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

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework is a new policy. It fulfils both the commitment contained within Transport Strategy 2035 and the first action in the DfI Disability Action Plan to develop a new Accessible Transport Strategy and Action Plan to develop a dedicated strategy focused primarily on the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people, with the aim of improving accessibility, removing barriers to travel and supporting safe, confident and independent mobility.

While the Framework is new, it builds upon longstanding statutory responsibilities and policy commitments relating to accessibility and inclusion. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI), and its predecessor organisations, have for many years been responsible for transport policy, public transport funding, transport infrastructure, active travel and elements of the wider built environment, all of which play an important role in enabling equality of opportunity through access to transport.

The Department's predecessor, the Department for Regional Development (DRD), published an Accessible Transport Strategy in 2005. That strategy set out a programme of work to improve the accessibility of transport services and infrastructure and informed a range of subsequent policy and operational improvements across the transport system.

In 2015, DRD undertook a public consultation on proposals for a new Accessible Transport Strategy 2025. The consultation sought views on a draft strategy aimed at further improving accessibility and independent mobility. However, the proposed strategy was not subsequently finalised or published.

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework therefore represents the first dedicated accessibility-focused transport strategy to be progressed by DfI. It reflects changes in transport policy, demographics and societal expectations since the publication of the 2005 strategy. It also responds to evidence that, despite substantial progress in accessibility and inclusion, older, d/Deaf and disabled people continue to experience barriers when travelling and accessing services. The Framework seeks to provide a renewed strategic framework for addressing those barriers and promoting continuous improvement across the Department's transport functions.

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

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework aims to improve accessibility, remove barriers to travel and support safe, confident and independent mobility, particularly for older, d/Deaf and disabled people.

The Framework seeks to embed accessibility and inclusion across the Department's transport functions through improved engagement, inclusive design, staff awareness, investment decisions, public transport accessibility, and consideration of end-to-end journeys.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?
If so, explain how.

The primary beneficiaries are expected to be:

- Older people.
- Disabled people, including people with physical, sensory, cognitive, neurological, mental health and hidden disabilities.
- d/Deaf people.

The measures may also benefit:

- Children and young people.
- People with dependants, including carers and parents travelling with young children.
- People with temporary injuries or mobility limitations.

- People from minority ethnic communities who may benefit from improved accessibility and communication.

The Framework is intended to benefit these groups by reducing barriers that can prevent or discourage independent travel and participation in everyday activities. Through its focus on accessibility, inclusion and independent mobility, the Framework seeks to improve people's ability to access employment, education, healthcare, public services, shopping, leisure activities and community life.

Benefits are expected to arise from:

- Improved consideration of accessibility and inclusive design in transport infrastructure, public realm schemes and transport services.
- Greater involvement of older, d/Deaf and disabled people in decision-making through engagement with Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and other representative organisations.
- Improvements to the accessibility of public transport, including vehicles, stops, stations, information systems and customer service.
- More accessible communications and information, including digital content and passenger information.
- Action to address barriers within the wider built environment, such as pavement parking, footway obstructions and poor pedestrian connectivity.
- Continued support for community transport, Shopmobility services and improvements to accessible taxi provision, particularly for people who cannot easily use conventional public transport.
- Increased awareness and understanding of accessibility issues among Departmental staff, policy makers and delivery partners.
- Greater consideration of end-to-end journeys, recognising that accessibility depends on every stage of a journey being accessible and connected.

The Framework is also expected to promote greater independence, confidence, safety and social inclusion for older, d/Deaf and disabled people by helping to reduce physical, communication, organisational and attitudinal barriers to travel.

In the longer term, the Framework should contribute to improved equality of opportunity by enabling more people to participate fully in society and access the opportunities, services and communities that matter to them. While focused primarily on older, d/Deaf and disabled people, many of the measures contained within the Framework are also expected to benefit other groups, including people with temporary mobility impairments, carers, families with young children and people living in rural areas.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Department for Infrastructure.

Who owns and who implements the policy?
DfI owns and will implement the policy. Implementation will be supported by relevant DfI business areas, arm's-length bodies, transport operators, and key stakeholders.

Background

DfI has responsibility for many of the services, networks and policy areas that influence how people move around Northern Ireland (NI) and access employment, education, healthcare, public services, social opportunities and community life. These responsibilities include the strategic road network, footways and footpaths, public transport policy and funding, community transport, planning, active travel, transport regulation and elements of the wider built environment.

Accessible transport is a fundamental enabler of equality of opportunity. The ability to travel safely, confidently and independently has a significant influence on an individual's ability to participate fully in society. Where transport systems, infrastructure or services are inaccessible, barriers can arise which limit access to employment, education, healthcare, social activities and public services. These barriers can contribute to social isolation, reduced independence and poorer outcomes for affected individuals.

Northern Ireland's demographic profile, as detailed below in this screening form highlights the increasing importance of accessibility and inclusive mobility.

The Department has already taken significant steps to improve accessibility and inclusion across transport services and infrastructure. These include investment in accessible public transport fleets, improvements to stations and stops, support for community transport and Shopmobility services, concessionary travel schemes, enhanced passenger information systems and increasing use of inclusive design principles in transport and public realm projects.

There is also a substantial legislative, regulatory and policy framework governing accessibility. This includes the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, public service vehicle accessibility regulations, equality legislation, planning

policy, building regulations and associated accessibility guidance. Collectively, these frameworks establish important protections and minimum standards relating to accessibility, non-discrimination and equal access.

Notwithstanding this progress, evidence gathered during development of *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* demonstrates that significant barriers remain. The Department established an Inclusion Task and Finish Group under the *Including People* workstream as part of the *Foundations for a Better Future* initiative. Its remit was to identify the principal barriers to inclusion and transport challenges experienced by older, Deaf, and disabled people, and to consider how these could be addressed. In Spring 2025 the Group engaged with a broad range of organisations and stakeholders across the wider sector through a survey, receiving responses from representative organisations across the disability, older people's, transport, and community sectors on the travel and transport issues that have the greatest impact on their members' ability to travel independently.

Stakeholders highlighted a range of physical barriers, including poor footway conditions, uneven surfaces, inaccessible bus stops, insufficient crossing facilities, pavement parking, street clutter, poor quality utility reinstatements, inadequate links between transport modes and accessibility issues within the public realm. These barriers can make journeys difficult or impossible, particularly for people with mobility impairments, visual impairments or other disabilities.

Barriers relating to public transport were also identified, including concerns regarding accessibility of vehicles and infrastructure, availability of assistance, accessibility of passenger information, provision for wheelchair users, connectivity between services and the overall ease of completing end-to-end journeys.

Stakeholders further identified communication and information barriers affecting many users, particularly d/Deaf people, people with sensory impairments, people with learning disabilities, neurodivergent people and those with hidden disabilities. These include difficulties accessing information, inconsistent provision of audio and visual announcements, challenges during service disruption and accessibility issues associated with digital technology and ticketing systems.

The engagement process also identified transport challenges that can be more acute in rural areas, including lower service frequencies, longer distances to

transport hubs, fewer transport options and greater reliance on community transport services and private transport.

The Department recognises that many disabilities are not visible. People with learning disabilities, autism, dementia, acquired brain injuries, neurological conditions, mental health conditions and other hidden disabilities may experience significant difficulties navigating complex transport environments, understanding information, coping with unexpected changes or accessing assistance when required. Such barriers are not always recognised in traditional approaches to transport planning and design. A UK-wide survey by Mencap revealed that people with learning disabilities find public transport confusing, unreliable, inaccessible and unsafe; passes and tickets are not fit for purpose; and public transport staff do not understand learning disability.[1]

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework has therefore been developed to address these challenges and to fulfil the commitment contained within Transport Strategy 2035 to develop an inclusive transport strategy focused primarily on the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people. The Framework recognises that while legal compliance remains essential, compliance alone does not always guarantee that journeys are fully accessible or inclusive in practice.

The Framework seeks to build upon existing legislation, policies and programmes by promoting continuous improvement across the Department's responsibilities. It aims to embed accessibility and inclusion within decision-making, policy development, transport planning, infrastructure investment, service delivery and organisational culture. It also seeks to ensure that the lived experience of older, d/Deaf and disabled people plays a central role in informing decisions that affect them.

The intended outcomes of the Framework include:

- Improving the accessibility of transport services, infrastructure and the wider built environment.
- Supporting safe, confident and independent mobility for older, d/Deaf and disabled people.
- Reducing physical, communication, organisational and attitudinal barriers to travel.
- Improving access to employment, education, healthcare, public services and community life.

[1] Mencap_Motability_Research_Report.pdf

- Strengthening the consideration of accessibility within investment decisions and project design.
- Improving engagement with people who have lived experience of transport barriers.
- Promoting inclusive design and accessibility beyond minimum statutory requirements.
- Supporting greater independence, social inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Implementation factors

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

Yes.

Financial – Delivery of some actions will depend upon future budgets and resource availability.

Legislative – Certain actions may require legislative change or policy development.

Main stakeholders affected

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

- DfI staff and business areas.
- Service users, particularly older, d/Deaf and disabled people.
- Transport operators, including Translink, community transport, and Shopmobility.
- IMTAC
- Older, d/Deaf and disabled people representative groups

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Transport Strategy 2035 – DfI

Provides the overarching strategic framework for transport in NI and includes a commitment to develop an inclusive transport strategy focused on improving accessibility, removing barriers to travel and supporting independent mobility.

Local Transport Plans / Regional Transport Plans – DfI
These plans translate Transport Strategy 2035 into place-based transport improvements. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* seeks to ensure accessibility and inclusion are embedded throughout their development and delivery.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – NI Executive
Requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* supports the Department in meeting these obligations through improved consideration of accessibility and inclusion.

DfI Equality Scheme and associated Disability Action Plan
The Scheme sets out how the Department fulfils its statutory equality duties. The DfI Disability Action Plan sets out the actions to how the Department will meet its Section 75 disability duties. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* contributes to the delivery of those commitments by addressing barriers experienced by older, d/Deaf and disabled people.

Active Travel Delivery Plan – DfI
Promotes increased levels of walking, wheeling and cycling. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* seeks to ensure active travel infrastructure is designed and delivered in a way that is accessible and inclusive for all users.

Planning Policy and Local Development Plans – DfI
Influence the design of places, developments and transport connectivity. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* promotes the incorporation of inclusive design principles within planning and placemaking processes.

Community Transport Policy and Funding Programmes – DfI
Support transport services for people who may be unable to access conventional public transport. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* recognises their important role in promoting independent mobility and social inclusion.

Concessionary Fares Scheme – DfI
Supports affordable travel for eligible older and disabled people. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* complements the scheme by

seeking to address other barriers that may affect people's ability to travel independently.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) – UK Government
Establishes legal protections against disability discrimination and places duties on transport providers and service providers. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* seeks to promote continuous improvement beyond minimum legal compliance.

Executive Disability Strategy – Department for Communities (DfC) - (lead Department)
The Executive Disability Strategy addresses disability issues across society as a whole. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* complements this by focusing specifically on transport, mobility and the built environment within DfI's remit.

Climate Change and Transport Decarbonisation Policies – Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)/DfI
Support the transition to a low-carbon transport system. *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* seeks to ensure that decarbonisation measures are implemented in a way that does not create unintended barriers for older, d/Deaf and disabled people.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework helps advance the principles of equality, accessibility, independent living and personal mobility contained within the Convention, particularly Articles 9 and 20.

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.

General Evidence [Include any qualitative and quantitative evidence related to the policy]

Evidence informing the Framework includes:

- Census 2021.
- NISRA population projections.
- DfI Audit of Inequalities
- Health Survey NI 2023/24.
- UK disability statistics.
- Engagement undertaken by DfI's Inclusion Task and Finish Working Group.
- Evidence gathered from representative organisations.
- IMTAC's publication *A New Approach to Travel, Our Streets and Our Places*.
- Mencap report *No Journey Left Behind: Making public transport accessible for people with a learning disability*.
- Consumer Council NI report *Understanding the barriers to greater public transport use in Northern Ireland*.
- Existing DfI transport and accessibility policy work.
- User and stakeholder feedback regarding transport accessibility.

Religious belief evidence / information:

2021 Census data indicates a diverse religious profile across NI. In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for the main current religions in NI: Catholic 45.7%, Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related) 43.5%, Other Religions 1.5% and No Religion 9.3%.

The Census shows that when it comes to car or van availability, there is higher rate of individuals from non-Christian religions (23.4%) living in households that have no cars or vans available, higher than the NI average of 13.3%.
People without a car can be limited to participating in activities within their local area, which were often not adequate for their needs. The reliance on public transport limits their ability to deviate far from the main public transport routes, due to financial constraints and the poor connectivity of transport services. This makes it more difficult to reach opportunities outside their local area, thereby increasing their risk of social exclusion (UK Government Office for Science. Inequalities in Mobility and Access. 2019).

Political Opinion evidence / information:

In the General Election Results 2024 the following statistics were recorded for political opinion in NI; 'Unionist' (40.6%), 'Nationalist' (40.2%) and 'Other' (19.2%).

No evidence has been identified suggesting differing transport accessibility outcomes based solely on political opinion, however, older and disabled people irrespective of their political opinion can benefit from the Framework.

Racial Group evidence / information:

Census 2021 recorded increasing ethnic diversity within NI, with approximately 3.4% of the population identifying as belonging to minority ethnic groups, compared with 1.8% in 2011. The number of people identifying with minority ethnic backgrounds has therefore increased significantly over the last decade.

The DfI Audit of Inequalities highlighted evidence that safety and perceptions of safety against racial hate crime on public transport is a particular consideration for those from minority ethnic groups. The Audit also highlighted evidence that asylum seekers and migrant workers may be more heavily reliant on public transport, citing evidence that a high proportion of this cohort is reliant on benefits or employed in low-paid jobs, so affordability of transport is a particular factor. The Audit identified language issues as a potential barrier to usage of public transport for new migrants and asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers and refugees are more likely to be non-white and have restrictions obtaining a driver's licence, meaning they are more reliant on public transport.

Analysis on an all-island basis by ethnicity, shows that one in sixteen (6%) respondents from a Black Irish/Black African/other Black background experienced discrimination in accessing/using transport services, compared with 2% of White Irish. Almost one in ten (9%) respondents from other ethnic backgrounds including people of Latino, Hispanic, and other mixed backgrounds, experienced discrimination in their use of/access to transport services.

Age evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for age groups in NI: 0-15 years 20.4%, 16-24 years 10.6%, 25-34 years 12.7%, 35-44 years 13.1%, 45-54 years 13.3%, 55-64 years 12.7%, 65+ years 17.2%.

Census 2021 also showed that the 66+ age group is also the most likely not to have access to cars or vans at 19.1% compared to an overall average of 13.3%.

NI's population is ageing significantly. Census 2021 showed that the number of people aged 65 and over increased by approximately 63,000 people (24%) between 2011 and 2021, representing the largest increase of any broad age group.

The latest 2024-based population projections published by NISRA indicate that this trend will continue. The population aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 44.7% over the period 2024 to 2049, while the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to increase by 126.1% over the same period. The projections indicate that by 2027 there will be more people aged 65 and over than children aged 0-15 in NI.

These projections demonstrate that older people will comprise an increasingly significant proportion of transport users over the lifetime of the Framework. Evidence also shows a strong relationship between ageing and disability: UK disability statistics indicate that disability prevalence increases significantly with age, with approximately 45% of adults over State Pension Age reporting a disability, compared with around 24% of working-age adults. Among people aged 85 and over, around 64% report a disability.

The Health Survey (NI) 2023/24 reported that 34% of adults aged 16 and over had a longstanding physical or mental health condition that reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. The survey also found that self-reported good health declines significantly with age, with only 48% of those aged 75 and over

reporting their health as very good or good, compared with 86% of those aged 16-24.

As people age, they are increasingly likely to experience mobility impairments, sensory impairments, reduced stamina, chronic health conditions and other factors that can affect their ability to travel independently and safely.

The DfI Audit of Inequalities outlined that older people also tend to have lower incomes, are more benefit dependent and spend more on necessities than the rest of the population. They also experience other forms of exclusion, such as isolation from friends, relatives, services and facilities and increased fear of crime. Older people, particularly women and those living in isolated or marginalised areas, can experience particular difficulties in accessing public services.

The Audit of Inequalities highlights that older people tend to have a greater reliance on public transport to access services and remain independent. The audit also highlights typically lower incomes and greater dependence on benefits in older age categories with the result that continuing access to free public transport is likely to be of greater significance to this cohort.

Survey evidence gathered during development of the Framework through engagement with representative organisations for older people, disabled people and transport users, including IMTAC, Mencap, sight-loss charities, and community transport organisations as well as individuals identified a range of issues that affect the ability of older people to travel independently. Key issues highlighted included:

- Poor condition of footways and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Uneven surfaces and trip hazards.
- Inconsiderate pavement parking and pavement clutter.
- Difficulties accessing bus stops and transport interchanges.
- Poor connections between transport modes.
- Limited availability of community transport services.
- Availability and affordability of accessible taxis.
- Inadequate passenger information and communication during service disruption.
- Limited public transport provision in some rural areas.
- Distance to public transport facilities.
- Lack of safe and accessible walking routes.
- Poor street lighting in some locations.
- Difficulties completing end-to-end journeys.

The cumulative effect of these barriers can discourage older people from travelling, reduce confidence in using public transport and contribute to social isolation. The evidence collated during DfI engagement with older people's organisations and transport stakeholders also indicates that where transport is inaccessible, unreliable or unavailable, older people can become increasingly isolated from services and social opportunities.

Unrepaired defects on a road or footpath could lead to tripping hazards and cause problems for those with a mobility related disability or visual impairment, therefore this group would have a greater need for roads and footpaths to be kept in good repair to make it easier for this group to safely access the walking environment.

Comparing the 0-24 age group with the 25-59 and 60+ age groups using data from the 2021 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland, shows that there is no real difference between these groups when looking at the percentage of journeys by walking (0-24 21%, 25-59 24%, 60+ 26%) or the percentage of journeys by cycling (0-24 2%, 25-59 1%, 60+ 1%). However, the 0-24 age group makes a higher percentage of their journeys by public transport (7%) than the other age groups (25-59 1%, 60+ 2%). Children and young people make the majority of their trips by bus, to get to school or college, leisure facilities and work. Therefore, affordability can be a barrier for older children and young people. Lack of provision in rural areas particularly affects young people who cannot drive.

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Experiences and attitudes of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland in 2024 found that 49% of those surveyed said they felt unsafe when using buses and trains by themselves. Public transport was the most common place for young women to feel unsafe.

Marital Status evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.5 million (those aged 16 and over), the following statistics were recorded for marital status in NI: single (38.1%), married (45.6 %), in a civil partnership (0.2%), Separated (3.8%), divorced / dissolved partnership (6%) and widowed (6.4%).

2017-2019 is the latest Travel Survey for NI data available for analysis by marital status. There was no real difference between the percentage of journeys by public transport taken by those who are married or in a civil partnership (3%) and those who are cohabiting (5%). However, single people, those who are

divorced or widowed made a higher percentage of their journeys by public transport (single 9%, divorced 6%, widowed 7%) than those who are married or in a civil partnership (3%).

The NIHRC' report on the impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland highlights that single parents are more likely to be on benefits, and therefore, more likely to rely on public transport or social housing and to be women. The Gender Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report explains that lone parents (the majority of whom are women) are even more vulnerable to poverty.

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.5 million (those aged 16 and over), the following statistics were recorded for sexual orientation in NI dependable: straight or heterosexual (90%), gay, lesbian, bisexual or other (2%), prefer not to say or not stated (7.9%).

Census 2021 also showed straight or heterosexual people have a higher likelihood of having access to cars or vans than other groups – 12.8% of this group do not have access to a car compared to 22.6% for gay, lesbian, bisexual and 22.4% for prefer not to say or not stated.

The DfI Audit of Inequalities highlighted that LGBTQI+ people living in a rural area were three times as likely not to access services they are aware of because it is too far to travel compared to those living in an urban area.

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for gender in NI: females were 50.8% of the population and males were 49.2% of the population.

The TSNI showed there is no real difference in how frequently males and females use public transport: 21% of males and 25% of females said they travel by bus or train at least once a month.

The available evidence does not indicate that men or women experience systematic inequalities in access to transport solely on the basis of sex. However, global data and transport research show that these inequalities affect men and women differently due to distinct economic, social, and safety realities, for example men and women often have different travel patterns, transport

needs and experiences, which can influence how transport systems are used and the extent to which transport barriers are encountered.

Women are generally more likely to:

- Make a greater number of shorter trips.
- Undertake "trip chaining" (combining multiple purposes within a single journey).
- Travel with children and dependants.
- Undertake journeys associated with caring responsibilities.
- Use public transport for local trips and access to services.
- Travel during off-peak periods.

Men are generally more likely to:

- Undertake direct commuting journeys.
- Travel longer distances for employment.
- Make greater use of private vehicles for work-related travel.

These differences do not apply universally but indicate that transport accessibility can have different practical implications for men and women.

Looking at journeys taken by the 16+ age group using any form of transport, on average men made a similar number of journeys (830) to women (868) in 2021. However, men tend to travel further, averaging 5,846 miles per year, compared to 4,725 miles for women in 2021.

Women tended to use grant funded Community Transport services in 2023-24 more than men, Dial-a- Lift (69%), the Disability Action Transport Scheme (54% of new members) and Shopmobility (58%). This highlights the importance of these services to women.

The Department's Audit of Inequalities cites evidence that fewer women than men hold driving licences and may, thus, be more reliant on affordable public transport than men. The Gender Equality Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report also notes that greater dependence on public transport puts women at an economic disadvantage to men and highlights cost and availability of public transport services (in rural areas in particular) as a barrier to women's participation in society and civic life.

The Department's Audit also highlights that safety and perceptions of safety against gender-based crime on public transport is more of a barrier to use of public transport for women than men. The Audit also notes that women are also more likely to have care-giving responsibilities that can necessitate multiple

short journeys during a day. The Audit highlights that the typical “hub and spoke” design of public transport systems which may present challenges to these travel patterns.

The Expert Advisory Panel Report to the Social Inclusion Gender Strategy identifies that women are more likely to be on benefits and low paid insecure work or not work due to caring responsibilities. Women are generally more likely than men to live in poverty across their lifetimes. Lone parents (the majority of whom are women) are even more vulnerable to poverty.

The Report also identifies women are much less likely to have access to their own private transport than men. This means that women depend much more on public transport and are at an economic disadvantage to men. Rural women’s participation in public and political life is further hindered by geography and distance from decision making spaces. The lives of rural women are affected directly and indirectly by their access to transportation. The absence of public transport in most rural areas makes the majority of women dependent on private automotive transportation. Rural women are one of the groups that are most often ‘transportation disadvantaged’. Research indicates that rural women have more limited access to family vehicles than do men. Lower incomes for women in rural communities mean that maintaining a vehicle may be beyond the reach of individuals, even when they need one to get to work or access childcare. Lack of access to transport is a major issue for rural women accessing education, training work and childcare.

The NI Rural Women’s Network note that “Women are much less likely to have access to their own private transport than men. This means that women depend much more on public transport and are at an economic disadvantage to men. The accessibility of education, training, work and childcare provision, and the cost of public transport, are factors in determining women’s participation, especially in rural areas. The economic disadvantages of lack of access to transport are compounded by the impeded ability to access basic services and social isolation”.

The Transport Poverty Report by Belfast Healthy Cities outlines broader patterns of vulnerability and systemic inequities, particularly a pronounced gender divide that shapes mobility and access to transport services. The report cites academic research (UK level) that finds women face unique challenges in their transport needs, largely influenced by societal norms that assign them a disproportionate share of unpaid household and caregiving responsibilities. These roles often require women to travel to multiple destinations within a day,

such as schools, food shops, healthcare facilities and workplaces, leading to more complex and fragmented travel patterns compared to men.

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Experiences and attitudes of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland in 2024 found that 49% of those surveyed said they felt unsafe when using buses and trains by themselves. Public transport was the most common place for young women to feel unsafe

Evidence from the 2021 Census and research by Carers NI and the Women's Regional Consortium indicates that women undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid caring responsibilities. Women account for almost 60% of carers in Northern Ireland and are significantly more likely than men to reduce their working hours, leave employment, or forgo career progression because of caring responsibilities.

A transport system that is accessible, reliable and easy to navigate can therefore be particularly important for supporting participation in employment, education and community life while balancing caring responsibilities.

Disability evidence / information:

Census 2021 data shows that around one in four people in NI (24.3%, approximately 463,000 people) have a limiting long-term health problem or disability. This indicates that a significant proportion of current and future transport users may require accessible infrastructure, services and information.

The Health Survey (NI): First Results 2023/24 further reported that 34% of adults aged 16 and over had a longstanding physical or mental health condition that reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, an increase from 31% in the previous year.

Transport Accessibility Statistics 2024 further indicate that almost one quarter (24.3%) of people whose day-to-day activities are limited do not have access to a car or van, compared with 10.1% of those without such limitations, demonstrating greater reliance on public transport. This reliance on public transport was also demonstrated in the 2025 Consumer Council NI report to understanding barriers in transport, in which 52% of disabled consumers reported they were dependent on public transport compared with 38% of non-disabled consumers[2]. In addition, Travel Survey data shows that people with

[2] Understanding the barriers to greater public transport use in Northern Ireland | Consumer Council

mobility difficulties make significantly fewer journeys overall, reflecting higher barriers to safe and accessible travel.

People with a disability are key users of the grant funded Community Transport services in 2023-24 and Shopmobility (100%). A key condition of membership of the Disability Action Transport Scheme is that an individual finds it difficult or impossible to use mainstream public transport.

The Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report outlines how access to transport is a long-standing issue which can have a direct impact on the ability of d/Deaf and disabled people to exercise their rights to, for example, independent living, education, employment, health, and access to culture, arts and leisure. The Report also outlines that the physical inaccessibility of public transport has been recognised by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a major factor in the ongoing marginalisation and exclusion of both disabled children and adults. While there have been improvements to public transport, many of the improvements have benefitted people travelling in the Greater Belfast area the most, with travel by public transport more challenging for people living in other areas.

Disability prevalence increases significantly with age. UK disability statistics indicate that approximately 24% of working-age adults report a disability, compared with around 45% of people over State Pension Age and approximately 64% of people aged 85 and over.

Given projected population ageing in NI, the number of people likely to experience mobility limitations, sensory impairments or other accessibility needs is expected to increase over time. This highlights the importance of ensuring that transport systems, services and the built environment are accessible to the widest possible range of users.

The Framework recognises that disability encompasses a broad spectrum of needs and experiences. Disabled people may have:

- Physical disabilities affecting mobility and balance.
- Visual impairments.
- Hearing impairments and d/Deafness.
- Learning disabilities.
- Autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions.
- Acquired brain injuries.
- Neurological conditions.
- Mental health conditions.
- Dementia and other cognitive impairments.

- Long-term health conditions.
- Hidden or non-visible disabilities.

The nature and extent of transport barriers experienced may therefore vary significantly between individuals and groups.

Stakeholder engagement in developing the Framework identified a range of barriers affecting transport accessibility and mobility. These included poor footway conditions, uneven surfaces, inaccessible bus stops, insufficient crossing facilities, pavement parking, street clutter, poor quality utility reinstatements and accessibility issues within the public realm. Stakeholders advised that these barriers can make journeys difficult or impossible, particularly for people with mobility impairments, visual impairments and other disabilities.

Engagement also identified barriers relating to public transport, including concerns regarding the accessibility of vehicles and infrastructure, availability of assistance, accessibility of passenger information, provision for wheelchair users, connectivity between services and the ease of completing end-to-end journeys.

Communication and information barriers were highlighted by stakeholders, particularly for d/Deaf people, people with sensory impairments, learning disabilities, neurodivergent people and those with hidden disabilities. Issues identified included difficulties accessing information, inconsistent provision of audio and visual announcements, challenges during service disruption and accessibility issues associated with digital technology and ticketing systems.

Evidence gathered through DfI engagement also highlighted transport challenges that can be more acute in rural areas, including lower service frequencies, longer distances to transport hubs, fewer transport options and greater reliance on community transport services and private transport.

Engagement with representative organisations, transport stakeholders, IMTAC and community organisations, identified a range of barriers that continue to affect disabled people's ability to travel independently as outlined in the Age section above.

Evidence from disability organisations, IMTAC and transport users demonstrates that transport barriers can have wider consequences for disabled people's lives, including:

- Reduced access to employment and training opportunities.
- Reduced access to healthcare and public services.

- Reduced participation in education.
- Social isolation and loneliness.
- Reduced independence.
- Reduced participation in cultural, recreational and community activities.
- Increased reliance on carers, family members or specialist transport services.

Dependants evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for dependants in NI: 30.7% per cent of households in contained at least one dependent child and 44.9% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability; made up of those households with dependent children (10.1%) and those with no dependent children (34.8%).

The Census shows that 9.9% of people with dependent children in their household live in a household without cars or vans available, slightly below the NI average (13.3%).

In respect of roads and footpath maintenance, there is evidence from the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) and The AA to suggest that poor maintenance of pavements poses a difficulty to all pedestrians but the latter highlights particularly the negative impact on those with young dependents who are reliant on using pushchairs or wheelchairs.

Women are more likely than men to be a single parent and claiming benefits, or to be earning low incomes working in insecure employment. As such this presents challenges for expectant mothers or parents with young children with regards to affording public transport and/or the of availability of public transport, as well as limitation in transport choice when travelling with a young child. These are similar experiences to disabled people and older people, the accessibility and design of physical spaces can also affect parents' ability to travel freely with small children, especially if using pushchairs (DfI Audit of Inequalities)

In the 2021 Census, 222,218 or 11.7% of the population provided unpaid care. Many carers support individuals with disabilities, long-term health conditions, mobility impairments, age-related conditions or other support needs.

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

Evidence does not indicate that religious belief itself gives rise to specific accessibility or mobility needs. However, Census data shows that people from non-Christian religions are more likely than the Northern Ireland average to live in households without access to a car or van. This may increase reliance on public transport and active travel options. Consequently, key needs and priorities for this group include access to affordable, reliable and accessible public transport, good connectivity to essential services and places of worship, and transport networks that support participation in community life. Improvements to accessibility, connectivity and the overall journey experience proposed through the Framework are therefore likely to have positive benefits for those who are more reliant on public transport.

The Framework seeks to address many of the barriers identified through improvements to public transport accessibility, pedestrian infrastructure, information provision, community transport, engagement, inclusive design and consideration of end-to-end journeys. The Framework is intended to support safe, confident and independent mobility in NI.

Political Opinion

No evidence has been identified to suggest that transport accessibility or mobility outcomes differ based solely on political opinion. The barriers to accessible travel identified through the development of the Framework are experienced across society and are not unique to any particular political grouping. Consequently, the needs and priorities associated with the Framework relate to improving accessibility, inclusion and independent mobility for older people and disabled people regardless of their political opinion. The proposed actions are intended to support equitable access to transport, services, opportunities and community participation for all individuals and are therefore expected to benefit people across all political perspectives.

The Framework seeks to address many of the barriers identified through improvements to public transport accessibility, pedestrian infrastructure, information provision, community transport, engagement, inclusive design and consideration of end-to-end journeys. The Framework is intended to support safe, confident and independent mobility in NI.

Racial Group

Evidence indicates that Northern Ireland's population is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse, with the proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds rising from 1.8% in 2011 to 3.4% in 2021. The evidence also suggests that some minority ethnic groups, including asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers, may face particular barriers in accessing and using transport services. These can include greater reliance on public transport due to lower levels of car access, affordability constraints, restrictions on obtaining a driving licence, language barriers, and concerns about personal safety. Evidence also indicates that people from some ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely than their White counterparts to experience discrimination when accessing or using transport services.

Some minority ethnic communities may experience barriers associated with communication, access to information and understanding and navigating transport systems. Where transport services are inaccessible, difficult to understand or difficult to access, individuals may experience additional barriers to participating fully in economic and social life.

The experiences of people within the Racial Group category may be influenced by other characteristics. For example:

- Disabled people from minority ethnic communities may experience both accessibility barriers and communication barriers.
- Older people from minority ethnic communities may face challenges associated with ageing, disability and access to information.
- Carers from minority ethnic communities may experience difficulties accessing appropriate transport services for those they support.

The interaction of these factors may increase the importance of accessible public transport, accessible communications, inclusive engagement and user-centred service design.

In the context of the Framework, key needs and priorities for this group include affordable, reliable and accessible public transport; clear and accessible travel information; safe and welcoming transport environments free from discrimination and harassment; and transport services that enable equitable access to employment, education, healthcare and community participation. The Framework's focus on improving accessibility, engagement, information provision and the overall journey experience has the potential to support the inclusion and mobility of people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Age

The evidence demonstrates that age is a significant factor in shaping people's transport needs, experiences and priorities. While the Framework focuses primarily on improving mobility and accessibility for older people, it is also relevant to children and young people, who can be particularly reliant on public transport and active travel. The needs, experiences and priorities of these age groups differ, but both can be affected by the accessibility, affordability, availability and safety of transport services and infrastructure.

Older people are a key user group within NI's transport system and are likely to become an increasingly important transport user group as the population continues to age. The projected growth in the older population, combined with the higher prevalence of disability and long-term health conditions among older age groups, means that accessibility and inclusive mobility are particularly important considerations for this Section 75 category. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) projects that the population aged 65 and over will increase by 44.7% by 2049, while the population aged 85 and over will more than double.

Older people are more likely to depend on public transport, have limited access to private vehicles and experience mobility impairments, sensory impairments, chronic health conditions and reduced stamina, all of which can affect their ability to travel independently. Their needs include:

- Accessible, reliable and affordable transport to enable independent living and continued participation in community life.
- Accessible public transport services, stops and interchanges that accommodate reduced mobility, sensory impairments and long-term health conditions.
- Clear, accessible passenger information, particularly during service disruptions.
- Good connectivity between transport modes and destinations to support end-to-end journeys.

- Availability of community transport, accessible taxis and other alternative transport options where conventional public transport is unavailable.
- Transport services that facilitate access to healthcare, employment, shopping, social activities and other essential services.
- Continued access to affordable transport options, recognising that many older people have lower incomes and are more reliant on concessionary travel.

Many older people rely on accessible transport to:

- Attend healthcare appointments.
- Access shops and essential services.
- Participate in social, cultural and community activities.
- Maintain family and social connections.
- Volunteer and undertake caring responsibilities.
- Continue working or participate in education and lifelong learning.

Access to transport is often a key factor in enabling older people to remain independent and continue living in their own homes and communities for longer.

Older people also rely on well designed and maintained active travel infrastructure as mobility impairments can make it harder to walk and this group can also be more sustainable to trips and falls due to defective and damaged walkways etc. Stakeholder engagement identified a number of priority concerns including:

- Poor footway maintenance.
- Uneven surfaces and trip hazards.
- Damaged pavements.
- Pavement parking and footway obstructions.
- Difficulties using crossing facilities.
- Lack of seating and rest areas.
- Accessibility of bus stops and stations.
- Poor lighting and wayfinding.
- Difficulties accessing transport interchanges.

These barriers can disproportionately affect older people because even relatively minor obstacles can create significant challenges for those with reduced mobility or confidence.

While digital information can offer significant benefits, some older people may continue to rely on non-digital channels and therefore require information to be available through multiple formats.

Children and young people are also more reliant on public transport than other age groups and may face challenges relating to affordability, service availability, rural connectivity and personal safety. Key priorities for this group include accessible, affordable, reliable and safe transport services, good pedestrian infrastructure, improved connectivity and support for independent travel.

The Framework's focus on improving accessibility and the whole journey experience is therefore particularly relevant to addressing the needs of both older people and younger transport users.

Marital status

The available evidence does not indicate that marital status in itself creates specific accessibility needs. However, it does suggest that some marital status groups, particularly single people, widowed people, divorced people and lone parents, are more likely to rely on public transport and may be more vulnerable to the impacts of poor transport accessibility, affordability or availability. As a result, transport plays an important role in enabling these groups to access employment, education, childcare, healthcare, social networks and essential services.

The Framework seeks to address many of the barriers identified through improvements to public transport accessibility, pedestrian infrastructure, information provision, community transport, engagement, inclusive design and consideration of end-to-end journeys. The Framework is intended to support safe, confident and independent mobility in NI.

Sexual orientation

No specific transport accessibility issues identified. The available evidence does not indicate that sexual orientation itself creates specific accessibility needs. However, Census data suggests that people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or another sexual orientation are less likely to have access to a car or van than those who identify as straight or heterosexual. This may increase reliance on public transport, walking and other sustainable transport options. Evidence also indicates that LGBTQI+ people living in rural areas can face particular challenges accessing services due to travel distance, highlighting the importance of accessible, reliable and well-connected transport networks.

The Framework seeks to address many of the barriers identified through improvements to public transport accessibility, pedestrian infrastructure, information provision, community transport, engagement, inclusive design and

consideration of end-to-end journeys. The Framework is intended to support safe, confident and independent mobility in NI.

Men and Women Generally

Evidence demonstrates that men and women often have different travel patterns, transport needs and experiences because of differing employment patterns, caring responsibilities, income levels and perceptions of personal safety. These differences can influence how transport systems are used, the barriers encountered, and the extent to which individuals rely on public transport and other transport services.

Women are:

- less likely than men to have access to a driving licence or private transport and may therefore be more dependent on public transport.
- more likely to undertake caring responsibilities and to travel with children, older people or other dependants and therefore often make multiple linked journeys throughout the day rather than a single direct journey.
- more likely to experience financial disadvantage, poverty and low-income employment, making transport affordability particularly important.

As a result, women may be more dependent on local transport services, walking environments and public transport connectivity.

Women use community transport services more frequently than men, highlighting the importance of these services in supporting mobility and independence. Women in rural areas may face particular challenges accessing employment, training, childcare and essential services due to transport limitations.

Evidence consistently shows that women undertake a greater proportion of unpaid caring responsibilities. Consequently, they may be particularly affected by:

- Poor pavement conditions.
- Pavement parking.
- Physical obstructions on footways.
- Inaccessible public transport infrastructure.
- Difficulties transferring between transport modes.
- Inadequate accessibility at bus stops and stations.

While women are more likely to undertake caring roles, these issues may also affect men who provide care and support to family members.

Men are more likely to undertake direct commuting journeys, travel longer distances and use private vehicles for employment-related travel.

The experiences of men and women cannot be considered in isolation from other Section 75 characteristics (S75). For example:

- Older women are more likely to experience age-related mobility issues.
- Disabled women may experience transport barriers associated with both disability and caring responsibilities.
- Male and female carers may encounter additional transport challenges when accompanying older or disabled family members.
- Women from minority ethnic communities may experience language or communication barriers in addition to transport accessibility issues.
- Older men who no longer drive may become increasingly reliant on accessible public and community transport services.

The interaction of these characteristics means that accessibility improvements can have benefits across multiple groups simultaneously.

Key priorities include affordable, reliable, safe and accessible transport services; good connectivity between destinations; transport systems that accommodate different journey patterns; and measures that support access to employment, education, healthcare, childcare and community life.

The Framework's focus on accessibility, inclusive design, improved journey experiences and independent mobility is therefore relevant to both men and women, although it has particular potential to benefit women due to their greater reliance on public transport and community transport services and the transport impacts associated with caring responsibilities.

Disability

The evidence demonstrates that disabled people experience some of the most significant transport and mobility barriers of any Section 75 group. Around one quarter of the population in Northern Ireland has a limiting long-term health problem or disability, and evidence consistently shows that disabled people are more reliant on public transport and specialist transport services, while simultaneously experiencing greater difficulties accessing and using them. The diversity of disabilities means that experiences vary considerably, but common

themes include physical, sensory, informational, attitudinal and environmental barriers that can affect the ability to travel safely, independently and with confidence. Accessible mobility is therefore a key enabler of independent living, social inclusion, education, employment, healthcare access and participation in community life.

Disabled people are significantly more likely than non-disabled people to be without access to a private vehicle and therefore more reliant on public transport. Many disabled people make fewer journeys overall, reflecting the barriers they face when travelling.

Disabled people living in rural areas may face additional barriers due to fewer transport options, lower service frequencies and longer distances to transport hubs. In addition, many disabled people rely heavily on community transport, Shopmobility and other specialist services because mainstream transport does not always fully meet their needs.

Individuals with physical disabilities and mobility impairments identified accessibility of the built environment as a significant priority including uneven footways, poor surfaces, street clutter, pavement parking, inaccessible crossings and inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. Even where public transport services themselves are accessible, barriers encountered before reaching the transport service may prevent journeys from taking place. Wheelchair users may encounter barriers relating to vehicle accessibility, infrastructure design and availability of wheelchair spaces.

Disabled people also identified reliable and accessible public transport as a key priority. For many disabled people, predictable and reliable accessibility features are as important as the physical accessibility of individual vehicles or facilities.

Stakeholders highlighted that street furniture, temporary works, advertising boards, pavement parking and poorly designed public realm interventions can present significant challenges for blind and partially sighted people.

People with learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injuries, dementia, mental health conditions, neurological conditions and other hidden disabilities identified challenges associated with understanding complex transport systems, interpreting transport information, coping with unexpected journey changes, accessing support and assistance, and purchasing tickets and understanding fare structures. d/Deaf people may be disadvantaged where visual information is unavailable or where communications during service disruption are inaccessible. Accessible information was identified as a recurring priority across

a wide range of disability groups. Inaccessible information can be as significant a barrier as inaccessible infrastructure. Clearer information, better staff awareness and more accessible transport environments can improve confidence and independent mobility.

In addition to physical and communication barriers, disabled people highlighted the continuing impact of attitudinal barriers. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of disability awareness and disability equality training in helping to create a more inclusive transport system.

These barriers can have wider impacts on disabled people's ability to access employment, education, healthcare, public services and community life, and may contribute to social isolation and reduced independence. Consequently, key needs and priorities include accessible infrastructure, vehicles, information and services; improved journey connectivity; inclusive design; accessible communications; and continued engagement with disabled people in transport decision-making.

As improving accessibility and inclusion for older people and disabled people is the central focus of the Framework, disabled people are expected to be one of the groups most positively affected by its successful implementation.

Dependants

The transport needs of people with dependants are often influenced not only by their own travel requirements but also by the needs of those for whom they provide care. As a result, accessibility barriers can affect carers directly and indirectly through the impact on the people they support.

The evidence suggests that people with dependants, including parents, guardians and unpaid carers, have particular transport needs arising from their caring responsibilities. While households with dependent children are slightly less likely than average to be without access to a car, transport accessibility, affordability and availability remain important factors in enabling carers and families to access employment, education, childcare, healthcare and community activities.

Evidence also indicates that the design and condition of the transport network and public realm can have a significant impact on those travelling with young children, particularly where pushchairs are used. In addition, a substantial proportion of the population provide unpaid care, often supporting individuals

with disabilities, long-term health conditions or age-related needs, which can create additional transport requirements.

For carers supporting older people, disabled people or children with additional needs, access to reliable and accessible transport can be essential to maintaining independence and quality of life for both the carer and the person receiving care.

Many individuals with dependants do not travel alone and frequently accompany others who require assistance. Consequently, barriers that affect older or disabled people often have wider implications for carers and dependants. Poorly maintained footways, uneven surfaces and inaccessible public spaces can create barriers for those travelling with pushchairs or accompanying dependants with mobility needs. Safe, accessible and well-maintained pedestrian infrastructure is important not only for disabled people but also for those supporting them.

Parents and carers often undertake complex journeys involving multiple destinations, such as childcare, schools, healthcare facilities, workplaces and shops.

Affordability and availability of public transport can be particularly important for single parents and families on lower incomes.

Limited transport options can make it more difficult to balance caring responsibilities with employment, education and participation in community life, while inaccessible transport infrastructure can increase reliance on private vehicles, carers, family members or specialist transport services.

The experiences of people with dependants often overlap with other S75 categories. For example:

- Older carers may experience age-related mobility challenges while caring for others.
- Parents of disabled children may encounter accessibility barriers when accessing services.
- Disabled carers may face additional challenges when accompanying dependants.
- Women are statistically more likely to undertake caring responsibilities and may therefore be disproportionately affected by transport barriers impacting dependants.

- Carers living in rural communities may face multiple barriers relating to both location and caring responsibilities.

These overlapping characteristics can amplify the impact of transport barriers and reinforce the importance of an inclusive and accessible transport system.

Key needs and priorities for this group include accessible, affordable and reliable transport services, well-maintained pedestrian infrastructure, good connectivity and transport systems that support caring responsibilities and independent participation in daily life.

The Framework's focus on improving accessibility and the end-to-end journey experience is therefore likely to provide positive benefits for people with dependants and caring responsibilities.

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**:

   Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. A more accessible transport network has the potential to improve equality of opportunity.

   What is the level of impact? Minor Positive

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

   As above.

   What is the level of impact? Minor Positive

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

   Evidence suggests that language and communication barriers can affect some people from minority ethnic communities, particularly those who are new to NI or whose first language is not English.

   The Framework includes actions aimed at improving the accessibility of information and communications. These measures may make transport

information easier to understand and navigate for a wider range of users, including people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

What is the level of impact? Positive

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

The evidence indicates that older people are one of the groups most likely to benefit from the Framework.

The Framework is expected to improve the ability of older people to travel safely, confidently and independently through actions relating to:

- Accessible public transport services.
- Accessible transport infrastructure.
- Improved pedestrian environments.
- Community transport provision.
- Accessible information and communications.
- Consideration of accessibility within transport planning and investment.

These measures should help reduce barriers that can prevent or discourage travel, particularly for older people with reduced mobility, sensory impairments or long-term health conditions.

Directly addressing many of the transport barriers identified by older people can support independent living and mobility, improve access to services, opportunities and community life, and help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

What is the level of impact? Anticipated to be Major Positive

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

Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. A more accessible transport network has the potential to improve equality of opportunity.

What is the level of impact? Minor Positive

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

As above.

What is the level of impact? Minor Positive

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

The Framework is designed to improve accessibility, inclusion and independent mobility across the transport system and wider built environment, and the benefits are intended to be available to all users irrespective of sex.

However, available transport and equality evidence suggests that women and men can experience transport systems differently because of variations in travel patterns, caring responsibilities, personal safety concerns and transport dependence.

Research consistently shows that women are more likely than men to undertake unpaid caring responsibilities. As a result, women may disproportionately benefit from measures that make journeys easier, safer and more reliable.

Many of the most significant benefits arising from the Framework are expected to occur through the interaction of sex with age and disability. For example:

- Older women are more likely to experience mobility difficulties and may benefit from improved accessibility and community transport provision.
- Older men who no longer drive may become increasingly dependent on accessible public transport and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Both older men and women may benefit from improved access to healthcare, social activities and community participation.

The interaction between disability and sex means that many women and men may experience benefits through multiple S75 categories simultaneously.

What is the level of impact? Positive

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

The evidence indicates that disabled people are one of the primary beneficiary groups of the Framework. The Framework has been developed specifically in response to evidence that disabled people continue to experience a range of physical, communication, organisational and attitudinal barriers when accessing transport services and the wider built environment, despite significant improvements in accessibility over recent decades.

The Framework aims to deliver:

- Improved accessibility of transport services.
- Better pedestrian and wheeling environments.
- Improved passenger information and communications.
- More inclusive planning and design.
- Better consideration of accessibility throughout transport decision-making.
- Improved awareness and understanding of accessibility issues across the Department and among delivery partners.

By reducing transport-related barriers, the Framework is expected to support greater participation in society and improve opportunities for disabled people to live independently and contribute to economic, social and community life.

What is the level of impact? Anticipated to be Major Positive

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

The Framework's focus on improving public transport accessibility is likely to provide benefits for carers who regularly accompany dependants. The measures may reduce some of the practical difficulties carers encounter when supporting others during travel e.g., improved pedestrian infrastructure may make everyday journeys safer, easier and more convenient for people with caring responsibilities.

In addition, by improving independent mobility for older, d/Deaf and disabled people, the Framework may:

- Reduce reliance on carers for some journeys.
- Increase opportunities for independent travel.
- Improve access to services and community activities.
- Support greater autonomy and confidence.

What is the level of impact? Positive

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

In general terms the proposed strategy will address society-wide inclusive transport issues and are expected to have major positive impacts across Age and Disability groups. There could be potential to promote equality of opportunity across other individual groups and groups within multiple identities.

Religious Belief – Yes
Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. A more accessible transport network has the potential to better promote equality of opportunity.

Political Opinion –Yes

As above

Racial Group – Yes

Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. A more accessible transport network has the potential to better promote equality of opportunity.

In addition, the Framework provides opportunities to improve equality of opportunity within this S75 category through:

- Greater use of plain language in transport communications.
- Improved accessibility of passenger information.
- More user-friendly information and guidance.
- Improved accessibility of digital content and online information.
- Better communication of service changes and disruptions.

Access to clear and understandable information is fundamental to enabling people to use transport services confidently and independently.

Some people from minority ethnic communities, particularly recent migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and those whose first language is not English, may experience difficulties accessing or understanding transport information.

These measures may help ensure that transport information is easier to understand and accessible to a wider range of users.

The Framework may be particularly beneficial for people who belong to multiple S75 categories, including:

- Disabled people from minority ethnic communities.
- Older people from minority ethnic communities.
- Carers from minority ethnic communities.
- People experiencing both accessibility and communication barriers.

By addressing transport accessibility and improving communications, the Framework has the potential to help reduce cumulative barriers experienced by individuals with multiple and intersecting needs. This can help:

- Support access to employment, education and training.
- Improve access to healthcare and public services.
- Promote social inclusion and community participation.

Age – Yes

The Framework presents significant opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for older people by addressing many of the barriers that can limit independent mobility, access to services and participation in society.

The Framework provides substantial opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for older people by:

- Improving access to transport services and infrastructure.
- Addressing barriers within the walking and wheeling environment.
- Enhancing accessibility of information and communications.
- Strengthening engagement with older people.
- Ensuring transport policy and investment better responds to the needs of an ageing population.

This can help:

- Support independent living and mobility.
- Reduce social isolation.
- Improve access to healthcare, employment and community life.

The measures may also benefit:

- Children and young people.
- People with dependants, including carers and parents travelling with young children.

- People with temporary injuries or mobility limitations.

Enhanced transport accessibility can support access to education, employment, healthcare and social participation for those who may be more dependent on public transport.

Marital Status – Yes
Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. A more accessible transport network has the potential to better promote equality of opportunity.

Sexual Orientation – Yes
Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. A more accessible transport network has the potential to better promote equality of opportunity.

Men and Women generally – Yes

The Framework provides a number of opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for both men and women by improving access to transport services, infrastructure, information and the wider built environment. The opportunities presented by the Framework are particularly relevant for older men and women, many of whom may experience increasing mobility challenges with age.

Disability – Yes

The Framework presents significant opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people by addressing many of the barriers that currently limit access to transport, services, facilities and wider participation in society. Improving transport accessibility is particularly important because transport acts as an enabler for many other aspects of everyday life, including employment, education, healthcare, community participation and independent living.

Many disabled people currently experience restrictions on their ability to travel independently because of barriers associated with:
- The built environment.
- Public transport infrastructure.
- Passenger information.
- Service reliability.

- Availability of assistance.
- Accessibility of end-to-end journeys.

The Framework provides opportunities to reduce these barriers and increase opportunities for disabled people to make journeys independently, confidently and safely.

By reducing travel barriers and supporting greater independent mobility, the Framework can contribute directly to:

- increased independence, autonomy and choice.
- increased access to employment, training and economic opportunities.
- access to Education and Lifelong Learning.
- health outcomes, wellbeing and quality of life.
- reduced social isolation and fuller participation within communities.

Dependants – Yes

Transport accessibility can have a significant influence on the ability of carers and families to access services, participate in employment and education, maintain social connections and support those for whom they care.

The Framework's emphasis on accessibility, independent mobility and inclusive design creates opportunities to improve outcomes both for carers themselves and for the people they support.

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

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

A more accessible transport network has the potential to reduce barriers between different religious communities, promote greater integration and build more cohesive relationships.

What is the level of impact? Minor (positive)

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

As outlined above

What is the level of impact? Minor (positive)

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

The Framework promotes inclusion and equal participation for all in society through improved access to transport and mobility. Accessible communication, enhanced access to shared services, public spaces and community activities may support interaction and participation among people from different racial groups, contributing positively to good relations.

What is the level of impact? Minor Positive

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 – Yes

A more accessible transport network has the potential to reduce barriers between different religious communities, promote greater integration and build more cohesive relationships.

Political Opinion – Yes

A more accessible transport network has the potential to reduce barriers between people of different political opinion, promote greater integration and build more cohesive relationships.

Racial Group – Yes

A more accessible transport network has the potential to reduce barriers between people from different ethnic backgrounds, promote greater integration and build more cohesive relationships.

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).*

The Department recognises that individuals may identify with, or belong to, more than one Section 75 category simultaneously. The interaction of multiple characteristics can influence how transport barriers are experienced and may result in some individuals facing additional or compounded disadvantages. Consequently, consideration of multiple identities is particularly relevant to the Framework.

Some of the potential impacts on people with multiple identities have been set out above within the individual section 75 groups. It is also envisaged that the consultation will also further investigate and report the multiple identity Section 75 categories.

Part 3. Screening decision

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

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework is primarily intended to promote equality of opportunity by improving accessibility and inclusion, particularly for older, d/Deaf and disabled people.

There has already been extensive consultation during the design stage of this Strategy with stakeholders, representative groups etc, and comments have been taken into account when completing the final draft. This Scheme will be subject to an eight week consultation and any s75 comments will be analysed, reviewed and if necessary updated to reflect any equality issues raised during the consultation process.

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.

There has already been extensive consultation during the design stage of this Strategy with stakeholders, representative groups etc, and comments have been taken into account when completing the final draft. This Scheme will be subject to an eight week consultation and any s75 comments will be analysed, reviewed and if necessary updated to reflect any equality issues raised during the consultation process.

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?

No mitigation is considered necessary as no adverse impacts have been identified at this time.

Consultation responses will be reviewed to determine whether any unforeseen impacts require further consideration before the Framework is finalised.

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

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	**Rating 1, 2 or3**
Social need	**Rating 1, 2 or3**
Effect on people's daily lives	**Rating 1, 2 or3**
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.

N/A

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 review consultation feedback and monitor implementation through:

- Progress against Framework actions.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Annual user feedback.
- Analysis of accessibility-related complaints.
- Accessibility and inclusion performance indicators.
- Ongoing engagement with IMTAC and representative organisations.

Monitoring information will be used to inform reviews of the Framework and identify any emerging equality issues requiring further action.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Scott McClenaghan
Position/Job Title: Deputy Principal (DP) – Public Transport Strategy Branch
Date: 23/10/26

Approved by: Linda Buick
Position/Job Title: Head of Public Transport Strategy Branch
Date: 23/10/26

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:	14 October 2026
Amendments Requested: Yes / No	Yes
Date Returned to Business Area:	21 October 2026
Date Final Version Received / Agreed:	
Date Published on DfI's Section 75 webpage:	