups in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>However, we have identified younger people around the time of the signing of the Agreement in 1998 (or afterward) as potentially being less aware of the Agreement and its impact.</p> <p>We will ensure people and our communications relating to it engages with all age groups and intend to develop an element specifically for younger people to ensure they feel able to participate.</p>
Marital status	<p>The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.</p>
Men and women generally	<p>As noted in the data above men and women may have different attitudes and levels of support for the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and its provisions.</p> <p>However, we will ensure our Programme and its communications take a balanced approach that engages with men and women equally in Northern Ireland.</p>

Disability	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.
Dependants	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.

PART 2 – SCREENING QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

2.1. In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an EQIA, please give consideration to your answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of the Equality Commission’s “A Guide for Public Authorities”.

2.2. If your conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, 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.

2.3. 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.

2.4. 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:

- take measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- introduce 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.

2.5. Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

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? (minor/major/none)

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	<p>Groups within this s.75 category may have greater levels of interest in a 25th anniversary programme than others.</p> <p>According to the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey from 2021, people of Catholic belief continue to be more likely to regard the Agreement as remaining the best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes, than those of other religions. They may be more likely to engage with our programme communications and any activity to mark the 25th anniversary. However, the substantial gap in support for the Agreement between those of a Catholic and Protestant religious belief has narrowed markedly in the 13 years since the Referendum.</p> <p>We intend that our programme will be inclusive of all faith communities and that they can build on our core activity if they choose. To support equality of opportunity, it will recognise individuals of differing religious beliefs will hold differing views on the Agreement and the anniversary and seek to create space for them to express them equally.</p>	Minor
Political opinion	<p>Some groups within this s.75 category may have a greater interest in a 25th anniversary programme than others.</p> <p>Those of a Nationalist background may be more supportive of the Agreement than those of a Unionist or 'other' background, and therefore more likely to engage with our programme communications and activity.</p> <p>We intend for our programme to speak to all political views and communities in</p>	Minor

	Northern Ireland. To support equality of opportunity, it will recognise individuals of differing political opinions will hold differing views on the Agreement and the anniversary and seek to create space for them to express them equally.	
Racial group	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.	None
Marital status	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.	None
Sexual orientation	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.	None
Age	<p>Some groups within this s.75 category, particularly those aged 25 and under, may be less familiar with the Agreement and its contribution to peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland since its signing in 1998.</p> <p>They may be less inclined to engage with our programme of communications and activity as a result.</p> <p>Our programme has been developed to speak to all age groups in Northern Ireland. To address this potential imbalance and ensure equality of opportunity, we will consider whether young people may require a specific focus in our programme and its communications.</p>	Minor
Men and women generally	<p>Some groups within this s.75 category may be less supportive of the Agreement than others.</p> <p>They may be less engaged with our programme of communications and activity as a result.</p> <p>Our programme has been developed to speak to all age groups in Northern Ireland. To address the potential imbalance in engagement between men and women with an anniversary programme, we will consider the need for targeted communications to ensure equality of opportunity in the delivery of our programme.</p>	Minor

Disability	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.	None
Dependents	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.	None

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	<p>Our programme aims to be inclusive of all religious beliefs, enabling the whole community to reflect upon the Agreement and the peace and prosperity that it has brought.</p> <p>In demonstrating equal treatment among all religious beliefs in our programme and providing scope for religious organisations to build upon our core programme with their own activity, there is potential for promotion of increased equality of opportunity.</p>	
Political opinion	<p>Our programme aims to be inclusive of all political opinions, enabling the whole community to reflect upon the Agreement and the peace and prosperity that it has brought. It will include events and engagements to bring those of differing political opinions together.</p> <p>There would be potential scope to improve equality of opportunity for different political opinions via our programme, however, in seeking expressly to include those sceptical of the Agreement and its benefits. To achieve equality of opportunity, the programme will need to give space also to more critical voices.</p>	
Racial group		No impacts have been identified on this s.75 category.
Marital status		No impacts have been identified on this s.75 category.
Sexual orientation		No impacts have been identified on this s.75 category.
Age	There is potential scope to improve equality of opportunity for different age groups via our programme, specifically for younger age groups	

	<p>and among the post-Agreement generation who according to our analysis may be less likely to engage with the anniversary.</p> <p>A youth-focussed element to the programme in educational settings could help support the engagement of younger age groups in the programme, and support equality of opportunity.</p>	
Men and women generally	<p>There is potential scope to improve equality of opportunity for men and women via our programme to address an imbalance identified in our analysis. Women are more likely to be sceptical of the Agreement and potentially less likely to engage with the programme.</p> <p>Our programme and associated communications will need to consider how to support equality of opportunity and participation of men and women in it.</p>	
Disability		No impacts have been identified on this s.75 category.
Dependants		No impacts have been identified on this s.75 category.

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	<p>Our analysis indicates that there is shared support for the Agreement across Northern Ireland's two main religious traditions, with those of a Catholic religious background being marginally more likely to be supportive of the Agreement today than those of a Protestant or neither religious background.</p> <p>However, the substantial gap in support for the Agreement between those of a Catholic and Protestant religious belief has narrowed markedly in the 13 years since the Referendum, as has the gap with those of no religious belief. This would indicate increasing acceptance of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement on a cross-community basis.</p> <p>We consider that on balance, such a programme to open space for reflection on the Agreement, its benefits, and Northern Ireland's journey is likely to positively support good relations, but a small minority may still remain reluctant to engage with it. As such, we judge the policy impact to be 'minor' on good relations among this s.75 category.</p>	Minor
Political opinion	<p>The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement enshrined parity of esteem for the Unionist and Nationalist communities in Northern Ireland, as well as introducing the power sharing Executive. However, NILT data indicates that those identifying as Nationalist are more likely to hold the view that the Agreement remains the best basis for governing Northern Ireland than Unionists.</p> <p>Our programme of activity and communications to mark the 25th anniversary will promote the benefits of the Agreement, particularly its role in ensuring equal treatment of all communities in Northern Ireland and the peace and reconciliation that it has brought. However, we assess that there is a risk that a</p>	Minor

	small minority may remain reluctant to engage with such a programme. As such, we judge the policy impact to be 'minor' on good relations among this s.75 category.	
Racial group	The analysis conducted has not identified a reportable impact on those within this s.75 category.	None

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	<p>Those of a Catholic religious belief may be more likely to engage with a programme for the anniversary than those of a Protestant or neither of Northern Ireland's main religious backgrounds. This is on the basis of differences in support for the Agreement among Northern Ireland's two main religious backgrounds and those who consider themselves to be 'neither'. However, there has been a notable narrowing of this gap over the past 25 years.</p> <p>Any programme of activity and communications will need to ensure inclusion of those from religious backgrounds less likely to be supportive of the Agreement and engage with the programme, in order to better promote good relations. There may be particular opportunities in working collaboratively with community groups and stakeholders to ensure the inclusion of all parts of this s.75 category.</p>	
Political opinion	Those of a Nationalist political opinion are more likely to take a positive view toward the agreement than those of a Unionist political opinion. Ensuring those of both Northern Ireland's main political traditions and neither are included in	

	<p>the programme will be crucial for maximising its good relations benefits.</p> <p>Any programme of activity and communications will need to ensure inclusion of those from political opinions less likely to be supportive of the Agreement and engage with the programme, in order to better promote good relations. There may be particular opportunities in working collaboratively with community groups and stakeholders to ensure the inclusion of all parts of this s.75 category.</p> <p>To achieve this objective, the programme will also need to give space to a wide range of voices and perspectives – including some of those more critical of the Agreement. This will help maximise the inclusiveness of the programme and its good relations benefits.</p>	
Racial group		No impacts have been identified on this s.75 category.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (*For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people*).

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

The 2021 NILT found that 69% of Protestants also define themselves as Unionist. Those of a Protestant religious background and Unionist political identity may be less likely to view the Agreement as the best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes. This could impact the engagement of those from these s.75 categories with an anniversary programme, and underscores the importance of careful messaging and the inclusion of a wide range of voices - including those who may be more critical of the Agreement - in it.

The same NILT survey found that 64% of Catholics identify as Nationalist. Those of a Catholic religious background Nationalist political identity may be more likely to view the Agreement as the best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes. This could make it more likely for those of these two s.75 categories to engage with an anniversary programme, if it does not seek to include a wide range of voices and allow for the sharing of opinions from across the community spectrum.

Young people are less likely to have a strong community identity. The 2021 NILT survey found that 35% of 18-24 year olds did not identify as Unionist or Nationalist. However, research on the basis of political opinion indicated that those who do not identify as Unionist or Nationalist are likely to show a similar level of support to Unionism for viewing the Agreement as the best basis for governing Northern Ireland either as it is, or with some changes. The development of any programme and messaging for it will need to account for the lower level of community identification among a youth audience.

PART 3 – SCREENING DECISION

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

An equality impact assessment is not required given the impacts identified on s.75 groups are minor, and can be effectively mitigated in accordance with Section 3.2 of this screening.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, you should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

Mitigations are set out in 3.2 of this screening.

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

N/A

3.1. All public authorities' equality schemes must state the arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Equality Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in the Equality Commission publication: "Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment".

MITIGATION

3.2. If you have concluded that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, you may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

- The programme will need to incorporate a wide range of voices and perspectives on the Agreement, sensitively marking the anniversary and being inclusive of those more critical toward the anniversary. This mitigation will be particularly important to women, those of a Unionist or ‘neither’ political opinion, and those of a Protestant religious belief, who are less likely to be supportive of the Agreement and therefore to engage in the programme.
- The programme will need to remain sensitive to the political context in Northern Ireland at the time of the 25th anniversary, whether the Strand One institutions are operating. This mitigation will be particularly important to the political opinion s.75 category, if support is not forthcoming from the NI Parties across the community spectrum for the Assembly to function and an Executive to be formed.
- Young people are less likely to have a strong community identification or have memory of the Agreement. Specific provision will need to be developed in the programme to remedy a potential imbalance in engagement from young people in activity around the anniversary.

TIMETABLING AND PRIORITISING

3.3. 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	N/A
Social need	N/A
Effect on people’s daily lives	N/A

Relevance to the NIO's functions	N/A
Total rating score (total of 12)	N/A

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

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

No.

If yes, please provide details.

N/A

PART 4 – MONITORING

4.1. The NIO should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

4.2. The Equality Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

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

PART 5 - APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

Screened by:	Clare Sloan
Grade/Branch/Group:	Deputy Director External Relations
Date:	8 December 2022
Approved by Deputy Director:	Clare Sloan
Date:	13 December 2022

Note: A copy of the Screening Template for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy and made available on request.

Any screening forms completed within the Department will be published on a six monthly basis in line with our Departmental Equality Policy monitoring arrangements. Such information will be collated and published by the Corporate Governance Team.

ANNEX A – MAIN GROUPS IDENTIFIED AS RELEVANT TO THE SECTION 75 CATEGORIES

Category	Example Groups
Religious Belief	<p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims; people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order</i>. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “<i>similar philosophical belief</i>”.</p>
Political Opinion	Nationalists generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial Group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; Women (including girls).
Marital Status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; care of a person with disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

Sexual orientation

Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

ANNEX B – SCREENING FLOWCHART

