

DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING ANALYSIS FORM

The purpose of this form is to help you to consider whether a new policy (either internal or external) or legislation will require a full equality impact assessment (EQIA). Those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full EQIA.

The form will provide a record of the factors considered if a policy is screened out or excluded for EQIA. It will provide a basis for quarterly consultation on the outcome of the screening exercise and will be referenced in the biannual review of progress made to the Minister and in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission.

Further advice on completion of this form and the screening process including relevant contact information can be accessed via the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Intranet site.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

When considering the impact of this policy you should also consider if there would be any Human Rights implications. Guidance is at:

- <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/human-rights-and-public-authorities>

Should this be appropriate you will need to complete a Human Rights Impact Assessment. A template is at:

- <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/human-rights-impact-assessment-proforma>

Don't forget to Rural Proof.

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first 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 process on a step-by-step basis.

Public authorities 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

Rathlin Island Ferry Fare Increase

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Existing

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

A fare increase of 5.6% will help to maintain the Rathlin Island Ferry service. The fare increase is only the second such increase in 12 years (with the last increase in July 2023) and is required to ensure the service continues at its current level.

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

If so, explain how.

An increase in fares will preserve the current ferry service level for all Section 75 (s75) categories who make up the residents of Rathlin and the people who visit the island. Although standard fares are increasing, discounts and concessions currently available for island residents and those NI residents and visitors who carry a SmartPass, will remain.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

This fare review was initiated by the Department for Infrastructure, following the Northern Ireland (NI) Executive setting a budget for Northern Ireland Departments in April 2025. The objective is to increase fares by 5.6% to help maintain the ferry service. The last fare increase was implemented in July 2023.

The current Rathlin Island Ferry fare structure was initiated by the Department for Infrastructure in July 2023.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

- The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) own the policy.
- Dunaverty Ltd, as the operator of the service, will implement the fare increase.

Background

Rathlin is our only offshore inhabited island. The NI Executive acknowledged that the challenges faced by such an island community are different from those on the mainland and therefore recognises that they need to be addressed in a different way.

To this end, the NI Executive introduced its own policy for Rathlin Island in 2010 following a public consultation held in 2009.

The Rathlin Island Policy and associated Action Plan are the expression of that co-ordinated approach. The strategic aims of the Rathlin Island Policy are:

- to enhance community involvement
- to improve the provision of public services for Islanders
- to advance policies for a sustainable Island community
- to conserve the Island's exceptional environmental heritage

There are a number of strategic objectives set out in the Policy which are relevant in this context. These include:

- to ensure a modern affordable ferry service
- to increase the community's capacity to participate in sustainable economic and tourism development

- to enable the community to contribute fully to Island policies which protect and sustain its unique rural environment including the landscape, the natural and built heritage
- to provide the Islanders with equitable access to health and social care that is of an equivalent standard to that provided for people on the mainland and delivered as far as possible within their community and close to, or in, their homes
- ensure Islanders have equitable access to post primary education
- to develop islanders' employability

The Rathlin Island Ferry service provides that lifeline service for the islanders in all those ways. In recognising the service lifeline the ferry provides to Rathlin, the Department provides a subsidy to enable the operator to provide that service which would otherwise not be commercially viable. The maintenance of an affordable, sustainable ferry service to Rathlin is therefore aligned with the strategic aims and the policy of the NI Executive.

The 2021 Census states the population of Rathlin Island was 141 living in 71 households. Rathlin has its own “Data Zone” which provides more information and data on the island itself which can be found at the following link; [The Glens B1](#).

In 2024, the Rathlin Island Ferry service transported over 109,683 passengers and over 4,000 cars between Ballycastle and Rathlin Island. Of the 109,683 passengers, 7,088 (6.5%) were Rathlin Island residents. Over 32,000 (29%) were in receipt of a discount by way of a SmartPass (available to eligible NI residents) or under 16 fare. 330 disabled car journeys (on presentation of a UK Blue Badge) were recorded in 2024, with more than half (173) of these undertaken by Rathlin Island residents. Non-resident Blue Badge holders receive a discount of 50% while Rathlin Island residents who hold a Blue Badge receive a discount of 75% when travelling with their vehicle.

Fares for the ferry service have remained at the same level since July 2023. The current budget pressure on the Department and the increased subsidy requirement for the ferry service, has exacerbated the need for a review of fares. Based on current estimates, were a policy of Full Cost Recovery to be pursued, the standard ferry fare would increase from £8 to over £13.68 for a single journey per adult passenger.

In comparison, the island of Cape Clear in the Republic of Ireland has a similar size population to that of Rathlin and has standard return fares of €20 for adults and €9 for children while other ticket combinations which offer discounts are

available. The ferry to Cape Clear does not allow vehicles and lists various charges for cargo transportation.

Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they (please delete as appropriate)

Financial - Yes, increasing fares amidst the wider economic climate may have a detrimental effect on passenger numbers. That said given the cost pressures to run the Rathlin Island Ferry service and to ensure a service to the Island, the Department has no other recourse than to increase fares.

Legislative - The implementation of this policy requires for a decision to be made by the DfI Minister.

Other - The current budgetary pressures on the Department have required the need to examine all areas where costs can be reduced or revenue raised. If the fare increase is not introduced, the Department will need to make significant savings from its operation which could result in cuts to routes/services therefore resulting in less choice for the consumer.

Main stakeholders affected

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

service users

public sector organisations

commercial business on Rathlin

voluntary/community groups

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Northern Ireland Executive Rathlin Island Policy

Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

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. The Commission has produced this guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

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

Religious belief evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining religious belief of the Islanders has been published.

Catholic 46%, Presbyterian <1%, Church of Ireland 8%, Methodist 4%, Other Christian religions <1%, Other religions 5% and No religion/Not stated 36%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Political Opinion evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed 2024 election data outlining political opinion of the constituency for Antrim North has been published.

The electorate was 74,697 with a turnout of 41,185 (55.14%)

Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) 28.27%, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) 27.17%, Sinn Fein 18.73%, Alliance NI 10.90%, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) 9.47%, Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP) 4.03%, Minor 1.10% and Others 0.33%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Racial Group evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining racial group of the Islanders has been published.

White 98% and Other Ethnic Groups 2%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Age evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining age bands of the Islanders has been published.

0-14 years 18%, 15-39 years 18%, 40-64 years 38% and 65+ years 26%.

Approximately 48 Rathlin Island residents are in possession of a Senior SmartPass and 24 residents with a 60+ SmartPass. During 2024, 18,848 trips to Rathlin Island were made by SmartPass holders, representing 19% of the

total number of trips (109,683). A further 15,835 trips were made by resident & non-resident children up to the age of 15, representing 14% of total trips.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Marital Status evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining marital of the Islanders has been published.

Single 35%, Married or in a civil partnership 43%, Separated 5%, Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership 11% and Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership 5%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining sexual orientation of the Islanders has been published.

Straight or heterosexual 86%, Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation 5% and Prefer not to say or not stated 9%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining gender generally of the Islanders has been published.

Males 47% and Females 53%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Disability evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining disability of the Islanders has been published.

Long-term health problem or disability: Activities not limited 70%, Limited a little 21% and Limited a lot 9%.

The Department supports people with disabilities using public transport through the Concessionary Fare Scheme, this also applies to the Rathlin Island ferry service through the discounts available. There were 330 journeys made to and

from the island in 2024 by people with disabilities who hold concessionary fare passes, providing the majority of people with a disability half-fare travel.”

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Dependents evidence / information:

The NI Census 2021 shows the current Rathlin Island population as 141 residents. The detailed population data outlining Islanders with dependents has been published.

No dependent children 77%, one dependent child 9%, two dependent children 13% and three or more dependent children 1%.

There is no robust data on the Northern Ireland population who visit Rathlin Island on a tourist basis for this s75 group. The only location on the island which gathers data is the West Lighthouse Visitor centre which attracts up to 25,000 visitors per year.

There is potential that those who fall into this group and use the ferry service to and from the island will be impacted by the fare increase. However, concessions will continue to apply for users of the service who fulfil the appropriate criteria.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Considering 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 of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious belief

The Rathlin Island Ferry service is used by island residents and tourists, and an increase in fares has the potential to impact this s75 category. The main specific needs, priorities and experiences identified for this group is to be able to travel between Rathlin and the mainland on a regular, reliable and affordable ferry service to access employment, goods, services, education and leisure activities including tourism.

Political Opinion

As outlined above in religious belief.

Racial Group

As outlined above in religious belief.

Age

As outlined above in religious belief.

The vast majority of journeys taken by children, are those by children not resident on the island. All children under 5 avail of free travel while those between 5 and 15 receive a discount of 50% for non-island residents and 75% for island residents.

Rathlin Island resident children are required to attend post primary education on the mainland.

Older people over the age of 60 and in possession of a SmartPass, avail of free travel.

Marital status

As outlined above in religious belief.

Sexual orientation

As outlined above in religious belief.

Men and Women Generally

As outlined above in religious belief.

Disability

As outlined above in religious belief.

People with specific accessibility needs may also have needs in respect of the cost of public transport services in relation to this policy.

The Department supports people with disabilities using the Rathlin Ferry through the discounts available and by using vessels which meet accessibility standards. There were 330 journeys made to and from the island in 2024 by people with disabilities who hold concessionary fare passes, providing the majority of people with a disability half-fare travel. It is worth noting that this only applies to those people aged 16-59. People with a disability aged 60+ can avail of free travel under the SmartPass scheme.

Dependants

As outlined above at religious belief.

People with -dependants and those who are dependents may have needs in respect of the cost of services in relation to this policy as a potentially vulnerable consumer. The sections entitled 'Age and Disability' above refers to concessions available for people who fall into these s75 categories.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In deciding as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

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 it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts 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 amongst 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.

Considering the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of 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 equality categories?

Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

In 2023-24, there were 78.2 million journeys on public transport in Northern Ireland and for many people public transport is their only choice. For the Rathlin Island community there is no choice. The dependence on ferry service has implications for Islanders' ability to access employment, education and social opportunities.

An increase in fares, therefore, has the potential to impact all passengers (excluding those entitled to free travel, who will remain unaffected). The fare increase should not impact on equality of opportunity for consumers due to their religious belief, political opinion, racial group, marital status, gender or sexual orientation, as the increase will apply to all passengers. Fare discounts will continue to be available for those who fulfil the relevant criteria.

Without the fare increase there may be a possibility that the ferry services would have to be reduced or stopped to offset losses being sustained by the service. The reduction or stopping of the ferry service would have an adverse impact upon the equality of opportunity for people in all s75 categories, wishing to travel between Rathlin Island and the mainland.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

Based on the evidence, this decision would have little or no impact on equality of opportunity for older people. Older people (60+) will continue to avail of free travel through the discounts available.

Children under the age of 16 will continue to receive at least half price travel (with children under 5 continuing to receive free travel) through the discounts available and the impact of the fare increase is likely to be minor on this category.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

Based on the evidence, this decision would have a minor impact on equality of opportunity for people with a disability. Older people with a disability who

are more than 60 years old will continue to avail of free travel through the SmartPass scheme.

People with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 59 will continue to receive half price travel through the discounts provided. The discounts available will continue to support this s75 category from the impact of the fare increases.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

Children under the age of 16 will continue to receive at least half price travel (with children under 5 receiving free travel) through the discounts available.

People with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 59 will continue to receive half price travel through the provided discounts. The impact of the fare increase is likely to be minor on this dependant's category.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? Yes/No

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief – No

The Rathlin Ferry Service uses its fare revenue and subsidy to deliver an agreed regular service for those who live on the island and tourists. As such, it already promotes equality of opportunity across all s75 groups and no further promotion opportunities are available.

There is no evidence to suggest that persons of this section s75 category will be impacted by the fare increase more than another.

Political Opinion – No

As above in religious belief.

Racial Group – No

As above in religious belief.

Age – No

As above in religious belief. However, the discounts which will continue to be available go some way to promote equality of opportunity across certain age profiles within this s75 group.

Marital Status – No

As above in religious belief.

Sexual Orientation – No

As above in religious belief.

Men and Women generally – No

As above in religious belief.

Disability – No

The Rathlin Ferry Service uses its fare revenue and grant to deliver an agreed regular service, using vessels which meet accessibility standards. It continues to promote equality of opportunity across this s75 group by way of financial assistance for people with disabilities through the discounts available.

Dependants – No

As above in religious belief.

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Please provide details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

Rathlin Island is a home to a small population and is also a popular tourist destination due to its history and rich natural environment. This policy relates to a fare increase on the Rathlin ferry and as such is not likely to impact on good relations between people of this s75 category.

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

As outlined above in religious belief.

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

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief – No

The ferry service uses its fare revenue and grant to deliver an agreed service timetable across the only route to Rathlin Island. The fare increase does not provide the opportunity to better promote good relations.

Political Opinion –

As above in religious belief.

Racial Group –

As above in religious belief.

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.

As the majority of people belong to more than one s75 category, this fare increase is likely to have a minor impact on people with multiple identities.

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The Department acknowledges that the 5.6% increase is likely to have a minor impact on the s75 groups identified above. However, the fare increase is only the second such increase in 12 years (with the last increase in July 2023) and is required to ensure the service continues at its current level.

While the Department provides an enhanced service to ensure the economic prosperity of Rathlin Island through tourism, the life-line aspect of the service (providing access to the island for island residents and service providers), would not require as many sailings as is currently offered

The impact of the fare increase will have a minor negative impact on the s75 categories, but without a fare increase there is a possibility that the Department can no longer subsidise the ferry at the current level and therefore services would be reduced. That decision would have a greater impact on all s75 groups.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is not required at this time as the impact to all s75 categories is considered a minor negative one.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

Mitigation is not possible the policy is not taken forward; there is the possibility that the ferry services would have to be reduced or stopped to offset losses being sustained by the service. The reduction or stopping of the ferry service would have an even more adverse impact upon all s75 categories as it would limit people's choice and their ability to connect to socio-economic activities.

When considering the alternative of not implementing fare increase, ie. service reductions, the Department considers the impact of the fare increase is minor negative and an EQIA is not required.

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

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.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

N/A

If so, **give the reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/A

Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been ‘**screened in**’ for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

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 equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion [Author picks 1 2 or 3 if a full EQIA is to take place]

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Social need **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Effect on people’s daily lives **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Relevance to a public authority’s functions **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority’s Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

No

If yes, please provide details.

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities 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, 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.

The Department will continue to monitor ferry usage/data and the impact on s75 categories, reviewing and amending this screening as and when necessary.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Phillip Wilson
Position/Job Title: Head of Ferry Operations
Date: 14 October 2025

Approved by: Peter Rice
Position/Job Title: Director of Public Transport Operations
Date: 14 October 2025

Note: 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 easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

For Equality Team Completion:

Date Received:	27/08/2025
Amendments Requested:	Yes
Date Returned to Business Area:	04/09/2025
Date Final Version Received:	27/10/2025
Date Published on DfI's Section 75 webpage:	27/10/2025

ANNEX A – CURRENT FARE STRUCTURE

Discounted fares are offered as part of the Rathlin Ferry Discounted Fares Scheme, which are not part of the Northern Ireland Concessionary Scheme, but is an approved scheme for this particular ferry service.

Rathlin Island Residents Pass *

Residents Pass Age Criteria	Type of Residents Pass	Discount on Standard Fare
Resident Child under 5	No Pass Required	Free
Resident Child aged 5-16	Child Pass	75%
Resident Adult aged over 16	Adult Pass	50%
Resident Adult over 60*	60+ Pass	Free
Resident Adult over 65*	SmartPass Pass	Free
Resident Adult over 65*	SmartPass Pass	Free

Type of Fare	Discount on Standard Fare
Resident's Pass Holder – Car	50%
Resident's Pass Holder - Baggage Trailer	50%
Resident's Pass - Disabled Car Entitled to mobility component	75%
Emergency "Blue Light" Services – Police, Fire, Ambulance and Coastguard in response to emergencies	Free

Discounted fares apply to Island residents on presentation of a valid Rathlin Island Residents Pass

NI Concessionary Fares Scheme

NI Concessionary Pass Scheme Holders	Single	Return
Senior (65+) SmartPass	Free	Free
60+ SmartPass	Free	Free
War Disablement SmartPass	Free	Free
Registered Blind SmartPass	Free	Free
Half Fare SmartPass	50%	50%

Children under 5 years travel free

Children under 16 years receive 50% discount on standard fares.

Ballycastle – Rathlin Ferry Service

Table of Rates, Fares and Charges – From Include new date

Passenger Fares	Current Fares		New Fares	
	Single	Return	Single	Return
Adult *	£8.00	£16.00	£8.45	£16.90
Child 5 – 15 *	£4.00	£8.00	£4.20	£8.40
Under 5	Free	Free	Free	Free
Senior SmartPass Holders	Free	Free	Free	Free
60+ SmartPass Holder	Free	Free	Free	Free
War Disablement SmartPass Holder	Free	Free	Free	Free
Registered Blind SmartPass Holder	Free	Free	Free	Free
Half Fare SmartPass Holders	£4.00	£8.00	£4.20	£8.40
Vehicle Fares				
Vehicles and Trailers below 2.5 metres *	£13.75	£27.50	£14.50	£29.00
Vehicles and Trailers over 2.5 and under 6.0 metres *	£27.50	£55.00	£29.00	£58.00
Vehicles and Trailers over 6.0 metres and under 8.0 metres (price includes driver)	£85.00	£170.00	£89.80	£179.60
Vehicles and Trailers over 8.0 metres (price includes driver)	£105.50	£211.00	£111.40	£222.80
Vehicle with Blue Badge Holder	n/a	£27.50	n/a	£29.00
Bicycle	£2.20	£4.40	£2.30	£4.60
Pallet and Parcel Rate				
Pallet rate	£11.70	n/a	£12.35	n/a
Parcel rate	£3.00	n/a	£3.20	n/a
*Discounted fares apply to island residents on presentation of a valid Rathlin Island Residents Pass				