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.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

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

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

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

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

**Don’t forget to Rural Proof.**

**Part 1. Policy scoping**

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

**Information about the policy**

Name of the policy

DfI Budget 2023-24 considerations

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

This is considered an existing policy, following the outcome of a budget for the Department, internal budget decisions are required.

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

The intended aim of the Department’s budget for 2023-24 is to enable the Department to fulfil its legal obligations and deliver its essential public services within the agreed budget total. This screening assessment is being completed to assess the equality impact on these services from the 2023-24 budget set by the Secretary of State; which is £523.4m resource and £792.4m capital.

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

If so, explain how.

This screening document is assessing the impact of the budget outcome on the essential services that the Department provides. Given that the Department’s requirements far exceeded the budget settlement for both resource and capital, with the Department in effect now facing a 14% cut in its resource budget compared to last year; it is anticipated that service levels would be severely impacted, resulting in potential adverse equality impacts across all Section 75 groups.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Secretary of State has provided all NI Departments with 2023-24 budgets, for both resource and capital.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

In the absence of an Executive, the Secretary of State has agreed the overall Northern Ireland budget and how this is allocated across Departments to address priorities, following the announcement of the Spending Review by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In the absence of a Minister, the Permanent Secretary will make decisions, which are within their power to make under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation Etc) Act 2022. Where reductions to services are required over and above the level of decisions which the Permanent Secretary can make these budget decisions in the absence of a Minister and Executive would fall to the Secretary of State to make. Following budget decisions these will be implemented by business areas within the Department; Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs); and other Arms Length Bodies (ALBs); which include NI Water, Translink, Waterways Ireland and Driver and Vehicle Agency.

**Background**

**Resource**

The Department for Infrastructure is responsible for the maintenance, development and planning of critical infrastructure in Northern Ireland. Through its focus on water, transport and planning, the Department is seeking to manage and protect over £30 bn of public assets that improve people’s quality of life, reduce our impact on the planet by living sustainability and decarbonising key services, and building prosperity by driving inclusive productivity.

The Department has an extensive and wide-ranging remit and responsibilities for the delivery of essential public services. Its responsibilities are grouped into three key delivery areas: Water, Transport and Planning.

For many years the Department has operated within a constrained resource budget, with the opening baseline insufficient to meet minimal service levels. In-year funding has therefore been relied on every year to deliver core services.

This situation became very difficult, particularly over the last two financial years, when resource costs associated with maintaining public services in an operational department increased considerably as a result of unprecedented energy and inflation prices. That volatility, along with an inadequate baseline to meet our legal obligations, remains a significant challenge. This challenge is continuing into 2023-24 and is exacerbated by the actions that had to be taken in 2022-23 to live within a budget allocation that was insufficient to provide a standard level of service across a range of areas.

The resource outcome of £523.4m against a requirement of £690.9m has left the department with a shortfall of c£167m for 2023-24. The 2023-24 allocation is not sufficient to fully fund increasing costs of energy and inflation, nor does it recognise the necessary steps taken in 2022-23 to balance a budget, including the one-off decision to use Translink’s reserves to maintain services. Before the impact of this one-off action, when compared on a like for like basis, the Department is now facing a 14% cut in its resource budget in a context of increased costs for front lines services.

Core public services of essential road maintenance (potholes, gully emptying, road markings, etc), and public transport have been particularly impacted by funding reductions. By way of example, road maintenance has been underfunded since August 2014 and as a result, the Department has had to operate a ‘limited service’, meaning only the highest priority defects are currently being repaired. This has led to a general and continuing deterioration of the road network, which brings with it a greater risk to the safety of road users.

Cuts to the public transport budget have also led to significant financial pressures for Translink, the main public transport provider. In 2022-23, Translink has maintained delivery at its current level on the public transport network by drawing on reserves but there is now no capacity for this to continue beyond the current financial year. This was known and agreed outworking of 2022-23 budget. Translink is working through the implications of the budget allocation and will provide the Department with its assessment of areas where cuts will need to be made and what the impacts will be.

The outgoing Executive’s policy is to provide subsidy in lieu of domestic water charges. In previous years, there had been chronic underfunding for water and wastewater services, with funding levels below the levels determined independently by the Utility Regulator as necessary to ensure an efficient and affordable delivery of water and sewerage services. In 2021-22, the Executive agreed to fund NI Water to the level recommended by the Regulator as set out in the PC21 Final Determination which was based on 2018-19 prices. Since the Final Determination was agreed, the financial outlook has changed considerably due to the unprecedented increase in energy and inflation and the Utility Regulator agreed in 2022-23 that these increased costs should be factored into any budget decisions, as these reflect the current cost of operations. The budget allocation provided is unlikely to meet these costs without an impact on water and wastewater services in 2023-24. NI Water is currently working through the implications of the budget and will provide the Department with its assessment of areas where cuts will have to be made and what the impacts will be.

In considering the equality impact as requested by DoF, the Department has paid particular attention to the statutory duties placed on it in legislation, as areas that must take priority. However, the Department has also been cognisant of the potential equality implications. The vast majority of the services provided by the Department are universal in nature and therefore any diminution in service will have varying negative impacts on all including all Section 75 groups.

Budget 2023-24

The Department has identified forecast 2023-24 resource requirements of £690.9m and the detail is included in Table 1.

Table 1: 2023-24 Forecasted Resource Requirements

|  | **£m** |
| --- | --- |
| **ALBs:** |  |
| NI Water | 218.5 |
| Translink | 150.9 |
| DVA | 5.8 |
| Waterways Ireland | 4.5 |
| **Department:**  |  |
| Transport and Road Asset Management | 234 |
| Climate, Planning and Public Transport | 30.6 |
| Water and Departmental Delivery | 46.6 |
| **Total** | **690.9** |

The 2023-24 resource budget allocation provided to DfI, £523.4m, when comparing to the 2022-23 resource budget shows at face value a 0.4% increase. However, the 2023-24 allocation to DfI does not recognise the necessary steps taken in 2022-23 to balance a budget, including the one-off decision to use Translink’s reserves to help maintain services. Before the impact of this one-off action, when compared on a like for like basis, the Department is now facing a 14 % cut in its resource budget in a context of increased costs for front line services. This is before the additional funding which is needed for energy and inflation in 2023-24. Therefore, when set against the Department’s 2023-24 forecast requirements the £167m of savings are required to seek to manage within the resource budget provided.

In light of the extremely challenging financial position the department has already taken decisions to reduce expenditure and raise revenue, including:

* Increasing Translink fares;
* Increasing on-street car park charges in Belfast, Lisburn and Newry;
* Increasing non-domestic water and sewerage charges (approved by the Utility Regulator);
* Increase in Rathlin Ferry fares;
* Continuing to deliver limited essential road maintenance service (meaning only the highest priority defects get repaired – for example the deepest potholes or issues on more highly trafficked roads) and flood management services (which includes clearing blockages in rivers);
* Reducing expenditure on day-to-day administrative costs
* Reducing ‘discretionary’ spend in a number of areas including road safety programmes;
* Significant staff vacancy control; and
* Additional savings being delivered by Translink and NI Water.

Despite these decisions the Department is left with a remaining funding gap of £112m.

The Permanent Secretary is considering further actions, including; reducing already limited day-to-day expenditure across the Department; ceasing road safety advertising and other road safety schemes for the second year; ceasing the Active School Travel programme; ceasing support for planning advice that is provided through a grant to Community Places, and reducing maintenance at Crumlin Road Gaol.

The Department’s Arm’s Length Bodies, including NI Water and Translink, will also be required to make cuts to live within their budget allocations and the Department is working closely with them on the service impacts.

Whilst final decisions have yet to be taken, over the course of the year the remaining options available to live within the budget allocation involve scenarios including;

* 1. • A reduction in Public transport provision;
	2. • Impacts on water and wastewater services;
	3. • Road maintenance and flood risk management operational activities are
	 reduced to emergency-only services;
	4. • Community transport (including Rural “Dial-a-Lift”, Urban “Disability Action Transport Service” and Shopmobility services) not funded;
	5. • Streetlights switched off; and
	6. • No road gritting service provided this winter.

In considering the equality impact of the resource budget for 2023-24, the Department has paid particular attention to the statutory duties placed on it in legislation as these areas must take priority and on public safety impacts. The vast majority of the services provided by the Department are universal in nature. Any diminution in service would impact on all Section 75 groups, but in particular “Age” and “Disability”.

**Capital**

The Capital Budget is built from a zero-baseline approach, with current schemes and contractual commitments identified. The Department’s opening capital budget allocation has increased over the past number of years as set out below:

2019-20 - £471.0m

2020-21 - £558.2m

2021-22 - £722.5m

2022-23 - £796.4m

The Department identified forecasted 2023-24 capital requirements of £938.5m for 2023-24. The Department’s 2023-24 capital budget provided by the Secretary of State is £792.4m, which is £146m less that would have been required.

However, this will enable some key schemes to progress, for example the Belfast Transport Hub; A5; essential rail and bus safety works; and some structural maintenance of our road network. It will not however facilitate the level of investment required to properly maintain our infrastructure assets and could delay the progress for some schemes.

This year’s Capital Budget will not likely lead to decisions to stop services outlined in the DfI Business Plan and as such, an equality screening is not required. Future budgets will inform future capital budgets.

**Implementation factors**

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

The remaining decisions, noted above, which are not within the power of the Permanent Secretary to take under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation Etc.) Act 2022.

**Main stakeholders affected**

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

Staff

Service users

Voluntary/Community sector

Other public sector organisations, including hospitals and schools

Wider economy

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

* Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation
* Regional Transportation Strategy
* The flood risk management plans for Northern Ireland
* Green Growth Strategy
* Energy Strategy
* Road Safety Strategy

**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](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/S75DataSignpostingGuide.pdf).

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

***Due to the impacts of Covid during 2020-22, previous information has been used where it presents a more accurate reflection than years affected by Covid.***

**Religious belief** evidence / information:

The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in NI showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1.5% other religions and 9% no religion.

The Department’s services benefit all citizens across NI within this S75 group.
That said there is no evidence to suggest that religious belief has a specific relevance to the provision of DfI’s core universal services of water and sewerage services, roads and footpaths maintenance, road safety regulations, rivers policy, flood risk management plans, or planning provision.

Data from the 2016-2018 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland shows there are no differences between Protestants and Catholics when considering the percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport. Those who are other/none did not answer whether they were more likely to make journeys using those travel modes. The DfI Audit of Inequalities cites anecdotal evidence that religious belief may have some relevance in the provision of public transport services – particularly in respect of safety.

In the absence of more robust data outside of that above it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2023-24 budget allocation.

**Political Opinion** evidence / information:

In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as ‘British’. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as ‘Irish’. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities ‘Northern Irish’. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.

The Department’s services benefit all citizens across NI. Whilst the Department there is no evidence to suggest that political opinion has a specific relevance to the impact of the resource budget on this group, there has been a historical tendency for voting preferences to closely reflect the religious affiliations of the population. Statistics for first preference votes in the 2022 NI Assembly Election showed 42% unionist, 42% nationalist and 16% other. This implies that any issues and differentials identified in relation to people of different religion may also impact on people of different political opinion.

In the absence of more robust data outside of that above it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2023-24 budget allocation.

**Racial Group** evidence / information:
The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups.

The Department’s services benefit all citizens across NI. The DfI Audit of Inequalities suggested that there is some evidence that racial group may have some relevance in the provision of public transport services. The report 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.

In the absence of more robust data outside of that above it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2023-24 budget allocation.

**Age** evidence / information:
The 2021 census indicated that 17% of the 1.9m people resident in Northern Ireland are 65 and over. There is no evidence to suggest that age has a specific relevance to the provision of DfI’s core universal services of water and sewerage services, rivers policy, flood risk management plans, or planning provision.

There is evidence, however, to suggest that age has some relevance to provision of roads and footpaths maintenance, public transport services and road safety regulations.

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 particular difficulty to older people’s ability to get out and about. There is also substantial anecdotal evidence from the Department’s own advisory body, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC), whose members typically identify poor maintenance of existing, and poor design of new, pedestrian infrastructure to be a major barrier to older people’s ability to get around on foot.

Unrepaired street lighting outages and/or street lighting switched off completely may lead to defects on a footpath being tripping hazards which could cause problems for people of any age who have a mobility related disability or visual impairment. For many in this S75 group unrepaired streetlights and or no street lights at all might increase their sense of insecurity where a number of street lights have ceased to work.

In April 2023, 368,302 Smart Passes were held by older people. Comparing this to the 2019 mid-year population estimate of those persons aged 60 and over (420,528 persons), there was an approximately 80% uptake of these Smart Passes. The number of passes used in 2022-23 was 186,609; which represents approx. 50% of active passes.

In a normal year, older people make up approximately 20% of Metro passengers, 16% of NIR passengers and 13% of Ulsterbus passengers which equates to an overall 16% of Translink’s normal 84m annual passenger journeys. This evidence is based on the journeys taken by people over 60 years old who hold concessionary fare passes. This overall percentage is representative of the percentage of older people in Northern Ireland which is almost 17% of the population here based on NISRA population statistics.

Translink carries around 80k school children to school every day, representing just over 20% (16m journeys) of its total 2019-20 passenger journeys. This is comparable with NISRA population statistics indicating that those aged up to 19, make up almost 25% of the NI population.

The 2021 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland data also shows that young people (both 0-15 and 16-24) were more likely to make a higher percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport than other age groups.

Older people are the main users of the grant funded Community Transport services in 2022-23, Dial-a-Lift (52%), the Disability Action Transport Scheme (46% of new members) and Shopmobility (47%). This highlights the importance of these services to those aged over 60.

Road fatalities for 2021-22 were 45 compared to 61 for 2022-23. The number of fatal and serious casualties i.e. the number of KSI casualties overall stood at 940 in 2021-22, this was 349 more KSIs or a 59% increase on the previous year. In comparison with ten years ago, the number of fatal and serious collisions for 2021-22 was 58 more than 2012-13, with 108 additional KSI casualties (reductions of 8% and 13% respectively). In 2021 nearly half (48%) of all people killed or seriously injured in road collisions were aged 34 or under; therefore, cuts to road safety may impact disproportionately on younger people.

**Marital Status** evidence / information:

The Department’s services benefit all citizens across NI. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the resource budget on this group, in 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.

The 2016-2018 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland data shows that compared to those who are married or in a civil partnership, single people were likely to make a higher percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport. Similarly, those who are divorced or widowed were also more likely to use these travel modes than married people.

There is no robust data to determine specific impacts on this group.

**Sexual Orientation** evidence / information:
The Department’s services provide benefit to all citizens across NI. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the resource budget on this group, the Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.

In the absence of robust data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2023-24 budget allocation.

**Men & Women generally** evidence / information:
The Department’s services provide benefit to all citizens across NI. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the resource budget on this group, of the responses to the Travel Survey 2017 – 2019 there were 5,266 respondents interviewed of which 2,462 (47%) were male and 2,805 (53%) female. Men tend to cycle more than women therefore active travel spend promoting cycling may benefit men more.

NISRA population statistics indicate that men and women make up roughly equal parts of NI’s 1.9m population. The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland In-depth Report 2016-2018 showed there is little difference in how frequently men and women use public transport, but like the rest of the UK, men tend to travel further distances than women on all forms of transport.

Women tended to use grant funded Community Transport services in 2022-23 more than men, Dial-a- Lift (69%), the disability Action Transport Scheme (61% of new members) and Shopmobility(58%). This highlights the importance of these services to women.

In respect of public transport usage, 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. This may also have implications for general affordability and development of suitable ticketing options.

PSNI Road Fatalities statistics shows that of the 45 people killed on Northern Ireland’s roads in 2021-22, 39 were male and 6 were female.

Males tend to be more likely to hold a driving licence when compared to females.

There is no robust date to determine impact on this group.

**Disability** evidence / information:
The 2021 Census indicates that nearly 45% of households in Northern Ireland with one or more people in the household with a disability (40% for 2011 Census).

The DfI Travel Survey, 2016-18 highlighted 19% of respondents said they had some difficulty with travel due to a physical disability or long-standing health problem. There was no significant difference between males and females except in the 70+ age group: more women aged 70+ had difficulty with travel (48%) than men aged 70+ (36%).

There was no difference between those with and those without a disability when considering the percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport.

Difficulty with travel due to a physical disability or long-standing health problem increases with age: 6% of 16–29-year-olds had difficulty with travel compared to 42% of those aged 70 and over.

21% of adults in Northern Ireland are classed as having a disability (NISRA). People with a disability are key users of the grant funded Community Transport services in 2022-23 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. This highlights the importance of these services to those aged over 60.

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 particular difficulty to disabled peoples’ ability to get out and about. There is also substantial anecdotal evidence from the Department’s own advisory body, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC), whose members typically identify poor maintenance of existing, and poor design of new, pedestrian infrastructure to be a major barrier to disabled people’s ability to both walk and wheel.

**Dependants** evidence / information:
Total population data

• The 2011 NI Census indicated that 34% per cent of households in
 Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 40% contained at least
 one person with a long-term health problem or disability; made up of those
 households with dependent children (9.2%) and those with no dependent
 children (31%).

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. There is also substantial anecdotal evidence from the Department’s own advisory body, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC), that poor maintenance of existing, and poor design of new, pedestrian infrastructure is a major barrier to people who use pushchairs for dependants to get around on foot.

In the absence of further robust data, it is difficult to determine fully the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2023-24 budget allocation.

**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**
As noted in the previous section, there is some evidence that religious belief may have some relevance in the provision of public transport services – particularly in respect of safety and perceptions of safety against sectarian hate crime on public transport within particular faith and religious communities.

**Political Opinion**

Although the Department’s services are universal in nature, other than that outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people of different political opinion have been identified.

**Racial Group**

Although the Department’s services are universal in nature, other than that outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people of different racial groups have been identified.

**Age**

The Department’s services are universal in nature for different age groups, however in the absence of robust data it is difficult to specify the specific needs for age groups, particularly in regard to Water services.

As noted in the previous section, there are issues relating to roads asset management regarding maintenance and street lighting and pedestrian infrastructure posing particular challenges to older people, especially those with mobility impairments. There are also a range of issues relating to public transport which have a particular relevance to age. Amongst older age groups, these include a greater reliance on public transport to access services and remain independent and affordability issues as a result of typically lower incomes and greater reliance on benefits with the result that continued provision of free travel is of central importance. It is also worthy of note that those issues highlighted in the previous section in relation to disability will also apply to older public transport users since a greater proportion of this cohort will have mobility issues. Amongst younger age groups, greater reliance on public transport to access educational and training opportunities is a critical factor.

School children need transport to school safely with priority given to this type of transport during term time months and at the beginning and end of the school day, particularly for school children living in rural areas.

Older people, who normally make up approximately 20% of Metro passengers, 16% of NIR passengers and 13% of Ulsterbus passengers, require a service level to meet their normal daily needs which may include access to shops, friends and community facilities as well access to health and care services.

Older people are the main users of community transport service in urban and rural areas.

Those killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions are more likely to be aged under 35 and are therefore more likely to be impacted by a reduction in road safety measuring.

The older population is more likely to have a long-term health problem or a disability that limits their day-to-day activities therefore, it is more likely they will have a mobility issues.

There are also a range of age-related factors of relevance to road safety regulations. These include an increased likelihood of involvement in a serious road traffic collision amongst certain age groups (younger drivers and those aged 34-49).

**Marital status**

Although the Department’s services are universal in nature, other than that outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people of different marital status have been identified.

**Sexual orientation**

Although the Department’s services are universal in nature, other than that outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people of different sexual orientation have been identified.

**Men and Women Generally**

As noted in the previous section, there are a range of issues relating to public transport which have a particular relevance to gender. These include a potentially greater reliance on public transport by women and the resulting economic disadvantage brought on by this additional cost, safety concerns in respect of use of public transport as a result of gender-based crime, and issues around affordability and service provision in the context of the travel patterns of care-givers (who are more likely to be female).

Travel Surveys (NI) have shown that women use public transport more frequently than men; however, the 2017-2019 Travel Survey shows that this is no longer the case; and men are likely to take longer journeys than women.

There are also relevant gender-related factors of relevance to the development of road safety regulation since men are substantially more likely to be involved in a serious road traffic collision.

Equality Impact Assessments on the Regional Transportation Strategy, Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan acknowledged that street lighting schemes may have a positive impact for women as they improve the night-time environment and reduce the fear of crime.

Those killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions are more likely to be male and are therefore more likely to be impacted by a reduction in road safety messaging.

**Disability**

People with certain disabilities may have a greater need for good roads maintenance and would potentially be unable to access water if they had to travel outside of their home to collect. There is a significant number of people with mobility issues that use public transport therefore they require accessible services at convenient times.

There are 130,000 valid Blue Badges in Northern Ireland which allow on-street parking concessions for people with disabilities. It is recognised that a reduction in transport services could impact negatively on this group.

People with a disability have fewer transport options and are the main users of community transport services in rural and urban areas.

**Dependants**

Although the Department’s services are universal in nature, other than that outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people of different political opinion have been identified.

**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**

1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

**In favour of ‘minor’ impact**

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of none**

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
2. 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**:

Although service reductions are anticipated they are not intended to directly impact on people of one particular religious belief. Any proposed cuts to the Department’s essential services have the potential to reduce connectivity and access to services across all aspects of society.

Service reductions may reduce opportunities to promote good relations between people of different religious beliefs.

As there is no robust data to determine impact(s) on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Although service reductions are anticipated they are not intended to directly impact on people of one particular political opinion. Any proposed cuts to the Department’s essential services have the potential to reduce connectivity and access to services across all aspects of society.

Service reductions may reduce opportunities to promote good relations between people of different political opinions.

As there is no robust data to determine impact on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Although service reductions are anticipated they are not intended to directly impact on people of one particular racial group. Any proposed cuts to the Department’s essential services have the potential to reduce connectivity and access to services across all aspects of society.

Service reductions may reduce opportunities to promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

As there is no robust data to determine impact on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Incidences of disability can increase with age. Any reduction to rural and community transport services could disproportionately affect those with a mobility related disability. Those with such a disability will be disproportionately impacted by reduced road maintenance.

Younger people are also likely to be disproportionately impacted by the cessation of road safety programmes.

School children need transport to school safely with priority given to this type of transport during term time months and at the beginning and end of the school day, particularly for school children living in rural areas.

Older people, who normally make up approximately 20% of Metro passengers, 16% of NIR passengers and 13% of Ulsterbus passengers, require a service level to meet their normal daily needs which may include access to shops, friends and community facilities as well access to health and care services.

Those aged 60+ account for 52% of Dial A Lift scheme usage and services and may be adversely impacted by budgets cuts which affect service delivery.

The highest proportion of new members of DATS (Disability Action Transport Scheme) are those aged 65+ (46%), with a high usage also demonstrated for those aged 16 – 64 (38%).

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Although service reductions are anticipated they are not intended to directly impact on people of one particular marital status. Any proposed cuts to the Department’s essential services have the potential to reduce connectivity and access to services across all aspects of society.

Service reductions may reduce opportunities to promote good relations between people of different marital status.

As there is no robust data to determine impact on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Although service reductions are anticipated they are not intended to directly impact on people of one particular sexual orientation. Any proposed cuts to the Department’s essential services have the potential to reduce connectivity and access to services across all aspects of society.

Service reductions may reduce opportunities to promote good relations between people of different sexual orientation.

As there is no robust data to determine impact on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Any service reductions are not intended to impact on people of one particular gender; however, as women use Translink and Community Transport services more than men they will be disproportionately affected by cuts in these areas.

Reductions to road essential maintenance and street lighting could also impact on women more than men.

As there is no robust data to determine impact on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

Any reductions to public transport will disproportionately impact on individuals with a disability as these are key users of these services.

Incidences of disability can increase with age. Any reduction to community transport services could disproportionately affect those with a mobility related disability who have fewer travel options in rural and urban settings because mainstream public transport services may not meet their specific needs. Those with such a disability will be disproportionately impacted by reduced road maintenance.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

People with dependants are higher users of Translink services and would be disproportionately affected if service reductions are required.

Service reductions may reduce opportunities to promote good relations between people of different sexual orientation.

As there is no robust data to determine impact on this wider group the level of impact has been assessed as ‘potentially major negative’.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Major negative

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

No – not with current budget pressures due to the significant funding gap the Department faces.

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

There are no opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for S75 groups when there are proposed cuts to the Department’s essential services. Any further funding that becomes available would have to be used to meet inescapable pressures first.

**Religious Belief -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Political Opinion -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Racial Group -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Age -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Marital Status -** If No, provide reasons: -

As outlined above

**Sexual Orientation -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Men and Women generally -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Disability -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

**Dependants -** If No, provide reasons:

As outlined above

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

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

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

The resource budget is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor

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

The resource budget is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group.

What is the level of impact? None

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

The resource budget is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group.

What is the level of impact? None

1. **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 -** If No, provide reasons: The resource budget is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group.

There is insufficient data available to assess how the department could use its services to improve good relations between people of different religious belief.

**Political Opinion -** If No, provide reasons The resource budget is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group.

There is insufficient data available to assess how the department could use its services to improve good relations between people of different political opinion.

**Racial Group -** If No, provide reasons The resource budget is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group.

There is insufficient data available to assess how the department could use its services to improve good relations between people of different racial groups.

**Additional considerations**

**Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(*For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

The services provided by the Department are generally universal in nature and as such the population, as multiple S75 identities, may be impacted by a reduction in services. For example, as disability (whatever gender and/or orientation) increases with age, older disabled people are more likely to be impacted by service cuts to transport services or by a reduction in roads essential maintenance.

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

**Part 3. Screening decision**

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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

**An equality impact assessment will be carried out on the 2023-24 resource budget, given the level of decisions required to seek to manage within the budget provided and the Department’s lack of robust data to determine impacts on the S75 groups**.

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

**Mitigation**

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

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

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

At this moment in time – no. Should the EQIA provide information to inform mitigations to the current budget allocation, these will be considered. Over the coming months the in-year monitoring process will give Departments the opportunity to reallocate and prioritise budgets within the guidelines set out by Department of Finance.

**Timetabling and prioritising**

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

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

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

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

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations **Rating 3**

Social need **Rating 3**

Effect on people’s daily lives **Rating 3**

Relevance to a public authority’s functions **Rating 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?

If yes, please provide details.

No

**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.

Equality assessments and rural needs screening for all business areas impacted will be updated by the relevant business areas within the department once final decisions are taken. Any mitigations suggested during the EQIA consultation period will beconsidered.

The formal in year monitoring rounds will afford an opportunity to seek to address any adverse impacts of the resource budget, either by reprioritisation or bidding for additional funding. Monitoring will take into consideration appropriate feedback from individuals / groups representing the interests of people within the Section 75 categories.

**Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

Screened by: Kristina Palmer

Position/Job Title: Financial Planning and Management Branch – DfI

Date: 9 May 2023

Approved by: Kerry Mack

Position/Job Title: Acting Deputy Finance Director – Department of Infrastructure

Date: 15 May 2023

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: 09.05.23

Amendments Requested: Yes

Date Returned to Business Area: 11.05.23

Date Final Version Confirmed: 19.05.23

Date Published on DfI’s Section 75 webpage: 19.05.23