

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?

New

a) Name of the policy

The Baby Loss Certificate Scheme

b) Brief Description of the policy

The Scheme enables any parent who has sustained a baby loss up to the end of the 24th week of pregnancy to receive a Certificate of Loss.

c) Aims of the policy/ Rationale behind the changes

The Scheme allows those parents suffering an early pregnancy loss to obtain an official acknowledgement of their loss. Such a scheme is already in place in other parts of UK (England and Scotland).

d) Who will the policy affect?

Parents who have experienced a loss of pregnancy up to the end of the 24th weeks gestation. The Scheme will not be available to parents suffering loss after the 24th week of pregnancy, as such loss must be officially registered as a still-birth.

e) Is this a NICS wide policy?

Yes.

f) Who will implement the policy?

Department of Finance, General Record Office.

g) Will this policy or revision address an existing inequality?

Yes~~No~~

If yes, please give details.

Parents suffering a loss up to the end of the 24th week of pregnancy shall now be able to obtain a formal record of their loss (the Certificate), whereas previously only loss occurring after week 24 could be registered.

h) Will this policy or revision benefit any Section 75 categories?

~~Yes~~**No**

If yes, please give details.

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.

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.

- **Religious belief**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Religious Belief.

- **Political opinion**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Political Opinion.

- **Racial group**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Racial group.

- **Age**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Age.

- **Marital status**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Marital status.

- **Sexual orientation**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Sexual orientation.

- **Men & women generally**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not negatively impact differently on people/groups of differing Gender. Whilst it is self-evident that women are directly affected by early pregnancy loss, (and as such, it could reasonably be expected that the majority of applications to the scheme will be made by women), the scheme will be open to applications from the second parent (whether male or female) and therefore there is to be no distinction in terms of the gender of applicant.

- **Disability**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing Disability status.

- **Dependents**

No evidence/information gathered as the policy does not impact differently on people/groups of differing status vis-à-vis Dependents.

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

No plans to acquire evidence where it is determined that the policy does not materially affect different groupings positively or negatively in respect of others.

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)
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:**

Adherence to any particular Religious belief does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Religious Belief.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Political opinion:**

Subscription to any particular Political opinion does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Political opinion.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Racial group:**

Membership of any particular Racial group does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Racial group.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Age:**

Membership of any particular Age group does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Age group. As the Scheme shall be open to application in respect of both recent and historic loss, there are no Age groups adversely affected by or denied access to the Scheme and its application process.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Marital status:**

Marital status of applicants does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Marital status. The Scheme does not restrict access to application to only those loss-suffering parents who are married or in civil partnership.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Sexual orientation:**

Sexual orientation of applicants does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Sexual orientation.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Men and women generally:**

Gender of applicants does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Gender.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Disability:**

The Disability status of applicants does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing Disability status.

What is the level of impact? **None**

- **Dependants:**

The status of applicants with regard to Dependents does not impact on the outcomes from this policy, nor do the aims and operation of this policy positively or adversely impact on any people/groups of differing status in this regard.

What is the level of impact? **None**

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*).

No potential impacts of the policy have been identified for people of multiple identities/Section 75 categories.

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

No impacts identified.

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:

No mitigations identified/required.

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?

No.

Explain your assessment in full

The policy does not impact either positively or negatively on people/groups of different disability status. As such, the policy does not provide an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

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

No.

Explain your assessment in full

The policy does not impact either positively or negatively on people/groups of different disability status. As such, the policy does not increase the participation by disabled people in public life.

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 i.e. 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.

The policy affords a section of society that had previously been unable to obtain an official acknowledgement of their loss (where loss occurred up to the end of the 24th week of pregnancy) to do so.

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

Potential for adverse impact under Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) for second parents identified to the scheme by the mother in the course of application to the scheme. Such provision of a person's details without their explicit consent or potentially without their knowledge would likely impinge on that person's rights under Article 8. However, this potential is to be mitigated by requiring the applicant (whether mother or father/second parent) to confirm that the other parent has consented to inclusion of their details on the application. Where such consent is not confirmed, the applicant will be unable to obtain a Certificate with the other parent's details included thereon.

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):
<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:

No monitoring arrangements planned.

Section D - Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened:

The Baby Loss Certificate Scheme

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 –

* **Screened Out** – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)

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

No adverse impacts have been identified by the screening process.

Screening assessment completed by -

Name Jonathan McCann
Grade Staff Officer
Date 26th November 2025

And approved by –

Name Violet Kennedy
Grade Grade 7
Date 18th December 2025