

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 taken into account 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 ([Equality Intranet page](#)).

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT - refer to the [Equality Intranet page](#)

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 - refer to the [Equality Intranet page](#).

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

Social and Environmental Guidance for Water and Sewerage Services (2028/29-2032/33) ('The guidance')

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

This is existing guidance which has been revised. The guidance contains policies set out in Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040), which was published in 2016.

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

This document provides the Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland (NI) with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating Northern Ireland Water (NIW) during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.

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

If so, explain how.

No. This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW. It is not targeted at any Section 75 category.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

DfI Water and Drainage Policy Division

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Department for Infrastructure (DfI) owns the guidance that the Utility Regulator must have regard to in exercising its statutory functions in regulating the water industry. In practice, the policies outlined in the guidance will be implemented by the Utility Regulator and NIW over the course of the Price Control period.

Background

The guidance was prepared by DfI Water and Drainage Policy in conjunction with other key water stakeholders such as the Utility Regulator for NI, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), NIW and the Consumer Council.

The guidance has been developed taking existing policies and legislative commitments into consideration. The guidance sets out the key strategic investment themes for NIW for Price Control (PC) 28 (2028/29-2032/33) which are environmental improvement and compliance; service delivery; improvement and affordability; and sustainability and climate change.

The policies in the guidance are taken from Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040). This document was informed by research carried out by the Consumer Council in March 2012 and August 2014, to help identify customer's priorities for water and sewerage services.

This research did not indicate any specific problem for Section 75 categories. In addition, an EQIA screening analysis and a public consultation report was carried out on Sustainable Water in 2014. A Consumer Measures / Satisfaction Working Group is in place, to ensure consumer priorities and measures remain central to the guidance.

Main stakeholders affected

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

Utility Regulator

NIW

DAERA (Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)

NIEA

Local Councils

Service users

Other public sector organisations

Businesses

Voluntary and community organisations

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?
 - The policies contained in Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040).
 - The Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021 - 2027
 - The Second Cycle Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 - 2027
- who owns them?
 - Sustainable Water is the Northern Ireland Executive's Long-Term Water Strategy.

- The Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021 - 2027 for Northern Ireland is owned and published by DAERA, with direct implementation and the development of the plan's actions managed by NIEA.
- The Second Cycle Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 - 2027 for Northern Ireland is owned and published by the Department, with implementation of the plan's actions managed by DfI business areas, Transport and Road Asset Management (TRAM), Sustainable Drainage Directorate and Rivers and NI.

Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they

financial ☐

The guidance recognises that the investment needs identified as part of the price control process are likely to be significantly more than the available funding that can be provided through public expenditure.

legislative ☐

Under Article 7 of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended, the Department may from time to time issue guidance on its social or environmental policies. There are no current plans to amend this legislation.

other, please specify N/A

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](#). Also refer to the [Equality Intranet page](#) for some evidence sources.

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:

DfI has consulted with key water stakeholders to develop the guidance. The policies in the guidance are taken from Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040).

The Strategy was informed by research carried out by the Consumer Council in March 2012 and August 2014, to help identify customer's priorities for water and sewerage services. This research did not indicate any specific problem for Section 75 categories. In addition, an EQIA screening analysis and a public consultation report was carried out on Sustainable Water in 2014.

A Consumer Measures / Satisfaction Working Group is in place, to ensure consumer priorities and measures remain central to the Guidance. The guidance will be subject to public consultation which will provide a further opportunity to identify and consider any relevant issues affecting specific Section 75 (S75) categories.

Political Opinion evidence / information: [As above](#).

Racial Group evidence / information: [As above](#).

Age evidence / information: [As above](#).

Marital Status evidence / information: [As above](#).

Sexual Orientation evidence / information: [As above.](#)

Men & Women generally evidence / information: [As above](#)

Disability evidence / information: [As above](#)

Dependants evidence / information: [As above.](#)

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account 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

[There are no specific needs identified for this group.](#)

[This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.](#)

[The Guidance will be subject to public consultation which will provide a further opportunity to identify and consider any relevant issues affecting specific Section 75 categories.](#)

Political Opinion

As above in Religious Belief.

Racial Group

As above in Religious Belief.

Age

As above in Religious Belief.

Marital status

As above in Religious Belief.

Sexual orientation

As above in Religious Belief.

Men and Women Generally

As above in Religious Belief.

Disability

As above in Religious Belief.

Dependants

As above in Religious Belief.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In making a decision 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.

Taking into account 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**:

There have been no likely impacts on equality of opportunity identified, at this stage. This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.

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

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

As above in Religious Belief.

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

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

As above in Religious Belief.

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

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

As above in Religious Belief.

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

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

As above in Religious Belief.

What is the level of impact? [None](#)

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

[As above in Religious Belief.](#)

What is the level of impact? [None](#)

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

[As above in Religious Belief.](#)

What is the level of impact? [None](#)

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

[As above in Religious Belief.](#)

What is the level of impact? [None](#)

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

[As above in Religious Belief.](#)

What is the level of impact? [None](#)

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

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

Religious Belief -

No, there is no opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity. This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.

Political Opinion -

As above in Religious Belief.

Racial Group -

As above in Religious Belief.

Age -

As above in Religious Belief.

Marital Status -

As above in Religious Belief.

Sexual Orientation -

As above in Religious Belief.

Men and Women generally -

As above in Religious Belief.

Disability -

As above in Religious Belief.

Dependants -

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**:

There have been no likely impacts on good relations identified.

This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.

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

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

As above in Religious Belief.

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

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

As 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, there have been no opportunities identified to better promote good relations. This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.

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?

(Every citizen belongs to more than one group - For example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

No impacts on people with multiple identities identified at this stage, should any be identified this form can be reviewed and updated, as required.

This document provides the Utility Regulator for NI with guidance on the key social and environmental priorities it expects to be contributed to in carrying out its role in regulating NIW during the 2028/29-2032/33 period.

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

Not applicable – no impacts identified.

Part 3. Screening decision

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

All members of society (i.e. service users of NI Water) have the potential to benefit from the policies in the guidance.

No Section 75 group is disadvantaged or adversely affected by the policies in the guidance. Good relations are not affected by the guidance. Equally, the guidance does not create opportunities to promote equality of opportunity or improve good relations.

The guidance will be subject to public consultation which will include reference to and a link to the screening analysis.

Any issues identified during the consultation process relating to any Section 75 group will be considered, with this assessment reviewed and updated as required.

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 of this consideration.

No mitigation measures or alternative policies are considered necessary.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

Not applicable

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?

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

Not applicable – given the subject matter of the policy there are no amendments that would better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

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 [choose 1, 2 or 3 if a full EQIA is to take place]

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	N/A
Social need	N/A
Effect on people’s daily lives	N/A
Relevance to a public authority’s functions	N/A

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?

If yes, please provide details.

Yes - The guidance is being developed and finalised in order to inform the determination by the Utility Regulator for the next Price Control period, PC28 (2028/29 – 2032/33).

A draft determination by the Utility Regulator is scheduled for 3rd June 2027.

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.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: [Julian Smyth](#)

Position/Job Title: [DP, Water Quality Policy Branch](#)

Date: [22nd July 2026](#)

Approved by: [Michael Armstrong](#)

Position/Job Title: [G7, Water Quality Policy Branch](#)

Date: [22nd July 2026](#)

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: [23/07/2026](#)

Amendments Requested: [Yes](#)

Date Returned to Business Area: [29/07/2026](#)

Date Final Version Received / Agreed:

Date Published on DfI's Section 75 webpage: