

1. POLICY TO BE SCREENED

What is a policy?

The Equality Commission has defined 'policies' as '**all the ways a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland**'. The Act defines 'functions' as including powers and duties'.

These are effectively a catch-all definitions that cover all Departmental policies, strategies, schemes, procedures and functions. If in doubt please contact the Equality Unit for advice.

1.1 Title of policy to be screened:

Disability Strategy and Action Plan 2007- 2008

1.2 Brief description of policy to be screened:

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006), public authorities, when carrying out their functions must have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

These are known as the disability duties. Furthermore, under section 49B of the Act, public authorities are also under a duty to submit to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) disability action plans showing how they propose to fulfil the disability duties in relation to their functions. To this end, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Disability Strategy and Action Plan has been developed following the guidance laid out by the ECNI's 'Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life – A Guide for Public Authorities'.

1.3 Aims of policy to be screened:

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

1.4 Branch responsible for devising and delivering policy:
You should indicate if responsibility is shared with another Government Department or Departments.

1.5 Name of and contact details for person carrying out screening:

2. SCREENING ANALYSIS

When proceeding to screening “proper”, the Equality Commission has stated that there are four criteria to be considered. These are listed at 2.1- 2.4 below. You are asked to consider the criteria in relation to the Section 75 groups and to answer the questions accordingly.

“Don’t know”?, “No evidence”?

The questions ask for evidence in relation to the Section 75 groups. You should not think of the “don’t know” column in the form as the easy option to respond to any of the questions. In cases where you don’t know and you don’t have data on file, you will need to make a pragmatic judgement based on experience as to whether the policy you are screening may have an impact on any of the groups. If your judgement is that the policy may have a differential adverse impact on any of the Section 75 groups (i.e. it affects them differently and less favourably than other groups), you should seek to obtain evidence. You should note that evidence can be qualitative – i.e. drawn from the experience of individuals from their perspective - as well as quantitative. Officials must give consideration to steps that they could reasonably be expected to take to obtain evidence and thereby inform their decision-making. Such steps could include meeting with a representative group or selective consultation.

Where there is little or no evidence, and common sense indicates that a differential impact may be expected, you should discuss this with the Equality Unit.

2.1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups? If so, please indicate below.

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender			
Sexual orientation			
Religion			
Political opinion			
Disability (physical and learning)			
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)			
Age			
Dependant responsibilities			
Marital status			

If YES give details:

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Give brief details of the evidence available/used:

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2.2 Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender			
Sexual orientation			
Religion			
Political opinion			
Disability (physical and learning)			
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)			
Age			
Dependant responsibilities			
Marital status			

If YES give details:

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

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender			
Sexual orientation			
Religion			
Political opinion			
Disability (physical and learning)			
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)			
Age			
Dependant responsibilities			
Marital status			

If YES give details:

2.4 Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems that are specific to them?

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender			
Sexual orientation			
Religion			
Political opinion			
Disability (physical and learning)			
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)			
Age			
Dependant responsibilities			
Marital status			

If YES give details:

If the answer to **any** of the questions in respect of any of the categories is “**YES**”, you – in discussion with the Equality Unit – will have to consider whether the policy has a significant impact on equality of opportunity and, therefore, should be subject to an equality impact assessment.

If the answer to **all** the questions in section 2 is **NO** an equality impact assessment is not required.

If the answer to any of the above questions is **DON'T KNOW**, and common sense and experience indicate that a differential impact may be expected, you will need to discuss this with the Equality Unit.

It may be that a policy has an adverse differential impact on certain people in one or more of the categories as a consequence of targeting or affirmative action to combat an existing or historical inequality. If this is the case, please give details below and contact the Equality Unit if you are in doubt:

3. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATION

Equality impact assessment procedures are confined to those policies considered likely to have significant implications for equality of opportunity.

3.1 If screening has indicated that a policy is having an adverse differential impact, how would you categorise it?

Please tick. N/A

Significant impact	
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Low impact	
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3.2 Do you consider that this policy needs to be submitted to a full equality impact assessment?

YES	NO

If NO but the policy has significant impact, please give reasons for your recommendation:

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Please indicate the time it has taken to complete this form and at what level.

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Please forward a copy of this form to the Equality Unit