

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

Recruitment and Retention Allowance (RRA) for qualified practice staff (social workers and youth workers) in the Youth Justice Agency (YJA)

b) Brief Description of the policy

Proposal to introduce a time-limited, non-pensionable Recruitment and Retention Allowance (RRA) to all qualified practice staff (social workers and youth workers), both in front line operational roles and in supervisory management roles.

c) Aims of the policy/ Rationale behind the changes

The allowance aims to address demonstrable recruitment and retention difficulties, evidenced in the business case, by aligning total reward more closely with other public sector employers. It will be paid monthly and pro-rated, with clear role-based eligibility and a formal review within three years in line with NICS HR Handbook Chapter 8.32.

d) Who will the policy affect?

Directly affected are qualified practice staff (social workers and youth workers) who meet the defined eligibility criteria, including the top-of-scale requirement where applicable.

e) Is this a NICS wide policy?

The policy is NICS-wide in the sense that, if there were other social worker or youth worker roles across the NICS that met the defined eligibility criteria, the allowance

would be open to them. Currently, however, only YJA staff are expected to be eligible, as YJA is the only area presently employing staff in these qualified practice roles.

f) Who will implement the policy?

YJA and NICSHR/HRConnect; policy oversight by People & Organisational Development (People & OD), Department of Finance.

g) Will this policy or revision address an existing inequality? No
N/A – the proposal is not intended to address an existing inequality.

h) Will this policy or revision benefit any Section 75 categories? No
N/A – the proposal is not intended to benefit any specific Section 75 category.

i) Will this policy or revision have an adverse differential impact upon any of the Section 75 groupings? No significant adverse differential impact has been identified. Potential indirect impacts are assessed as none to minor and will be monitored through the RRA review process.

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.

Screening is based on information available here: [Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service - 2026 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) and on internal NICS information on the composition of qualified practice staff (social workers and youth workers).

Source: Equality analysis workbook by People & OD.

Sex profile

Grade	YJA female	NICS female	YJA male	NICS male	Summary
EO1	65.0%	48.1%	35.0%	51.9%	Higher female representation in YJA.
SO	64.3%	48.6%	35.7%	51.4%	Higher female representation in YJA.
DP	60.0%	49.7%	40.0%	50.3%	Higher female representation in YJA.
G7	100.0%	44.3%	0.0%	55.7%	YJA G7 cohort recorded as wholly female.

Age profile

Note: Age bands are nearest available comparators; 35–49 is compared with NICS 35–44, 50–59 with NICS 45–54, and 60+ with combined NICS 55+.

Grade	Group	16–24	25–34	35–49*	50–59*	60+*
EO1	YJA	1.25%	15.0%	40.0%	35.0%	8.75%
	NICS	0.9%	14.1%	26.2%	28.5%	30.2%
	Summary: EO1 YJA broadly mirrors NICS in the younger bands, but has a higher proportion in the 35–59 range and a lower proportion aged 60+.					
SO	YJA	0.0%	7.14%	35.71%	57.14%	0.0%
	NICS	1.3%	14.1%	27.8%	28.5%	28.4%
	Summary: SO YJA is concentrated in the 35–59 range, particularly 50–59, with lower representation in the younger and 60+ groups.					
DP	YJA	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%
	NICS	0.0%	5.1%	26.0%	36.0%	32.9%

	Summary: DP YJA staff are entirely within the 50+ bands, with no representation below age 50.					
G7	YJA	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	NICS	0.0%	1.9%	25.1%	42.5%	30.5%
	Summary: G7 YJA staff are recorded wholly in the 50–59 band, compared with a wider spread across older NICS age bands.					

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

The data supplied is extracted from reports provided by the NI Statistics & Research Agency and based on staff data held on the HR system. Staff have been reminded to update their disability, sexual orientation and dependent status data.

No targeted consultation with Section 75 groups has been undertaken at this stage; however, normal engagement with recognised trade unions will provide an opportunity to raise any equality-related issues.

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)

Minor

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories? (yes/no)

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)

None. The policy is an internal staffing measure and does not affect public-facing services. No adverse impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group is anticipated.

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between these three groups? (Yes/No)

No. The policy is an internal staffing measure and no specific opportunity to better promote good relations has been identified.

Are there likely impacts on Section 75 Categories?

Religious belief: NICS does not hold employee data by religious belief, so community background has been used as the closest available proxy. The analysis shows no statistically significant difference between Catholic and Protestant representation in the YJA qualified practice staff cohort and comparable NICS grades, though findings should be treated with caution because of the small cohort size. Eligibility for the allowance is based solely on the qualified practice role, relevant professional requirements, position at the top of the EO1 scale where applicable, and evidenced recruitment and retention pressures. It is not linked to religious belief, political opinion or community background and will apply uniformly to all eligible staff. Likely impact: none to minor/no adverse impact requiring EQIA at this stage.

Political opinion: NICS does not gather staff data on political opinion and no evidence has been identified to suggest that it is relevant to eligibility for, or operation of, the allowance. The RRA is an internal workforce measure based on the qualified practice role and associated labour-market pressures, not on political

opinion or any proxy for it. It does not affect public-facing decision-making or access to services. Likely impact: none.

Racial group: Complete ethnicity data for the YJA qualified practice staff cohort is not available. On the evidence held, no adverse differential impact has been identified, although this should continue to be monitored. The allowance is not linked to race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, colour or any related criterion; eligibility is based only on the professional role and associated recruitment and retention pressures. It will apply consistently to all eligible staff who meet the role-based criteria. Likely impact: none to minor/no adverse impact requiring EQIA at this stage.

Age: The age profile shows some variation between the YJA qualified practice staff cohort and comparable NICS grades, with greater concentration in mid-career and older age bands and limited representation in some younger bands. The figures are indicative only, as comparator age categories do not align exactly and the cohort is small. The allowance does not select, exclude or treat staff differently by age; eligibility is based on the qualified practice role, professional requirements and evidenced recruitment and retention pressures. Payment will be monthly, pro-rated where appropriate, and not dependent on length of service, age or proximity to retirement. Any age-related difference is therefore incidental to the current workforce profile. Likely impact: minor/no adverse impact requiring EQIA at this stage, subject to monitoring.

Marital status: Marital status data for the YJA qualified practice staff cohort is not available. Wider NICS data should be treated with caution as it does not provide a cohort-specific profile. No evidence indicates that marital status is relevant to eligibility or that the proposal would affect staff differently because they are single, married, in a civil partnership, separated, divorced or widowed. Eligibility is role-based and linked to recruitment and retention pressures, with payment applied consistently and pro-rated where appropriate. Likely impact: none to minor, based on available evidence.

Sexual orientation: Sexual orientation data is incomplete across the NICS and is not available separately for the YJA qualified practice staff cohort. Available NICS figures should therefore not be treated as representative of the eligible group. No evidence suggests that sexual orientation is relevant to eligibility for, or operation of, the allowance. The proposal is role-based, responds to evidenced labour-market pressures and will apply uniformly to all eligible staff, irrespective of sexual orientation. Likely impact: none to minor, based on available evidence.

Men and women generally: The sex profile shows a higher proportion of females in the YJA qualified practice staff cohort than in comparable NICS grades, with correspondingly lower male representation. This reflects the current composition of the eligible workforce and should be interpreted cautiously given the small numbers involved. The allowance does not select staff by sex; eligibility is based on the qualified practice role and evidenced recruitment and retention pressures. Although more recipients may be female, this is incidental to workforce composition rather

than policy design. Likely impact: minor/no adverse impact requiring EQIA at this stage.

Disability: Disability data for the YJA qualified practice staff cohort is not available and wider NICS data is incomplete. No evidence suggests that disability is relevant to eligibility or that disabled staff would be disadvantaged. Eligibility is role-based and payment will be monthly and pro-rated for part-time working or partial-month changes, with no attendance-related condition proposed. Existing reasonable adjustment processes and disability-related employment protections will continue to apply. Likely impact: none to minor, based on available evidence.

Dependants: Dependants data for the YJA qualified practice staff cohort is not available and wider NICS data is incomplete. No evidence suggests that having, or not having, dependants is relevant to eligibility. The allowance is based on the qualified practice role and evidenced recruitment and retention pressures. Monthly, pro-rated payment for part-time working and partial-month changes helps ensure staff with caring responsibilities are not disadvantaged. Likely impact: none to minor, based on available evidence.

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).

Assessment:

The YJA qualified practice staff cohort includes eligible social workers and youth workers across EO1, SO, DP and G7 grades. Available data shows variation from the wider NICS comparator population by sex and age, including higher female representation and greater concentration in some mid-career and older age bands. These findings should be treated with caution because the cohort is small and some comparator age categories do not align exactly.

The main multiple-identity consideration is that the allowance may be received more by staff reflecting the current eligible cohort profile, particularly by sex and age. However, this arises from the composition of the qualified practice workforce and role-based eligibility, not from any protected characteristic or combination of characteristics.

The proposal does not select, exclude or treat staff differently because of Section 75 characteristics. Eligibility is based on the qualified practice role, relevant professional requirements, top-of-scale criteria where applicable, and evidenced recruitment and retention pressures. The allowance will be paid consistently to all eligible staff, monthly and pro-rated where appropriate.

Any compounded or intersectional impact is therefore assessed as none to minor and incidental to the existing workforce profile. The policy is objectively justified as a targeted, time-limited and non-pensionable response to role-specific recruitment and retention pressures, with monitoring through the RRA review process to identify any emerging adverse impacts.

Available data is limited to sex and age for the eligible cohort. No further multiple-identity data is available.

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:

Considered alternatives

The business case considered do-nothing and different allowance levels. The proposed approach balances effectiveness and affordability, while minimising the equality footprint through time-limited allowance and review.

Objective justification and proportionality

Business case evidence demonstrates the legitimate aim (addressing role-specific market scarcity) and the necessity of an allowance as the minimum effective intervention. Mitigations include keeping the allowance non-pensionable, time-limited and reviewed within three years.

Tight eligibility and scope control

Eligibility is strictly role-based and limited to qualified practice staff within YJA who meet the defined criteria. This ensures that staff performing the same eligible qualified practice role are treated consistently, and that staff outside the defined role scope are not inadvertently included or excluded.

Working pattern neutrality

Payment is monthly and pro-rated for all part-time and partial-month changes to avoid indirect discrimination for staff with caring responsibilities or disability-related adjustments.

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 decision provide an opportunity for DoF to better **promote positive attitudes** towards disabled people?

Explain your assessment in full

Neutral. The allowance is role-based, payment rules are neutral and pro-rated, and no attendance-related conditions are proposed. The policy is an internal staffing measure and does not directly provide an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. Standard dignity at work policies and reasonable adjustment processes will continue to apply.

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

Explain your assessment in full

Neutral. The allowance is role-based, payment rules are neutral and pro-rated, and no attendance-related conditions are proposed. The policy is an internal staffing measure and does not directly provide an opportunity to increase the participation of disabled people in public life. Existing disability-related workplace protections and reasonable adjustment processes will continue to apply.

Consideration of Human Rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 brings the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law and applies in Northern Ireland. Articles 3 and 4 are classified as “absolute” rights; that is, 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.

Adverse Impact

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 in 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:

NICS requires a three-yearly review of RRAs, which provides an opportunity to examine evidence, including joiners, leavers and destination data where available, that might change the balance of considerations in this screening. This could include evidence that the allowance is not improving recruitment or retention against the trajectory set out in the business case, or evidence of any emerging adverse equality impact.

Section D - Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened: Recruitment and Retention Allowance (RRA) for qualified practice staff (social workers and youth workers) in the Youth Justice Agency (YJA)

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

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this decision is **screened out** – no EQIA necessary, as impacts are assessed as none or minor.

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

On the basis of the evidence and mitigations set out above, the proposal is screened out for EQIA at this time, subject to monitoring and formal review.

The screening identifies no significant adverse equality impacts. Potential indirect impacts are minor, objectively justified by labour-market factors, and capable of mitigation through monitoring and review. The proposal pursues a legitimate aim (addressing role-specific market scarcity) through a proportionate, time-limited allowance with clear eligibility, monthly pro-rated payment and formal review within three years.

Monitoring is in place to validate outcomes and identify any emerging adverse impact.

Screening assessment completed by -

Name: Jill O'Neill

Grade: DP

Date: 10 April 2026

And approved by –

Name: Alison Welsh

Grade: G7

Date: 15/09/26

Central Support Team Notified

Equality Contacts advised

Screening uploaded to DoF website