

## 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

Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Resource Budget 2024-25 considerations

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Funding to departments is an existing policy, however the annual allocation is considered as new.

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

The intended aim of the Department's Resource Budget for 2024-25 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 2024-25 resource budget agreed by the Executive, which is £559.5m resource.

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 resource; it is anticipated that service levels could be severely impacted, resulting in potential adverse equality impacts across all Section 75 groups.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Executive agreed Resource Budgets for each NICS Department.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Following agreed Executive budget outcomes for the Department, the Minister makes decisions on how the Department's resource budget is allocated across the Department's services.

Following budget decisions these will be implemented by business areas within the Department; Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs); and other Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs); which include NI Water, Translink, Waterways Ireland and Driver and Vehicle Agency.

## **Background**

The Department for Infrastructure is responsible for the maintenance, development and planning of critical infrastructure in the North. It is this physical (roads, bridges, and water and sewage systems) and soft (policies, resources, and services, i.e., public transport) infrastructure that underpins society, thereby, allowing people to meet their personal needs and participate in broader societal and economic activity. Inadequate physical and social infrastructure can be a barrier to economic and social activity; therefore, infrastructure is essential to ensuring economic well-being for individuals and for society as a whole.

Through its focus on transport, water and planning, the Department manages and protects in the region of £37bn of public assets that improve people's quality of life. These assets include over 26,000km of roads, around 5,900 bridges, around 10,000km of footways, approximately 300,000 streetlights, 426km of raised flood defence embankments and flood walls, 26km of coastal defences and approximately 366km of below ground culverts.

The Department has a vast and wide-ranging remit. Its responsibilities are grouped into three key delivery areas: Transport, Water and Planning.

The Department is responsible for the oversight and facilitation of surface transport in the North. The main tools available for the delivery of the Department's transport vision are the development of Transport Policy, the management of the Road Network Asset (including the promotion of road safety) and providing funding and sponsorship of Translink which delivers the public transport network.

The Department is responsible for setting the strategic direction for water, wastewater and drainage policy across Northern Ireland including developing water, flooding and sustainable drainage legislation as well as the sponsorship of NI Water.

The Department also sponsors Waterways Ireland, one of six North South Implementation Bodies, established to promote the recreational and navigational use of our waterways.

The Department is responsible for the management of flood risk which includes the maintenance of our river and sea defences, construction of flood alleviation schemes, informing development decisions and developing flood maps.

The Department is responsible for the strategic direction and production of regional policy for land use planning. It also develops planning legislation and processes a small number of regionally significant planning applications and those applications which may be 'called in', along with having a statutory consultee role for roads and rivers to provide specialist advice in relation to the consideration of planning applications by councils.

The Department also has a regeneration role with Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast and have ownership of lands at the former St Lucia Barracks, Omagh.

The Department delivers essential public services every day and works to improve the lives of those living in, working in and visiting Northern Ireland. Having modern and sustainable water, drainage and public transport networks is essential if we are to grow our economy and improve the lives of everyone, in a way that addresses regional imbalance and responds to the climate change imperative.

## **Resource Budget 2024-25**

The Department identified that it required £676.6m resource budget in 2024-25 to deliver and in some instances further improve its essential services, including actions towards meeting climate action targets.

The Department's resource budget allocation for 2024-25 is £559.5m, which when set against the Department's forecast requirements is a shortfall of some £117m.

The Department has been historically underfunded, with its baseline position not being sufficient to deliver core services and has relied on in-year funding to

continue delivery. This underfunding has compounded the impact of the shortfall on the Resource Budget this year for the Department, with levels of service continually being maintained at lower levels than requested.

Essential road asset maintenance has been reduced considerably over the years due to budget constraints, with a limited service being provided since the inception of the Department, following the significant budget reductions in 2015. This level of service increases the risk to public safety and ultimately requires much more expensive repairs where defects deteriorate quickly (e.g., filling potholes). The public, and public representatives are already seeing the impact of reduced maintenance, and this is impacting directly on the Department through rising public liability claims, with a real potential for much larger claims in future.

The cost of running the extensive public transport network within the North requires public subsidy to breakeven as reflected in the Public Service Contract between the Department and Translink. Indeed, in common with many other jurisdictions, our public transport network has always required subsidy to operate. The baseline funding for our public transport network has not kept pace with inflationary cost pressures and this has resulted in severe financial pressures for Translink, with its reserves depleted. These financial challenges are expected to continue for Translink, and therefore there is a real risk that without increased funding there are likely to be impacts on public transport services.

In previous years, there has 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 2021-2022, the Executive agreed to fund NI Water to the level recommended by the Regulator as set out in the PC21 Final Determination (FD) which was based on 2018-2019 prices. Since the Final Determination was agreed, the financial outlook has changed considerably due to the unprecedented increase to inflationary rises and also the cost of the market supply of skills and essential resources and the Utility Regulator has agreed that these increased costs need to be factored into any budget decisions, as these reflect the current cost of operations.

Having clean and safe drinking water and appropriate sewerage infrastructure is essential to enable economic growth and development and requires a sustainable funding model. The impact of previous spending decisions is now serious and manifesting itself in restrictions on economic and housing development and risks

associated with pollution and environmental compliance. Failure to continue to provide the funding independently assessed as necessary to maintain functioning water and wastewater infrastructure will have a direct impact on service delivery, including continued constraints on development at a time when economic recovery is so important and significantly increased risks of widespread water outages, sewer blockages and untreated sewage being discharged into the environment, directly impacting public safety.

As noted above, the Department is facing a significant shortfall, when comparing the resource budget allocated against its forecast requirements.

Some 95% of the Department's resource budget delivers front-line service provision, with the vast majority regulated, statutory, fixed or contractually obliged, which leaves little opportunity to make savings. It could be argued that given the operational nature of the Department's services it is disproportionately impacted by rising costs of inflation and contractual commitments.

Therefore, again this year, the Department will be faced with maintaining limited service levels, and possibly direct impacts on its water and wastewater services and public transport network.

In seeking to balance the Department's requirements against the resource budget provided, the Department is currently considering a number of options to reduce spending forecasts, while still seeking to protect concessionary fares and community transport. Details of these proposed options are detailed below.

- NI Water – 21.7% reduction to funding against its revised 2024-25 Operating Plan and Budget;
- Translink – 19.4% reduction to funding against its forecast requirements, including implementation of a concessionary fares application fee and if required bid for additional funding for its potential holiday pay liability\*.
- DVA - requirement for DVA to use its reserves to fund licensing and enforcement activities rather than be provided with a subsidy from the Department;
- Essential Road Maintenance – Maintain a limited level of service level for a further consecutive year;
- Reduce funding for Public Liability\*;
- Remove funding for annual programme of footway enhancement on poor footways;
- Increase Private Street Fees charge;

- Fund Winter Service to December 2024 and seek additional funding in-year\*;
- Increase controlled parking zones charge, increase charge for blue badge and turn on all Monitoring Traffic Offences enforcement cameras;
- Maintain a limited Flood Risk Management Service and no provision to develop a Flood Forecasting Centre unless ringfenced funding provided;
- Reduce Road Safety Advertising to match proposed sponsorship and reduction in requirement for Road Safety Schemes;
- Funding of Community Transport remains at the total level provided in 2023-24, with funding for Assisted Rural Travel Scheme to be provided by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;
- Remove Climate Action Plan forecast requirements to deliver against draft Climate Action Plan;
- Maintain staff levels for Planning statutory consultees and planning staff unless ringfenced funding provided;
- Reduce funding for Departmental Pay and manage in year through staff churn\*; and
- Remove funding for Emergency Response costs.

\*should additional funding be required for these costs it is proposed that these will be bid for in-year, and if no additional funding provided further reductions may be required in year which would be subject to further equality considerations.

It is clear that with the resource budget allocation provided, the Department will be required to continue to deliver a limited level of services, reduce funding for other essential services such as road safety and will not be able to respond to emergency response, over and above normal expected levels, such as flooding, fallen trees, infrastructure collapse and major weather events without additional funding or impacting directly on its other essential services. With the reductions to both Translink and NI Water proposed there is a real risk that this will impact directly on the level of services provided, water and wastewater and public transport.

No decisions have been made by the Minister in terms of the distribution of the Department's budget, this will be made following a consultation on the proposed options.

## **Implementation factors**

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

None identified.

## **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
- Climate Action Plan
- 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](#).

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

### **Religious belief** evidence / information:

The 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.

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.

The General Consumer Council (NI) research paper ‘The Transport Trap – How transport disadvantages poorer people’ has illustrated how ‘transport poverty’ makes the lives of those on low income difficult indeed. The paper has highlighted how the lack of investment to maintain and enhance public transport services has been limited with the travel costs for those reliant on public transport are high, irrespective of S75 group, particularly for those who are living in rural areas and/or socially isolated. It also detailed the negative impact on the economy and society in general as people can’t access job opportunities, impacting on the economy, society in general as well as people who fall within certain S75 groups.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission’s (NIHRC) on report on [the impact of public spending](#) shows the projected distributional impact of changes in public spending on groups across a range of characteristics – including net income, gender and family demographics, age, ethnicity, disability status and (for the first time in a study of this type) religion. It also shows the combined impact of public spending changes and tax and welfare reforms on the final income of these groups (where final income is defined as net income plus the value of public services that can be allocated to households).

This report also shows that the social housing stock is also highly segregated by religious community background, with around 90% of social housing estates being single identity,

Therefore, where social housing developments are restricted in areas of deprivation due to wastewater and sewerage constraints, this may impact on religious belief linked to economically deprived areas.

The Department is aware of the importance of street lighting and potential impacts on Section 75 groups should this service be reduced; monitoring has not provided evidence to suggest that reducing street lighting provision will have any disproportionate impact on this Section 75 groups. The proposed policy will impact on all road users, whether on foot, wheeled, or hooved as dimly lit roads and footways can cause accidents to befall all of these users irrespective of religious belief. Without street lighting pedestrians are more likely to feel unsafe and not see tripping hazards. Similarly wheeled road users may come upon an obstruction too late to avoid, however it would be expected that drivers would make good judgement regarding use of their car lights etc.

Although the Department holds no specific S75 evidence on the impacts of the underinvestment for our water services, the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on the Funding water infrastructure in Northern Ireland outlines the identified underfunding as a long-term issue that does not meet the demands placed on the system in Northern Ireland. Ongoing historic regional imbalance can also impact on religious belief, particularly in the North West. (The Anti-Poverty Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report and NISRA Census 2021 statistics refers).

Monitoring of the impacts of the 2023-24 budget on Section 75 groups has not concluded, initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people of religious belief.

Quantitative:

[Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland – Statistical bulletin – Religion \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-statistical-bulletin-religion)

Qualitative:

- [Hate Motivation statistics \(PSNI\) 2023/24](#)
- [THE TRANSPORT TRAP – How transport disadvantages poorer people](#)
- [Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System](#)
- [The Anti-Poverty Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report](#)
- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)

- [Funding water infrastructure in Northern Ireland - NIAO](#)

### **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.

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.

As a result of underfunding to the Department over the years some difficult decisions and prioritisation of spending has had to be taken. These have impacted on our services and projects we have taken forward for example the impact of the prioritisation of water quality over investment in sewerage and wastewater infrastructure. As such this is likely to have an impact on people from different political opinions related to economically deprived areas if social housing development is restricted.

Additionally, the ongoing historic regional imbalance of public transport provision can also impact on political opinion, particularly in the North West.

Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people of political opinion, monitoring of the impacts of the 2023-24 budget on Section 75 groups has not concluded, initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people of political opinion.

### Quantitative:

- [Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland - Statistical bulletin - National identity \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Racial Group** evidence / information:

The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups.

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.

Furthermore, since the UK Government introduced the Immigration Act 2014, there have been restrictions on the ability of migrants to hold or obtain a driving licence. Additionally, asylum seekers have no recourse to public funds, meaning that they cannot work or receive benefits and rely on their Asylum Support payments from the Home Office.

There are also impacts due to lack of rural services for asylum seekers, particularly to travel to Home Office appointments, health appointments, school etc. There has been a particular impact on children who when granted refugee status must move from Home Office supported accommodation lose the EA bus pass and can't afford to travel to sit exams at their schools.

Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people of from a minority ethnic group, monitoring of the impacts of the 2023-24 budget on Section 75 groups has not concluded, initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people from a minority ethnic group.

### Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

### Qualitative:

- [The Experiences of Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in Northern Ireland - Northern Ireland Affairs Committee \(parliament.uk\)](#)
- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)
- [Hate Motivation statistics \(PSNI\) 2023/24](#)

## **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 rivers policy, flood risk management plans, or planning provision.

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.

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 and people with a disability'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 May 2024, 369,374 Smart Passes were held by older people. Comparing this to the 2022 mid-year population estimate of those persons aged 60 and over (452,105 persons), there was an approximately 82% 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% (18m journeys) of its total 2023/24 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.

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.

Older people were the main users of the grant funded Community Transport services in 2023-24, Dial-a-Lift (50% aged over 65), the Disability Action Transport Scheme (54% of new members were aged over 65) and Shopmobility (45%). This highlights the importance of these services to those aged over 65.

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, reductions to road safety may impact disproportionately on younger people.

Restricted provision of wastewater and sewage services is constraining social housing developments which may impact elderly people and children who are on social housing waiting lists.

Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

- [DfI Travel Survey 2021](#)
- [Road Traffic Collision Statistics \(PSNI\)](#)

#### Qualitative:

- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland](#)
- [IMTAC Publications](#)
- [Resilient Infrastructure for Northern Ireland – Institute of Civil Engineers \(ICE\)](#)
- [AGE NI Lived Experience 2021](#)
- [The relationship between transport and loneliness - Sustrans.org.uk](#)
- [The Anti-Poverty Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report](#)
- [Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System](#)
- [Transport and Poverty: a review \(ucl.ac.uk\)](#)
- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)
- [THE TRANSPORT TRAP – How transport disadvantages poorer 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.

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 report also outlines that single working-age applicants make up 45% of the social housing waiting list, and a similar proportion of housing applications.

The Gender Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report explains that lone parents (the majority of whom are women) are even more vulnerable to poverty.

Restricted provision of wastewater and sewage services is constraining social housing developments which may impact on people of differing marital status who are on social housing waiting lists.

#### Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Gender Strategy Expert Advisory Report \(2020\)](#)
- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)

### **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.

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. Seven in every eight LGBTQI+ people living in a rural area feel that it is important to have access to an LGBTQI+ support service in their local area. Therefore, cuts to public transport can negatively impact on the LGBTQI+ community.

Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people of sexual orientation, monitoring of the impacts of the 2023-24 budget on Section 75 groups has not concluded, initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people of sexual orientation.

#### Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DfI Audit of Inequalities](#)

### **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 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.

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.

The Gender Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report identifies that women are more likely to be on benefits and low paid insecure work, or not work due to caring responsibilities.

The Report also highlights that 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. Welfare reform and austerity measures introduced over the last decade have hit women harder than men and Universal Credit has tended to have more negative impacts for women than men. Women have lower financial wellbeing, are less likely to save and are more likely to be poorer pensioners than men. Lone parents are particularly vulnerable to debt and are over-represented as clients of debt advice agencies compared to the general population.

Women lost more on average from the direct tax and social security measures than men, mainly because they are more likely to be receiving benefits and tax credits than men.

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".

PSNI Road Fatalities statistics shows that of the 61 people killed on Northern Ireland's roads in 2022-23, 50 were male and 11 were female.

Males tend to be more likely to hold a driving licence when compared to females. Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people who are men and women generally, monitoring of the impacts of the 2023-24 budget on Section 75 groups has not concluded, initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people of men and women generally.

#### Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk)
- [Road Traffic Collision Statistics \(PSNI\)](#)
- [DfI Travel Survey 2021](#)

#### Qualitative:

- [The Gender Equality Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report](#)
- [\(PDF\) Social exclusion, accessibility, and lone parents \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- [The Anti-Poverty Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report](#)
- [AGE NI Lived Experience 2021](#)
- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)
- [Rural Transport - Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network NIRWN](#)

#### **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 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. This highlights the importance of these services to those aged over 60.

The Western Health and Social Care Trust report on Audit of Sensory Support Services (2010) showed that access to transport is particularly important for people with disabilities who live in rural areas, as they are less likely to have access to a car than other households.

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.

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 CRPD Committee 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.

Restricted provision of wastewater and sewage services is constraining social housing developments which may impact on people of differing marital status who are on social housing waiting lists.

#### Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DfI Travel Survey 2021](#)

#### Qualitative:

- [IMTAC Publications](#)
- [The Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report](#)
- [AGE NI Lived Experience 2021](#)
- [Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System](#)
- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)

#### **Dependants** evidence / information:

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.

As highlighted in the gender section women are more likely 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).

The cost-of-living crisis can have a particular impact on families, with rising household costs, particularly childcare, meaning that more people may rely on benefits and public transport. [This is evident in the Women's Regional Consortium Report on 'Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis in](#)

Northern Ireland', particularly as "Younger age groups were more likely to say that they had to turn the heating down or off – these are the households more likely to have children."

The DfI Audit of Inequalities evidenced some of the key challenges experienced by expectant mothers or parents with young children can include the lack of availability of public transport, as well as limitation in transport choice when travelling with a young child. Similar 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.

Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people with dependants, monitoring of the impacts of the 2023-24 budget on Section 75 groups has not concluded, initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people of with dependants.

Quantitative:

- [2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk)

Qualitative:

- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)
- [IMTAC Publications](#)
- [DfI Audit of Inequalities](#)

## 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

Our infrastructure supports our communities, our economy and our essential services. It is this physical (roads, bridges, and water and sewage systems) and soft (policies, resources, and services, i.e., public transport) infrastructure that underpins society, thereby, allowing people to meet their personal needs and participate in broader societal and economic activity.

Inadequate physical and social infrastructure can be a barrier to economic and social activity; therefore, infrastructure is essential to ensuring economic well-being for individuals and for society as a whole.

As noted in the previous section, 'Available Evidence' 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

As outlined above in the 'Available Evidence' section our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefit all citizens across NI. Other than that, outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people of different political opinion have been identified.

### Racial Group

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefit all citizens across NI. Other than that, outlined in the in the 'Available Evidence' section no other specific needs for people of different racial group have been identified.

A reduction in public transport services may have a disproportionate impact on racial group, particularly as there are restrictions on asylum seekers and migrants obtaining a drivers licence, meaning they are more reliant on public transport.

There is also a particular impact on asylum seekers in rural areas with a lack of services.

## **Age**

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefit all citizens across NI. The department does not hold specific evidence on the needs, experiences and priorities for all our services for those who fall into the Age S75 category particularly in regard to Water services.

That said the 'Available Evidence' section outlined 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, as well as a reliance on public and community transport.

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.

## **Marital status**

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure and our services benefit all citizens across NI. Other than that, outlined in the 'Available Evidence' section no other specific needs for people of different marital status have been identified.

There is no robust data to determine impact of the 2024-25 DfI Budget on this group, however much of the evidence outlined in religious belief may also be applicable for people of marital status.

Single working-age applicants make up 45% of the social housing waiting list, and a similar proportion of housing applications (NIHRC Report).

Lone parents (the majority of whom are women) are even more vulnerable to poverty (Gender Expert Advisory Panel Report).

Where social housing developments are restricted due to wastewater and sewerage constraints this may impact on people of differing marital status on social housing waiting lists.

## **Sexual orientation**

As outlined above, our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefit all citizens across NI. Other than that, outlined in the 'Available Evidence' section no other specific needs for people of different sexual orientation group have been identified.

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. Seven in every eight LGBTQI+ people living in a rural area feel that it is important to have access to an LGBTQI+ support service in their local area. Therefore, cuts to public transport can negatively impact on the LGBTQI+ community.

### **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 caregivers (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 gender-based 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 make up a significant proportion of community transport users in rural and urban areas in 2023-24.

## **Dependants**

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefit all citizens across NI. Other than that, outlined in the 'Available Evidence' section no other specific needs for people of different sexual orientation group have been identified.

The cost-of-living crisis can have a particular impact on families, with rising household costs, particularly childcare, meaning that more people may rely on benefits and public transport. [This is evident in the Women's Regional Consortium Report on 'Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Northern Ireland'](#), particularly as "Younger age groups were more likely to say that they had to turn the heating down or off – these are the households more likely to have children."

## **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**:

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

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 reductions

to public transport has the potential to reduce connectivity and access to services across all aspects of society.

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 reductions to public transport has 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, due to the impact on integration.

A reduction in public transport services may have a disproportionate impact on racial group, particularly as there are restrictions on asylum seekers and migrants obtaining a drivers licence, meaning they are more reliant on public transport. There is also a particular impact on asylum seekers in rural areas with a lack of services.

In terms of mitigating steps, when implementing the service changes and reductions that are necessary each business area will be cognisant of the potential equality implications and will carry out an equality analysis and where required conduct equality impact assessments.

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 65+ account for 50% of Dial A Lift scheme usage and services and may be adversely impacted by budgets reductions which affect service delivery.

The highest proportion of new members of DATS (Disability Action Transport Scheme) are those aged 65+ (54% of new members were aged over 65).

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 as such younger people depend on public transport.

**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 reductions 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.

Single working-age applicants make up 45% of the social housing waiting list, and a similar proportion of housing applications (NIHRC Report). Additionally, lone parents (the majority of whom are women) are even more vulnerable to poverty (Gender Expert Advisory Panel Report).

Therefore, where social housing developments are restricted due to wastewater and sewerage constraints this may impact on people of differing marital status on social housing waiting lists.

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 reductions 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 and may increase feelings of isolation for LGBTQI+ people in rural areas.

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 reductions 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.

The cost-of-living crisis can have a particular impact on families, with rising household costs, particularly childcare, meaning that more people may rely on benefits and public transport. [This is evident in the Women's Regional Consortium Report on 'Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Northern Ireland'](#), particularly as "Younger age groups were more likely to say that they had to turn the heating down or off – these are the households more likely to have children."

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

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

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

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

There are no opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for S75 groups within the Resource Budget. The proposed reductions to the Department's essential services are a direct result of the budget allocated to DfI. Any further funding that becomes available will be used to meet inescapable pressures first.

**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](#)

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

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

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

[Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. The resource budget has the potential to impact on good relations for this group.](#)

What is the level of impact? [Potentially Minor negative](#)

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

[As above.](#)

What is the level of impact? [Potentially Minor negative](#)

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

[As outlined above.](#)

What is the level of impact? [Potentially Minor negative.](#)

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** - If No, provide reasons:

There are no opportunities within the resource budget to better promote good relations within this section 75 group.

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

There are no opportunities within the resource budget to better promote good relations within this section 75 group.

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

There are no opportunities within the resource budget to better promote good relations within this section 75 group.

## **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).*

With regards to the proposed Resource Budget scenario, it is highly likely that those in society impacted by the proposed reductions will fall into multiple Section 75 categories.

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefiting all citizens across NI. That said 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, women, single parents particularly in rural areas are more likely to be impacted by service reductions 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.

Given the adverse impact of the 2024-25 budget, including the decisions required to manage within that budget allocation, compounded by the Department's S75 data on those potential adverse impacts, an EQIA consultation will take place.

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.

Currently – no. Measuring the budget allocation against what the Department actually needs to provide and sustain its services fully it is not possible to mitigate within this allocation. However, should the EQIA consultation 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

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	<b>Rating 3</b>
Social need	<b>Rating 3</b>
Effect on people's daily lives	<b>Rating 3</b>
Relevance to a public authority's functions	<b>Rating 3</b>

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 undertaken by the relevant business areas in relation to the options proposed, reflecting mitigating actions that can be considered. Continuing impact of last year's decision together with engagement with stakeholders and responses received from last year's consultation on the budget will also be taken into account.

Once final budgets have been agreed, the formal in year monitoring rounds will afford an opportunity to seek to address any adverse impacts of the opening budget, either by reprioritisation or bidding for additional funding. Monitoring will take into consideration appropriate feedback from stakeholders, individuals and groups representing the interests of people within the Section 75 categories and screening will be updated at each stage to reflect.

## Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Kelly Coogan  
Position/Job Title: Financial Planning and Management Branch – Dfl  
Date: 8 May 2024

Approved by: Susan Anderson  
Position/Job Title: Finance Director – Dfl  
Date: 5 June 2024

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:	14.05.24
Amendments Requested:	Yes
Date Returned to Business Area:	22.05.24
Date Final Version Received / Confirmed:	5.06.24
Date Published on Dfl's Section 75 webpage:	10.06.24