



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Equality Scheme

**Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the
Northern Ireland Act 1998**

**This document is available in a range of formats on request. Please
contact us with your requirements (see page two for contact details).**

Approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 22 February
2017.

Reviewed by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in December 2021.

Contact Details.

Council Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Address The Grange, Mountjoy Road, Omagh BT79 7BL;
Townhall, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh
BT74 7BA

Telephone 028 8224 5321 or 028 6632 5050

Textphone 028 8225 6216 or 028 6632 7969

Email info@fermanaghomagh.com

Website www.fermanaghomagh.com

For information on any part of the Scheme contact the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services

Address Townhall, Enniskillen BT74 7BA

Telephone 028 6634 2436

Textphone 028 6632 7969

Email louise.horner@fermanaghomagh.com

For information in relation to how to make a complaint, contact the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services:

Address Townhall, Enniskillen BT74 7BA

Telephone 028 6634 2436

Textphone 028 6632 7969

Email louise.horner@fermanaghomagh.com

Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act¹.

In our equality scheme we set out how Fermanagh and Omagh District Council proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and Elected Members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it.

We, The Chair and the Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector, the business community and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

Chair

Chief Executive

Date

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are 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.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, 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. ²

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority³. This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Fermanagh and Omagh District Council as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

1.3 We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

² For the Council's working definition of the term “Good Relations”, please refer to page 56

³ Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Who we are and what we do

1.4 The roles and functions of councils, established in the Local Government Act 2014 and in other legislation, fall into four types:

- ❖ Direct service provision in response to community needs and legislative requirements – setting priorities for the area and for the Council and being accountable for the choices made.
- ❖ A development role as enabler/facilitator on economic and community development initiatives – enabling and empowering local people; setting out the vision for local strategies in partnership with other agencies.
- ❖ A representative role on boards such as health and education – championing the District.
- ❖ A consultative role on issues such as education, water, roads and housing, by providing a challenge to the performance of all of the delivery agencies in the District.

From April 2015, the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is responsible for:

Arts and Entertainment

Bio-Diversity

Building maintenance and Contract Management

Building regulation

Civic Functions

Community Development

Community Planning

Community Safety

Consumer Safety

Control of communicable diseases and Food Poisoning

Corporate Health & Safety

Corporate Planning

Corporate Projects

Dangerous Buildings

Dog and pest control services

Economic Development

Local Economic Development:

Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows;

Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire);

Social Entrepreneurship;

Investing for Women,

Emergency Planning Liaison

Energy Performance of Buildings

Environment and Countryside

Environmental protection

Equality Legislation

Estate Management

EU Rural Development Programme

Financial Services
 Food control
 Good Relations
 Grounds maintenance – inc Horticulture, Cemeteries, Parks and Play areas
 Health and Safety
 Home Safety
 Housing:
 Registration of houses in multiple occupation, and
 Housing unfitness responsibilities, including repair and demolition notices
 Information Systems & Technology
 Internal Audit
 Leisure Facilities
 Licensing
 Local Tourism:
 Small scale tourism accommodation development;
 Providing business support including business start up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes, and
 Providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues.
 Local water recreational facilities
 Member Services
 Museum Services
 Neighbourhood Renewal - enterprises initiatives
 Off Street Car Parking
 Parks and Open Spaces
 Personnel, Training & Development
 Planning to include:
 Local development plan functions, and
 Development control and enforcement.
 Policing and Community Safety Partnership
 Postal naming and numbering
 Property certificates
 Public Health
 Purchasing & Tendering
 Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages
 Sports Development
 Street Cleansing – including Public Conveniences
 Sustainable Development
 Tourism and Visitor Attractions
 Townhall Facilities
 Urban regeneration and community development including:
 Functions associated with physical development (e.g. environmental improvement schemes);
 Area based regeneration (such as Neighbourhood Renewal)*, and
 Some community development programmes for the voluntary and community sectors
 Vehicle and plant maintenance
 Waste Management –including Recycling & Disposal

- Powers did not transfer from Central Government

Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties. (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme Consultation is in Chapter 3, monitoring arrangements, assessment of impact of policies and publication arrangements in Chapter 4, staff training in Chapter 5, access to information in Chapter 6, the Councils complaints procedure in Chapter 8, and publication and annual Review of the Councils Equality Scheme in Chapters 9 and 10

In addition, we will put the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

Responsibilities and reporting

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (details on Page 1) and we will respond to you as soon as possible.

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans⁴.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans will reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans will be subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will prepare an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

⁴ See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our annual report.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report will be available on our website: www.fermanaghomagh.com or by contacting: Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (details on Page 1).

2.9 We will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 Section 75 will be mainstreamed across all of the Council's Directorates and Departments. Directors and Heads of Service will be responsible for ensuring that Section 75 duties and responsibilities are considered as an integral part of developing and implementing policy.

2.11 Action plan/action measures

2.11 The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. (Appendix 6).

2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75 categories⁵ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁶.

2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.17 The Council will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress

⁵ See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

⁶ See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

report will also incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on our website: www.fermanaghomagh.com or by contacting: Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (details on Page 1).

If you require it in an alternative format, please contact us on the details provided.

2.19 It will also be reviewed twice a year by Senior Management Team.

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)')

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy. Consultations will also be undertaken with, but not confined to, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of ours, and our consultees, resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Council is aware of changes in best practice in relation to consultation and will keep its arrangements for consultation under regular review to ensure that the different needs and requirements of different groups are properly represented in its consultation processes. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions and Video Calls, or

- Telephone consultations.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We will take account of developing good practice from sources such as the Equality Commission in encouraging responses from all sections of the community, including those groups which are traditionally hard to reach including children and young people, people with disabilities and people from minority ethnic communities.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats⁷, in a timely manner, usually within twenty working days. We will try to assist such consultees to respond within the allocated timeframe where possible.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 We will continue to work with the community and voluntary sector to enhance their awareness of S75 matters.

3.2.6 In line with current ECNI Consultation Principles⁸, at present, the consultation period will normally last for twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented, or should guidelines on consultation change, then our practice will reflect current best practice and advice from the Equality Commission.

On occasions we may choose to continue consultation beyond the normal period and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments⁹.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we will take account of the equality screening already undertaken by the relevant legislative body.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

⁷ See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

⁸ <http://www.equalityni.org/Employers-Service-Providers/Public-Authorities/Section75/Section-75/PublicConsultation/Consultation-principles>

⁹ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We will make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We will provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report will be prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback will be provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at www.fermanaghomagh.gov.uk or by contacting the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (details on Page 1).

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (details on Page 1) to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9. (2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g., 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will use the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:

- the guidance on screening, as detailed in the Commission's guidance 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)' and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance 'Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)'.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and without prejudice to the equality of opportunity duty, to better promote good relations. ¹⁰

4.5 Screening will be completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

¹⁰ The Screening matrix is attached as Appendix 7 to the Scheme

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy will be taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The Council will undertake the screening process in a holistic way, in order to ensure that considerations of the respective duties in relation to equality of opportunity and good relations support the effective implementation and intended outcomes of the policy. The Council will consider mitigating actions where there are tensions between the two duties, but will always be mindful of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which sets out the Council's duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and, in relation to good relations, refers to the desirability of promoting good relations. All reports to Council, or to a Committee of the Council, will be required to outline consideration of the proposed policy on both equality and good relations.

4.8 The following questions will be applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- 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)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities, without prejudice to the equality of opportunity duty, to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities by altering the policy or working with others in government or the wider community? Yes/No
- Is there an opportunity to encourage people with disabilities to participate in public life by altering the policy or working with others in government or the wider community? Yes/No

4.9 In order to answer the screening questions, we will gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.10 Where the answer to the question set out at 4.8 above is yes and there are opportunities to better promote good relations (without prejudice to the equality of opportunity duty, and in accordance with the definition below), then The decision maker will recommend to an established cross party group that the policy is subject to consultation where the decision is likely to have a major impact on the promotion of good relations¹¹ (for details see above Chapter 3 "Our Arrangements for Consulting.")

Good relations can be said to exist where there is:

- a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding
- an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility or harassment
- a fair level of participation in society.

Good relations means, in particular, having regard to the desirability of a) tackling prejudice and b) promoting understanding."

4.11 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to the screening questions set out in 4.8 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation¹² or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted, we will nonetheless consider measures that may mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that may better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening matrix the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the Chief Executive and the appropriate policy lead within the Council.

4.13 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity grounds, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. In determining the priority to be given in undertaking an EQIA, the policy will be ranked in relation to its impact on Social need, the effect on people's daily lives, the effect on economic, social and human rights, the significance in terms of

¹¹ See Appendix 7 Page 69 for definition of Impact

¹² Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

expenditure, and the significance in terms of strategic importance. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the Chief Executive and the appropriate policy lead within the Council.

4.14 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the Chief Executive and the appropriate policy lead within the Council.

4.15 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening matrix, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website www.fermanaghomagham.com

4.16 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.17 The outcome of our screening matrices are published on our website as soon as possible after completion [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details]. In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a six-month period are also sent directly to consultees on a bi-annual basis.

The Good Relations Duty and Policy Formulation

4.17(a) Decision makers will be made aware of the duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations through the provisions in this scheme including the arrangements for staff training in chapter 5. The Action Plan referred to in this scheme will also ensure compliance with the good relations duty as a continuing duty. In addition to these and other provisions in this scheme the Council commits to the following:

- At the time of taking a decision or formulating a policy, decision makers will take into account the desirability of promoting good relations and taking into consideration its statutory aims.
- Records will be kept of this and included in any officer report on the matter.
- In undertaking this process, decision makers will be mindful that the duty to promote good relations must be fulfilled without prejudice to the equality of opportunity duty.
- Policies likely to be relevant to the Good Relations duty will be subject to consultation at appropriate stage(s) (for details see Chapter 3 "Our arrangements for Consulting").

Equality impact assessment

4.18 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact on equality of opportunity of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and to consider complementary steps desirable to promote good relations.

4.19 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.20 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 "Our Arrangements for Consulting").

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.21 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

What we publish

4.22 Screening reports

These will be published bi-annually. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council over the six-month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e:
 - whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
 - whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

- whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to the completed screening matrix/matrices on our website

4.23 Screening Matrices

For details on the availability of our screening matrices please refer to 4.14.

4.24 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports will be published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which may mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.25 All information we publish will be accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.26 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed matrices, the results of equality impact assessments) will be available on our website www.fermanaghomaggh.com and by contacting the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (contact details on Page 2).

4.27 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 6-month period will also be sent directly to all consultees on twice a year.

4.28 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.29 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Council will follow guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.30 We will monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.31 We will establish systems to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations including:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine Section 75 categories on an ongoing basis
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine Section 75 categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.32 If over a two-year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.33 We will review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed annually.

4.34 All completed job applications for positions in the Council have to have an equality monitoring form attached. This data will be collated and compiled by the Personnel section who also operate a PAMS system to analyse the data on employees. This system will provide valuable data on the profile of employees and applicants.

4.35 Any group or individual awarded a grant from the Council will be required to provide monitoring data in relation to themselves or their group as well as those people at whom the grant is targeted.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.36 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.37 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]

4.38 The Council will make publicly available on our website the outcome of any monitoring through publication on the website www.fermanaghomagh.com and in printed format by contacting the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (details on Page 1).

4.39 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5 Staff training

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we will introduce an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 The Council will draw up a detailed training plan for its staff which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Council's equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements will be put in place to ensure all our staff and elected members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Council Staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme by June 2015.
- The Section 75 statutory duties will form part of induction training for new staff.

- Focused training will be provided for key staff within the Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.
- Disability and Deaf Awareness Training, Introduction to Sign Language, Disability Awareness Training and other disability specific training courses will be offered and provided by other providers including members of the Access and Inclusion Groups and registered charities who deliver the training programmes using people who have a disability.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme will be subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We will evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.
- The numbers of staff trained during the year.
- Attendance at all training courses is recorded to enable monitoring of attendees. This helps to ensure that employees receive training appropriate to their needs and those of the organisation.

Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others.

In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Council staff will support anyone making a request for information and provide information in a format suitable to their needs wherever possible.

Access to information

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we will provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The Council liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within twenty working days.

Council will put in place mechanisms for integrating both spoken and written language forms in a way that best meets the needs of local language communities.

6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

6.5 We are committed to achieving high standards of accessibility to the information and services we provide. We recognise that there are a growing range of communication methods and channels and will regularly evaluate the effective use of such channels in meeting the differing needs of people within the community.

Access to services

6.6 We are committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 grounds. The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.7 Council is committed to providing appropriate interpreting services and ensuring accessibility of Council buildings and facilities.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 We will regularly review access to information and services across all our functions at least annually to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

6.9 These include:

- Provision of interpreting/translating services – annual review
- Monitoring complaints - ongoing
- Reasonable adjustments - ongoing
- Satisfaction surveys - ongoing
- Article 55 review - ongoing

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.

7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment it is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure (Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 The Council will be responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact: The Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (contact details Page 1).

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 5 days.

8.5 The Head of Corporate and Strategic Services will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (contact details on Page 1).

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:

www.fermanaghomagh.com

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various Section 75 grounds.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at www.fermanaghomagh.com

or contact the Head of Corporate and Strategic Services (contact details on Page 1).

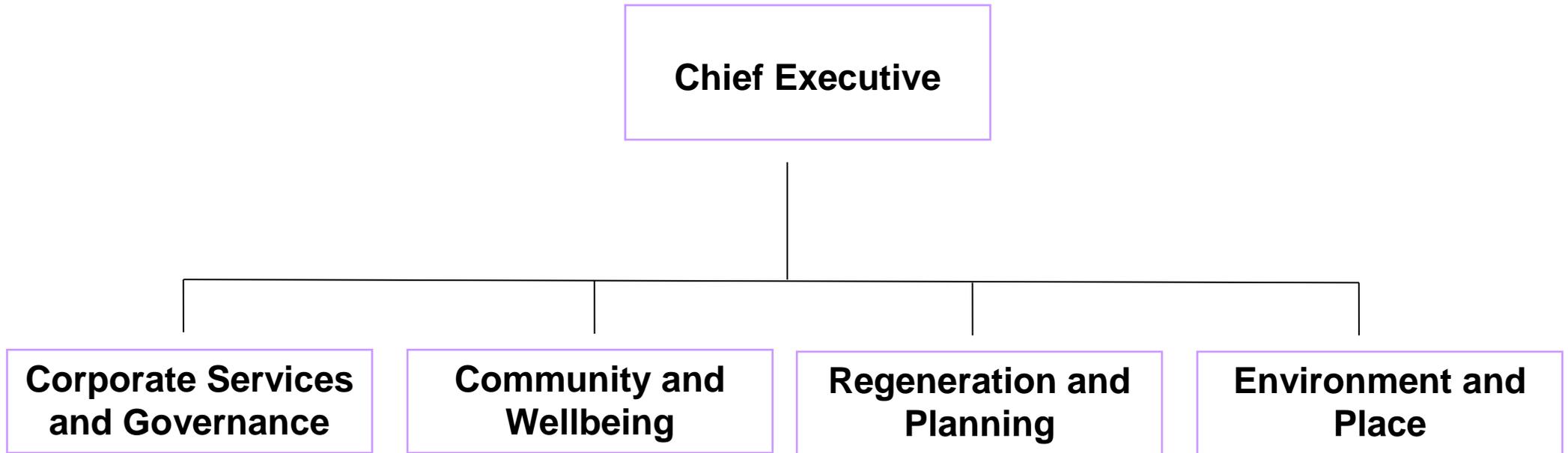
Chapter 10 Review of our Equality Scheme (Schedule 9 8. (3))

10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of the final draft of the equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public on the Council's website, its availability will be advertised in the local papers and it will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1 Organisational Structure Chart



Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths. For the purposes of Section 75, the term "religious belief" is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order ¹³ . Therefore, "religious belief" also includes any perceived religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any "similar philosophical belief".
Political opinion ¹⁴	Nationalist 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; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

¹³ See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: "In this Act..."political opinion" and "religious belief" shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998."

¹⁴ *ibid*

Appendix 3 List of consultees
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

The below list of organisations is a regional list which illustrates groups and organisations which are representative of the nine Section 75 categories.

The council, when appropriate, also uses a localised consultation list, which is reviewed regularly in line with Data Protection legislation and GDPR.

Additionally, the council will continue to review both lists regularly to ensure that they remain relevant to the functions of the Council.

Action for Children NI
Action Mental Health
RNID
ADAPT NI
ADOPT
Age NI
Age Sector Platform Group
Alcoholics Anonymous
Alliance Party of NI
Alzheimer's Society
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
ARC Healthy Living Centre
Ards & North Down Borough Council
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Autism NI
Aware Defeat Depression
Barnardos NI Regional Office
Belfast City Council
Brain Injury Matters
Brainwaves Northern Ireland
British Red Cross
CACDP (Council for Advancement of Communication with Deaf People)

Cara-Friend
Care for Cancer
Carers NI
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
Cedar Foundation
Centre for Independent Living NI
Child Poverty Action Group
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Citizens Advice Bureau
Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann
Commission for NI
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Community Connections
Community Relations Council
Conservation Volunteers N. I.
Council for Homeless (NI) – Londonderry
Council for the Homeless – Belfast
Crossroads Caring for Carers
CYSP
Dawn Women's Group
Deafblind UK
Democratic Unionist Party
Derry City & Strabane District Council
Diabetes UK Northern Ireland
Disability Action
Disabled Police Officers Association
Downs Syndrome Association
Early Years - the organisation for young children
Easilink Community Transport
Ecclesville Centre

Education Authority for Northern Ireland
Employers Forum on Disability
Equality Coalition
Equality Commission for NI
Equality Unit of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Family Planning Association NI
Fold Housing Association
Forget-me-nots
Friendship & Caring Trust
Gaelic Athletic Association
Gaelic League
Gateway Team
Gay & Lesbian Youth NI
Gingerbread NI – Belfast
Gingerbread NI – Ballymena
GMB Trade Union
Hare Krishna Community
Heads Together
Home-Start
Independent Councillors
Indian Community Centre
Invest NI
Irish Advocacy Network Ltd
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Leonard Cheshire Disability
Local Government Staff Commission for NI
ME Support Northern Ireland (MESNI)
Mencap
Meningitis Research Foundation
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Mid Ulster District Council

MindWise
Multiple Sclerosis Society NI
Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Nexus Institute
NI Association for Mental Health
NI Chest, Heart & Stroke
NI Commissioner for Children and Young People
NI Council for Voluntary Action
NI Gay Rights Association
NI Housing Executive
NI Human Rights Commission
NI Office
NI Public Service Alliance
NI Rural Women's Network
NI Statistics & Research Agency
NICEM
North West Forum of People with Disabilities
Northern Ireland Anti Poverty Network
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
NSPCC
Parkinson's Disease Society
Parkinson's Support (NI)
Participation Network
Partners in Care
POBAL NI
Positive Futures
Positive Futures
Praxis Care Group
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
Progressive Unionist Party

PSNI Headquarters
Ramona House
Riding for the Disabled
Riverbrooke Cross Border Initiative
Rivers Agency
RNIB
Royal British Legion - Women's Section
Rural Community Network
Rural Development Council
Samaritans
Save the Children
SDLP
Senior Citizens Consortium
Shopmobility
Sinn Fein
South West College
South West College Students Union
Stonepark Baptist Youth Fellowship
Supporting Communities NI
SW Age Partnership
SW College
The Barnabas Trust
The Commissioner for Older People for N.I.
The Nexus Institute
The Rainbow Project
The Salvation Army
The Ulster-Scots Agency
Transport NI
Traveller Movement NI
Ulster Unionist Party
Unison

Unite The Union
Victim Support NI
Voice of Young People in Care
Volunteer Now
Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland
Women's Forum NI
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource & Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Youth Action NI
Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed
(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Reflect S75 obligations in Strategic and Operational Business Plans (2.5)	Chief Executive/Directors	April (annually)
Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]	Policy Officer Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	31 August (annually)
Action plan		
Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	January 2022
Finalised action plan published [2.18]	Strategic Services Policy Officer/ Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	May 2022
Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	May 2022
Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Annually
Screening Matrices [4.15]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Website as soon as possible after completion. Forwarded to consultees bi-annually (as per Equality Scheme). Annually in Annual Equality Progress Report.
Screening of Policies	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services/ Director of Service	Ongoing
EQIA timetable [4.16]	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Annually in Annual Equality Progress Report.

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Monitoring		
Review of monitoring information [4.31]	SMT	Annually
Publication of monitoring information [4.33;4.34]	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Annually in Annual Equality Progress Report.
Training		
Development of summary scheme [5.4]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	3 months after Scheme is reviewed
Development of overall training programme [5.5]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	3 months after Scheme is reviewed
Focussed training [5.4]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Ongoing
Update training [5.4]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Annually
Evaluation of training [5.6]	Policy Officer/Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Annually
Assessing access to information and services [6.9]	SMT	Annually
Communication of Equality Scheme [9.3]	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Ongoing
Notification of consultees [9.3]	Head of Corporate and Strategic	Within 3 months of final approval by Equality

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
	Services	Commission
Review of equality scheme [10.1]	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	Within 5 years the previous review (December 2021)

Glossary of terms

Action Plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 categories and good relations categories.

Action Measures and Outcomes

Specific measures to promote equality and good relations for the relevant Section 75 categories and good relations categories, linked to achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

Adverse Impact

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 ground, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

Affirmative Action

In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

Article 55 Review

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern. These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

Audit of Inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing

inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 Section 75 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Differential Impact

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

Discrimination

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct Discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Victimisation
- Harassment

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

Direct Discrimination

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory nondiscrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a genuine occupational requirement exception; or, a positive action exception which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements” or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

Indirect Discrimination

The definition of this term varies across some of the antidiscrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

Disability Discrimination

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment,

discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) Disability-related Discrimination, and (b) failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

(a) Disability-related Discrimination generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.

(b) Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments:

One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

Victimisation

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Harassment

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Economic Appraisal

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

Equality Impact Assessment

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of Opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people because of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation.

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality Scheme

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An Equality Scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good Relations

Equality Commission Advice on Good Relations in Local Councils.

September 15

Although there is no current statutory definition of good relations within Section 75, or in any other Northern Ireland legislation, the Commission included a definition in its 2007 guidance, Promoting Good Relations – A Guide for Public Authorities. The guidance references a number of other definitions in use by public authorities at that time and recommended that public authorities themselves determine a definition of good relations, and a vision and aims, appropriate for their circumstances.

In the context of the Northern Ireland Executive strategy on good relations, Together: Building a United Community, the Commission has proposed that there should be a definition of good relations in statute, to ensure clarity and consistency of purpose in shaping actions and promoting good relations.

The Commission has indicated that there are a number of elements that would be helpful in the formulation of such a definition. Good relations could be said to exist where there is:

- a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding
- an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility or harassment
- a fair level of participation in society.

The definition contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in Great Britain is also useful in that it provides public authorities there with direction on how they should comply with their duty to have due regard to the need to foster good relations, as follows:

(5) - Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) tackle prejudice, and
- (b) promote understanding

The Commission will build upon the above and give further consideration to a definition through review of and updating of its good relations guidance

Mainstreaming Equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Mitigation of Adverse Impact

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). They provide statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Positive Action

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination.

Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that positive action involves the taking of lawful actions whereas positive discrimination involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, positive action is by definition lawful whereas positive discrimination is unlawful.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Schedule 9

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an Equality Scheme.

Section 75 Investigation

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved Equality Scheme.

There are two types of Commission investigation, these are as follows:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved Equality Scheme;
2. An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme.

Appendix 6 Action plan/action measures



Fermanagh & Omagh
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Draft Equality Action Plan 2022 - 2024

Contact Officers:

Head of Corporate and Strategic Services
Policy Officer (Equality)

Contact Details:

Policy and Strategic Services
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Townhall
2 Townhall Street
Enniskillen
County Fermanagh
BT74 7BA

Draft Equality Action Plan 2022 - 2024

Actions	Performance Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility
Theme A: Equality of Opportunity			
Outcome: Our Communities are involved in the development of plans to guide the Council's actions in promoting Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations.			
A1 Undertake a consultation process on the 2022-2024 Equality Action Plan	The Equality Action Plan is reviewed following the outcome of the consultation process.	December 2021 to March 2022	Policy Officer (Equality)
	A final Equality Action Plan is approved by Elected Members for the period 2022 - 2024.	April 2022.	
A2. Report on the progress of the Equality Action Plan for 2022-2024	Annual Progress Report is submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.	August (Annually).	Policy Officer (Equality)
A3. Ensure that Equality and Good Relations is embedded to all key Council documents e.g. Corporate Plans, Community Plan, etc.	Inclusion of the concepts of Equality and Good Relations is visible in the development of each strategic document.	Ongoing.	Policy Officer (Equality)
A4. Undertake a consultation process to develop a new Disability Action Plan for the Council, for the period 2022 - 2024.	The Disability Action Plan is reviewed following the outcome of the consultation process.	December 2021 – March 2022.	Policy Officer (Equality)
	A Disability Action Plan is approved by Elected Members for the period 2019-2022.	April 2022.	
A5. Implement a Disability Action	The Annual Progress Report is	August (Annually)	Policy Officer

Actions	Performance Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility
Plan for the Council which meets the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act	submitted to the Equality Commission		(Equality)
	A bi-annual progress report is presented to the Council's Disability Advisory Group	Bi-annually	
A6. Review current consultation processes in relation to individuals / groups with an interest in Equality and Disability issues.	The current consultation database is updated to reflect additional interest from individuals and changes to circumstances.	Bi-annually	Policy Officer (Equality)
A7. Review and develop a new Equality Scheme for the Council (2022-2027)	The current scheme is reviewed in line with guidance from the Equality Commission.	January 2022	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer (Equality)
	Elected Member approval is given for the adoption of a new Equality Scheme.	January 2022	
	The approved Equality Scheme is submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.	January 2022	
A8. All new, and revised, policies will be approved subject to screening outcomes for Equality of Opportunity.	Screening documentation is reported to Committee alongside the relevant policy.	Ongoing	Policy Officer (Equality)
	All screening exercises undertaken by the Council are published for comment every six months.	Bi-annually	
A9. Deliver an approved Good Relations Action Plan	Annual reports to Council.	Ongoing	Good Relations Team Leader

Actions	Performance Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility
A10. Raise the profile of underrepresented Section 75 Groups (and other protected groups) within the District	Events, and initiatives, targeting specific Section 75 Groups and the issues facing these individuals/groups (e.g. Civic Receptions, Programmes) are organised.	Ongoing	All Directors and Heads of Service.
Theme B: Accessible Services Outcome: All members of our community will benefit from the removal of barriers to accessing our services.			
B1. Review the Council's consultation processes, ensuring they are open and accessible to all.	The Section 75 Monitoring results of consultation processes are reviewed to inform improvements in consultation processes.	September 2022	Policy Officer (Equality)
B2. Scope the development of inclusive communication channels to meet the needs of individuals	New and appropriate channels of communication are available in Council venues, facilities and services.	Ongoing	Policy Officer (Equality) and relevant Head of Service
B3. Develop guidance for Council employees who may work or interact with LGBTQ+ customers.	Training and awareness raising initiatives are organised to improve employee knowledge and confidence.	Ongoing	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer (Equality)
	The development of a guide, or protocol, for Gender Identity following detailed consultation with relevant groups and individuals.	December 2022	
B4. Provision of support to employees who are LGBTQ+.	The Council, following detailed consultation with relevant groups and individuals, will agree ways to best demonstrate their support for employees who are LGBTQ+ or have family members who are LGBTQ+	December 2022	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer (Equality)

Actions	Performance Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility
Theme C: Spoken, Written and Signed Language Forms Outcome: Improvements in our communication methods will result in better access to information and services for all members of our community.			
C1. Ensure a consistent approach to the provision of translation and interpretation services to help people with limited, or no, English.	Introduction of a budget and a set of procedures for all Council Services in relation to accessing translation and interpretation services.	March 2022	Policy Officer (Equality).
	Usage of the new procedures for people interacting with the Council will be included within the Annual Equality progress Report.	August (annually)	
C2. Ensure that meetings and events have appropriate interpreters and/or other assistance in attendance as required	Number of meetings/events facilitated.	Ongoing	All Heads of Service
	Information included in Annual Progress Report	August (annually)	Policy Officer (Equality)
Theme D: Monitoring and Data Collection Outcome: Establishment of an evidence base to inform actions designed to address potential gaps in, and barriers to, accessing services.			
D1. Establish the Section 75 breakdown of the Council's Elected Members.	Equality Monitoring process is completed.	2023 – post election	Policy Officer (Equality)
	Report presented to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.	2023 – post election	
	Report presented to the Policy and Resources Committee for	2023 – post election	

Actions	Performance Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility
	consideration.		
D2. Review the monitoring information being collected by Council, to identify any potential gaps, or opportunities to capture additional monitoring data.	Report to be presented to SMT and a subsequent Policy and Resources Committee	June 2023	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer (Equality)
Theme E: Employees and Elected Members Outcome: Our Elected Members and Employees will be better able to demonstrate commitment to the promotion of the principles of Equality and Good Relations.			
E1. Increase the awareness of Elected Members in relation to the promotion of Equality of Opportunity, Good Relations and the Disability duties.	Development and implementation of a two year Learning and Development Programme.	June 2022	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer (Equality)
	Participation and attendance figures for each event.	Ongoing	
E2. Increase the awareness of Council employees in relation to the promotion of Equality of Opportunity, Good Relations and the Disability duties.	Development and implementation of a Learning and Development Programme	June 2022	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Head of Human Resources Policy Officer (Equality)
	Participation and attendance figures for each event.	Ongoing	
	Participation of new employees at Corporate Induction sessions	Quarterly	
E3. Increase the awareness of developments in good practice and concerns/issues raised with Council services.	Development of a communications programme on Equality and Good Relations for Elected Members and employees	Ongoing	Policy Officer (Equality)

Actions	Performance Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility
E4. Diversity Champion will participate in training and networking events, as required.	Attendance at events and feedback to include the sharing of good/best practice.	Ongoing	Elected Member (Champion) Policy Officer (Equality)



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Screening Matrix.

Statement of Intent. The Council intends to screen its policies, in accordance with Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Equality Scheme, to determine which would require a fuller equality analysis in the form of an impact assessment

Part 1: Policy Scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy or policy area. 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.

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

Information about the policy

Name of the policy or policy area:

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy/policy area?

Existing	Revised	New

Brief Description

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims and outcomes)

The aims of the policy are:

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

YES	NO	N/A

If YES, explain how.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Who owns and who implements each element of the policy?

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

YES	NO	N/A

If YES, are they

Financial:

Legislative:

Other, please specify:

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Service users:

Other public sector organisations:

Voluntary/community/trade unions:

Other, please specify:

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they and who owns them?

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories.

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
Religious Belief	
Political Opinion	
Race	
Disability	
Age	
Marital Status	
Sexual Orientation	
Gender	
Dependency	

Needs, experiences and priorities

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 Section 75 categories.

Section 75 Category	Details of Needs/Experiences/Priorities
Religious Belief	
Political Opinion	
Race	

Section 75 Category	Details of Needs/Experiences/Priorities
Disability	
Age	
Marital Status	
Sexual Orientation	
Gender	
Dependency	

Part 2: Screening Questions

Introduction

1. If the conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 categories then you may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out', you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.
2. If the conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to an EQIA.
3. If the conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an EQIA, or to measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or an alternative policy.

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 hence it would be appropriate to conduct an EQIA;

- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts (without prejudice to the equality of opportunity duty) 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 among 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.

Taking into account the earlier evidence, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity / good relations for those affected by this policy, by applying the following screening questions and the 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 categories? Minor/Major/None		
Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious Belief		
Political Opinion		
Race		
Disability		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Gender		
Dependancy		

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories?		
Section 75 Category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious Belief		
Political Opinion		
Race		
Disability		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Gender		
Dependancy		

3. Are there opportunities, without prejudice to the equality of opportunity duty, 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 Political Opinion Race		

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.

4. Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities by altering the policy or working with others in government or the wider community? Yes /No.
5. Is there an opportunity to encourage people with disabilities to participate in public life by altering the policy or working with others in government or the wider community? Yes /No.

Part 3: Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please indicate one):

- 1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)**
- 2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)**
- 4. Be subject to an EQIA**

If 1. or 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?

In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative policy at a future date? YES / NO

If 3. or 4. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

Timetabling and Prioritising EQIA

If 3. or 4., is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? YES / NO

If YES, please provide details:

Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabling the EQIA. 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 EQIA.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist you in timetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in the quarterly Section 75 report.

Proposed date for commencing EQIA: _____

Any further comments on the screening process and any subsequent actions?

Part 4: Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development. You should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007). The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

Part 5: Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Approved by:		
	Chief Executive	