

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY SCREENING FORM

The Legal Background

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department is required **to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:**

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and,
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the Department is also required **to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.**

Screening

In order to determine whether an EQIA is necessary, all policies must be screened. This form is intended to assist with the screening of any policies for which you take the lead and to record the outcome in respect of each policy. It should also be used as a prompt when considering legislative proposals.

The screening procedure should lead to one of these conclusions:

- the policy being screened has an insignificant impact on equality of opportunity; or
- the policy being screened has (or is likely to have) a significant impact on equality of opportunity. Policies falling into this category will need to be considered further and may require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Officials should complete a form for each of the new or revised policies for which they are responsible. When you have completed the form it should be retained on file in the branch for record purposes.

1. POLICY TO BE SCREENED

What is a policy?

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

These definitions cover all Departmental policies, strategies, schemes, procedures and functions. If in doubt please contact the Equality Unit for advice.

1.1 Title of policy to be screened:

Area-based Planning in Education

1.2 Brief description of policy to be screened:

This policy relates to the strategic planning of education provision on an area and cross-sector basis by the Education and Skills Authority proposed under the Review of Administration. It represents a change towards a more cohesive strategic approach based on meeting the needs of an area.

Area based planning is a mechanism to deliver a fit for purpose education estate designed to deliver a range of education and other policies, the equality impacts of which are considered separately as they are developed and reviewed. The purpose is not to adjudicate on such policies but to determine whether there are any potential impacts that might arise from the introduction of area-based planning.

1.3 Aims of policy to be screened:

The aim is to address need by providing a sufficiency of education places through the appropriate mix of facilities, of the right size, in the right locations. Area-based planning should address the need to ensure that schools are educationally sustainable, with a better use of resources available to education.

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

1.4 Branch responsible for devising and delivering policy:

The DE Programme Delivery Support Unit is responsible for devising policy and guidance relating to area-based planning.

The proposed Education and Skills Authority will be responsible for operational aspects, including delivery.

You should indicate if responsibility is shared with another Government Department or Departments.

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

PDSU 028 91 529843

2. SCREENING ANALYSIS

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

“Don’t know?” “No Evidence?”

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

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

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

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender	[]	[X]	[]
Sexual orientation	[]	[]	[X]
Religion	[]	[X]	[]
Political opinion	[]	[]	[X]

Disability (physical and learning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependant responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If **YES** give details, including source:

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

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability (physical and learning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependant responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If **YES** give details, including source:

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

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability (physical and learning)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependant responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If **YES** give details, including source:

Area-based planning is expected to lead to greater collaboration and sharing of facilities both within and across education sectors which should contribute to improved community relations and improving opportunities for children to avail of facilities beyond their own school.

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

CATEGORY	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability (physical and learning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race or ethnic origin (includes Travellers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependant responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If **YES** give details, including source:

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

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

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

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

3. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Please tick.

Significant impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Low impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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3.2 Do you consider that this policy needs to be submitted to a full equality impact assessment?

YES	NO
	X

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

The overall policy approach of area-based planning is not expected to have a differential impact on any specific group. It is designed to help support a range of education policies. At a local area level proposed changes consistent with an area-based planning approach may have impacts on particular groups and these would need to be considered and addressed if necessary before decisions would be made.