

DoF Screening template

Screening is the first of two methods by which the necessary level of “regard” is demonstrated as being paid to the statutory equality goal, as set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The DoF Equality Scheme commits us to screening our policies. This includes our strategies and plans, policies, legislative developments; and new ways of working such as – the introduction, change or end of an existing service, procedure, policy etc.

This screening template is designed to help business areas consider the likely equality and human rights impacts of their proposed decisions on different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors.

Detailed information about the Section 75 equality duties and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission’s website:
<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened, should be ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made accessible on the DoF website as soon as possible following completion and made available in alternative formats on request.

All Section 75 consultees should be advised of the screening exercise once the final policy decision has been taken.

The screening template has 4 sections to complete. These are:

Section A - details about the policy / decision that is being screened.

Section B - 4 key questions that require you to outline the likely impacts on equality groups, and all supporting evidence.

Section C - 4 key questions in relation to obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order and the Human Rights Act.

Section D - the formal record of the screening decision.

SECTION A

Information about the policy

This stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening on a step-by-step basis.

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

Is this a new or revised policy?

Revised

a) Name of the policy

[6.01 Standards of Conduct policy](#)

The revised section is Section 6 and Annex 10 – Private Occupations.

b) Brief Description of the policy

This policy is about the general principles and rules that govern the behaviour of existing and former civil servants. **Section 6 and Annex 10** deal with the specific rules for existing civil servants who wish to undertake any private work, including work with another public sector body (paid or unpaid).

c) Aims of the policy/ Rationale behind the changes

The aim of the revision to Section 6 and Annex 10 is to remove the provision to use annual/flexi leave for the purposes of other public sector work; and to expressly require the use of **unpaid leave** in such circumstances.

The revised policy aims to prevent civil servants from receiving double payments from public funds and aligns its rules with existing guidelines on remuneration for public sector employees, ensuring consistency with practices in other jurisdictions.

d) Who will the policy affect?

The revised policy is NICS wide as it will apply to all NICS staff – industrial and non-industrial. Those managing the policy and procedures will include Departments, NICSHR and HRConnect.

e) Is this a NICS wide policy?

Yes

f) Who will implement the policy?

The policy will be implemented by any manager who has a member of staff declaring a second occupation.

g) Will this policy or revision address an existing inequality? Yes/~~No~~
If yes, please give details.

The policy will prevent civil servants claiming, 'double payment from the public purse' and bring the rules into line with **DAO (DFP) 02/11 Remuneration of Independent Board Members**, which outlines the guiding principle to avoid 'double-paying' for the remuneration of independent board members in circumstances where the individual is a public sector employee. The revision includes an exception for The Electoral Office and allows annual/flexi leave to be taken for work as poll clerks and counting officers for local and general elections.

The policy allowed for a portion of annual or flexi leave to be used for other public sector work. The facility has been removed in the revised policy.

This revision brings the NICS into line with UK and Ireland civil service.

h) Will this policy or revision benefit any Section 75 categories? Yes/~~No~~
If yes, please give details.

(Insert text here)

- i) Will this policy or revision have an adverse differential impact upon any of the Section 75 groupings? ~~Yes~~/No. If yes, please give details.

(Insert text here)

Section B

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? Set out all evidence below along with details of the different Section 75 groups you have met and / or consulted with to help inform your screening assessment. Please also provide details of priorities and needs identified for each Section 75 group.

The policy review work included engagement with various stakeholders with relevant working knowledge of the procedure under review; including NICS Finance and HR Advisory Group (FHRAG) consisting of senior civil servants and recognised Trade Unions were consulted. During these consultations no equality issues were raised specific to the revised policy.

As of 1 January 2025, the headcount for the NICS was **24,513**.

The HRConnect system allows employees to declare an outside interest through the self-service facility. These are broken down into three categories, **Outside Interests, Public Appointment** and **Secondary Employment**.

As of 31 October 2025, **676** employees have declared an outside interest since the HRConnect facility was introduced in 2007, of this **399** are current. This represents **1.63%** of the workforce who have a current declaration.

As of 31 October 2025, 311 employees have declared a **secondary employment**, since the HRConnect facility was introduced in 2007. This represents a rate of **1.44** declarations a month from a workforce of around 24,500.

There are 160 current 'live' **secondary employment** declarations with end dates in the future or left blank. This represents **0.65%** of the workforce who have a current secondary employment declaration.

The table below shows the breakdown of declared, both open and ended, outside interests and the number of employees who have declared The Electoral Office as the employer. This represents **14.35%** of all employees who have declared an outside interest on the HRConnect system.

GROUP	OUTSIDE INTEREST	PUBLIC APPOINTMENT	SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT	TOTALS
Declared	307	58	311	676
Ended	102	24	151	277
Open	205	34	160	399
Electoral Office	28	8	61	97

- **Religious belief/Political Opinion**

The Equality Commission advise that Community background information can be used as a proxy for political opinion - latest data for NICS for 2025, shows 48.0% catholic, 47.0% protestant and 5.0% Not determined.

(Source – NISRA Stats 1 January 2025 obtained from www.nisra.gov.uk)

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Racial group**

As at 1 January 2025 data on ethnicity was missing for 8.4% of staff. Excluding these cases from the analysis 0.7% of NICS staff were from ethnic minorities.

(Source – [NISRA Background Quality Report for Equality Statistics in the NICS; January 2025](#))

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Age**

The age profile of the NICS is as follows:

Age Group	%
16-24	2.2
25-34	13.0
35-44	27.6
45-54	28.8
55-64	25.4
65+	3.1

(Source – NISRA Stats 1 January 2025 obtained from www.nisra.gov.uk)

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Marital status**

Data on marital status are missing or unknown for 7.2% of NICS staff. For those staff for whom data are available, 37.4% are recorded as single and 55.3% as married.

(Source – [NISRA Background Quality Report for Equality Statistics in the NICS; January 2025](#))

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation data are missing for 62.1% of NICS staff. Of those staff for whom data are available; 3.8% describe their orientation as towards someone of the same sex, 3.0% towards both sexes and 93.1% towards someone of different sex.

(Source – [NISRA Background Quality Report for Equality Statistics in the NICS](#); January 2025)

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Men & women generally**

50.0% of the NICS workforce is male and 50.0% is female.

(Source – NISRA Stats 1 January 2025 obtained from www.nisra.gov.uk)

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Disability**

Some 6.4% of all staff have a declared disability. Those staff with disability information missing have been reported as having no disability.

(Source – NISRA Stats 1 January 2025 obtained from www.nisra.gov.uk)

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

- **Dependents**

Data on dependents are missing for 60.2% of NICS staff. For those staff with data on dependents, 63.2% identify as having no dependents, with 36.8% stating they have dependents.

There were no complaints citing discrimination due to dependents during 2022-2025.

(Source – [NISRA Background Quality Report for Equality Statistics in the NICS](#); January 2025)

The Department is not aware of any specific needs or priorities for this category in relation to this policy.

If you have no evidence held, outline how you will obtain it:

N/A

Screening questions

There are 4 essential screening questions:

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the nine Section 75 categories?
(~~minor/major~~/none)

The policy applies to all staff equally, regardless of any possible section 75 category.

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories? (~~yes~~/no)
3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact upon good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (~~minor/major~~/none)
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between these three groups? (~~Yes~~/No)

Are there likely impacts on Section 75 Categories?

- **Religious belief:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Political opinion:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Racial group:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Age:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Marital status:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Sexual orientation:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Men and women generally:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Disability:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

- **Dependants:** No impact identified

What is the level of impact? None (delete as appropriate)

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).

None

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

N/A

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Alternatively there may already be policies in place which would mitigate any adverse impact identified.

Mitigation measures proposed:

N/A

Section C

DoF also has legislative obligations to meet under the [Disability Discrimination Order](#) and the [Human Rights Act](#) . The following questions relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

Does the proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for DoF to better **promote positive attitudes** towards disabled people?

Explain your assessment in full

No

Does the proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively **increase the participation** by disabled people in public life?

Explain your assessment in full

No

Consideration of Human Rights

The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 brings the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law and it applies in N Ireland. Articles 3 and 4 are classified as “absolute” rights ie the State can never withhold or take away these rights. All others are either “qualified” or “limited”. Further information is available via the following link

<http://www.nicshumanrightsguide.com/>

Indicate any potential adverse impacts that the policy / decision may have in relation to human rights issues.

	<u>Adverse Impact</u>	
	(delete as appropriate)	
Right to Life	Article 2	no
Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment	Article 3	no
Prohibition of slavery and forced labour	Article 4	no
Right to liberty and security	Article 5	no
Right to a fair and public trial	Article 6	no
Right to no punishment without law	Article 7	no
Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence	Article 8	no
Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	Article 9	no
Right to freedom of expression	Article 10	no
Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association	Article 11	no

Right to marry and to found a family	Article 12	no
The prohibition of discrimination	Article 14	no
Protection of property and enjoyment of possessions	Protocol 1 Article 1	no
Right to education	Protocol 1 Article 2	no
Right to free and secret elections	Protocol 1 Article 3	no

Please indicate any ways which you consider the policy positively promotes human rights.

N/A

Please explain any adverse impacts on human rights that you have identified.

None

If you have identified any adverse impacts on human rights through this screening you must complete a Human Rights Impact Assessment: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/human-rights-impact-assessment-proforma>.

Monitoring Arrangements

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's [Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities \(July 2007\)](#):

<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75MonitoringGuidance2007.pdf>

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

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

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

Equality of opportunity

This policy is kept under a three year review to ensure it takes account of any new legislation, including feedback raised by NICSHR, CTUS, DSO, Staff and Departments.

NICSHR and People & OD may request adhoc statistical information from HRConnect, who will provide advice and guidance on policy matters to employees, to monitor how this policy is working, and HRConnect provide regular updates at HR Services meetings.

Good Relations

Feedback is provided on an ongoing basis through Departments, with regard to any issues or problems encountered as a result of terms contained in the revised policy.

Disability Duties

It should be noted that the revision to the previous policy did not relate to any specific category covered by Section 75.

Section D - Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened:

Standards of Conduct Policy – Section 6 and Annex 10 – Private Occupations

I can confirm that the proposed policy / ~~decision~~ has been screened for (i) equality of opportunity, (ii) good relations disabilities duties and (iii) human rights issues

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / ~~decision~~ is –

(delete as appropriate)

- * ~~**Screened In**~~ – ~~Necessary to conduct a full EQIA~~
- * **Screened Out** – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
- * ~~**Screened Out**~~ – ~~Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)~~

Provide a brief note to explain how this decision was reached:

No impacts were identified during this screening exercise. This policy details the rules that govern all civil servants and **Section 6 and Annex 10** rules are applied equally to all.

Screening assessment completed by -

Name Heather McEneaney
Grade DP
Date 31/10/2025

And approved by –

Name Joan Fleetham
Grade G7
Date 31/10/2025

Central Support Team Notified	20/11/2025
Equality Contacts advised	26/11/2025
Screening uploaded to DoF website	(insert date)