



Northern
Ireland
Office

SECTION 75

EQUALITY SCREENING FORM

Version: July 2022

Name of the policy	Small grant scheme
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	New policy.
What is it trying to achieve (intended aims/outcomes)?	<p>This policy aims to strengthen ties between the community and voluntary sector in NI and GB and support them to address shared challenges as well as grasp shared opportunities. The policy will be a grant delivered with our delivery partner. This grant will be available to the community, voluntary and charity sector (and others) in Northern Ireland. Any award will be for the benefit of communities in Northern Ireland through the lens of East-West connections. The grant will support our objectives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen East-West connections by developing long lasting civic relationships; • Support the development of cultural, sports and people-to-people links; • Build leadership capability opportunities for community leaders on an East-West basis; and • Facilitate positive and constructive dialogue on shared opportunities/challenges facing communities in the UK. <p>It will further seek to meet and facilitate greater support for East-West cooperation and collaboration.</p>
Are there any s75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.	All s75 categories could potentially benefit from the intended policy through the possible benefits delivered by

	community groups and other recipients of funding.
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	The Northern Ireland Office.
Who owns and who implements the policy?	The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will own the policy. The policy will be implemented in collaboration with our delivery partner.

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) 	Delivery partner capability to effectively deliver this grant to meet demand within the sector.

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED

<p>Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff - service users - other public sector organisations - voluntary/community/trade unions - other (please specify) 	<p>Community and voluntary groups and civic society in Northern Ireland and GB.</p> <p>Given the intended aims of the scheme and the level of support that we expect to be available over the two years of the grant those community groups/organisations will likely be a mixture of both smaller scale and large umbrella organisations.</p> <p>Furthermore, we have defined community groups, for this screening, as those within the local community, civic and voluntary sector organisations. These include registered charities or companies. We have not prescribed an exhaustive list of who could qualify for this grant scheme. Instead, we will, with the expertise of the delivery partner, consider the merits of each applicant to determine the exact scope of who would meet the criteria, deliver the outlined objectives and that communities in NI would stand to benefit.</p>
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OTHER POLICIES WITH A BEARING ON THIS POLICY

What are they?	N/A
Who owns them?	N/A

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 Census in Northern Ireland showed 45.7% % of the population identified as Catholic and 43.5% of the population defined themselves as being from a Protestant religious upbringing. However, no data has been identified to indicate what proportion of each of the main religious beliefs are involved in the groups that would be eligible for consideration under the proposed grants scheme.</p> <p>Nevertheless, there is a general perception that community groups can be disadvantaged when it comes to accessing funding due to a lack of capacity and capability. Data is, however, anecdotal.</p>
Political opinion	<p>Recent Lucid Talk polling indicates that 41% indicated their first preference vote would be for a Unionist party (DUP, UUP, TUV) if an assembly election were held the following day. It also showed 40% of respondents would list a nationalist party (SDLP/Sinn Fein, Aontu) in these circumstances. 17% indicated their first preference would be for 'other' parties (Alliance, PFB, Greens). 2% indicated they would vote for independent or other candidates. However, no data has been identified to indicate what proportion of the various political opinions are involved in groups that would be eligible for consideration under the proposed scheme.</p> <p>There is a general perception that community groups can be disadvantaged when it comes to accessing funding due to a lack of capacity and capability. Data is, however, anecdotal.</p>
Racial group	<p>The 2021 Census in Northern Ireland reported 96.55% of the population to be of a white ethnicity, and 3.23% to be of an ethnicity other than white. This is a growth of 2.6 percentage points. The largest minority ethnic categories in the population were 'Mixed Ethnicity', Indian and Chinese.</p> <p>There are some anecdotal perceptions within the minority and ethnic sector that there is inadequate funding to support the needs of the sector, particularly in line with the growth of the ethnic, and minority populations in Northern Ireland. However, for this screening, it would not be possible to comprehensively determine this.</p>
Age	<p>The 2021 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 19% of the population were 0-14, 31% were 15-39, 32% were 40-64 and 17% were over 65. However, age does not have a direct bearing on this policy area.</p>

Marital status	Marital status is not directly relevant to this policy area and has not been considered in this screening.
Sexual orientation	The 2021 Census shows that 90% of the NI population identifies as straight/heterosexual, 2% define themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other and 8% prefer not to say. No evidence is available to suggest that sexual orientation is directly impacted by this policy area.
Men and women generally	The 2021 Census in Northern Ireland showed 49% of the population to be male and 51% of the population to be female. No evidence is available to suggest that gender/sex is directly impacted by this policy area.
Disability	The 2011 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 76% of the population consider their day-to-day activities are not limited by a long-term health problem or disability, compared to 24% who responded that it was limited a little or a lot. No evidence is available to suggest that disability is directly impacted by this policy area.
Dependants	Dependants status is not relevant to this policy area and has not been considered in this screening.

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	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Political opinion	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Racial group	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Age	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Marital status	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Sexual orientation	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Men and women generally	This grant will be available to all community groups.

Disability	This grant will be available to all community groups.
Dependants	This grant will be available to all community groups.

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 direct 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	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of religious background. Any impact on particular religious groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	Minor.
Political opinion	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of political opinion. Any impact on particular political groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	Minor.
Racial group	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of race of the group or they act in the interest of. Any impact on particular ethnic and minority groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	Minor.
Age	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of the age profiles of the group or those they act in the interest of. Any impact on particular age groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	Minor.
Marital status	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of marital status.	None.
Sexual orientation	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of sexual orientation. Any impact on particular political groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	Minor.
Men and women generally	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of gender/sex.	Minor.

	Any impact on particular political groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	
Disability	This grant will be available to all community groups, regardless of disability. Any impact on particular political groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups.	Minor.
Dependants	N/A	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	Yes - any impact on particular religious groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Political opinion	Yes - any impact on particular political groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Racial group	Yes - any impact on particular racial groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Age	Yes - any impact on particular age groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Marital status	Yes - any impact on particular marital status groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any	

	disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Sexual orientation	Yes - any impact on any particular sexual orientation groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Men and women generally	Yes - any impact on the basis of gender will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Disability	Yes - any impact on particular disability/ability groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	
Dependants	Yes - any impact on particular dependent focused groups will likely have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by addressing any disadvantage experienced by community groups in this sector.	

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	Capacity building and improved understanding of challenges and solutions facing communities can be considered a positive action that can improve the ability of community groups to operate which can improve outcomes for communities and, in turn, good relations.	Minor.
Political opinion	Capacity building can be considered a positive action that can improve the ability of community groups to operate which can improve outcomes for communities and, in turn, good relations.	Minor.
Racial group	Capacity building and improved understanding of challenges and solutions facing communities can be considered a positive action that can improve the ability of community groups to operate which can improve outcomes for communities and, in turn, good relations. There is a particular potential for benefits to be felt by the ethnic and minority community groups who are typically less well established than other sectors in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.	Minor

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	Yes. By developing the capacity and capability of community groups and expanding their networks on an E/W basis, those groups will be able to improve good relations between people of different religious beliefs through their community work.	N/A
Political opinion	Yes. By developing the capacity and capability of community groups expanding their networks on an E/W basis, those groups will be able to	N/A

	improve good relations between people of different political opinions through their community work.	
Racial group	Yes. By developing the capacity and capability of community groups expanding their networks on an E/W basis, those groups will be able to improve good relations between people of different racial groups through their community work.	N/A

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.

Community groups often address issues faced by people with multiple and/or intersecting identities. The impact of this policy would be positive as community groups would have increased capacity and capability to strengthen their networks, understand the community and voluntary sector (i.e. funding opportunities) and use this information for the benefit of the communities they operate within. All Section 75 categories could be positively impacted by the policy.

PART 3 – SCREENING DECISION

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

This policy will be open to all community groups. The connections made between NI and GB will bring benefits to communities and groups across all of NI. The benefits of this scheme are expected to outlast the length of the policy by strengthening the ties and collaboration of community groups in NI and GB.

The policy is expected to have only positive effects on good relations and on equality of opportunity.

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.

The objectives of the policy are to benefit community groups across Northern Ireland and the policy is expected to have only positive effects on good relations and on equality of opportunity. As a result, there is no need to mitigate the policy or introduce an alternative policy.

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 impacts on good relations and equality of opportunity are perceived to be positive. As such, no proposed changes/amendments are required.

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?

N/A

If yes, please provide details.

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.

Please set out any proposed monitoring arrangements for the proposed policy:

The NIO will continuously review the arrangements for this proposal through the memorandum of understanding that is issued to delivery partners for the grant.
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PART 5 - APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

Screened by:	<i>Political Affairs Group Policy Advisor</i>
Grade/Branch/Group:	Senior Policy Advisor, Political Affairs Group
Date:	20.05.2025
Approved by Director:	Chief Operation Officer & External Affairs Director
Date:	06.06.2025

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

