

## 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

Dfl draft Capital Budget 2025-26 considerations.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

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

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

The intended aim of the Department's Capital Budget for 2025-26 is to maintain and develop its infrastructure. The Department manages and protects in the region of £37bn of public assets (excluding NI Water and Translink) 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. NI Water and Translink manage a further £4bn and £1bn of assets, respectively.

This screening assessment is being completed to assess the equality impact on the draft 2025-26 capital budget agreed by the Executive, which is £932.7m, an increase of £112.6m (14%) from the prior year's opening budget.

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

If so, explain how.

The agreement of a capital budget which is the largest capital budget ever proposed for any NICS Department, will allow the Department to progress key infrastructure schemes and capital maintenance of vital infrastructure, which will benefit all S75 groups. However, as the draft budget falls short of the bids submitted, as is usually the case, schemes will have to be prioritised and progressed in the 2025-26 financial year in line with the draft capital budget and available resources.

Although not all schemes and capital maintenance of vital infrastructure will progress during this financial (2025-26) year, it is not anticipated that there will be any major adverse equality impacts across all Section 75 groups.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Executive agreed 2025-26 Draft Capital Budgets for each NICS Department on 19 December 2024.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

This screening form is based on the Draft Capital Budget 2025-26, which has been agreed by the Executive to launch for consultation. The consultation and associated equality screenings and if required equality impact consultations will inform the Executive's consideration of the Final 2025-26 Capital Budget.

Following agreement by the Executive on the Final Capital Budget 2025-26 the Department will consider the equality impact on this outcome for the Department before any decisions are taken by the Minister.

### **Background**

The Department for Infrastructure is responsible for the maintenance, development and planning of critical infrastructure in Northern Ireland. Through its focus on transport, water and planning, the Department manages and protects in the region of £37bn of public assets (excluding NI Water and Translink) 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. NI Water manages a further £4bn of assets and Translink £1bn.

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

## **Transport**

The Department is responsible for the oversight and facilitation of surface transport in Northern Ireland. 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 developing a new Transport Strategy which will set out the new vision for our transport system here, placing climate change and connecting people at its heart. The Transport Strategy will signal the future direction of transport, provide the context in which decisions, within and beyond government, will be made and set out the strategic framework for future transport investment decisions.

The Department sponsors the NI Transport Holding Company (NITHC) which is the parent company of Northern Ireland's only publicly owned bus and rail company, Translink. The Department is also responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Strangford ferry and the management of the Rathlin ferry. The Department further provides grant funding to support the delivery of Community Transport and advisory services including rural Dial-a-Lift, urban Disability Action Transport Scheme, Shopmobility services and the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC).

The Department also has responsibility for some aspects of the governance of Trust Ports and the development of airports.

The Department has a number of key responsibilities to ensure that everyone has access to safe and accessible travel. For this to happen, the Department has a statutory responsibility to promote good road safety. An Executive approved Road Safety Strategy and accompanying action plan has been developed by the Department and stakeholder partners, to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

Another key part of this is done through the Department's agency - the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) which contributes to road safety, law enforcement and a

cleaner environment by promoting compliance of drivers, vehicles and transport operators through testing, licensing, enforcement and education.

## **Water**

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.

NI Water is an arm's length body of the Department and a Government owned Company with the Department as sole shareholder. NI Water is the statutory water and sewerage undertaker for Northern Ireland. NI Water provides approximately 605m litres of drinking water every day to 920k households and businesses and treats approximately 360m litres of wastewater from 750k homes and businesses before safely returning it to the rivers and sea.

The Department also sponsors Waterways Ireland, one of six North South Implementation Bodies, established to manage, maintain, develop, and restore specific inland waterways, principally for recreational purposes.

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.

Dfl is the lead government Department for the strategic coordination of the emergency response to severe weather events, including flooding, emergency planning and processes, which are developed in conjunction with multi-agency partners.

## **Planning**

The Department is responsible for the strategic direction and production of regional policy for land use planning.

Dfl develops planning legislation, provides guidance and oversight of the 'two tier' planning system and works with partners in local government and the wider community to create healthy living places. The Department also processes a small number of regionally significant and called in planning applications.

The Department, with local government and stakeholders, is also taking forward a Planning Improvement Programme. An interim Regional Planning Commission has been established to provide advice and support, and the programme for

change and improvement focuses on a wide range of work areas including legislation, policy, practice, resourcing and governance.

DfI also promotes sustainable transport and are working with local government as councils prepare local development plans and local transport plans that have an important role in carbon reduction and the development of sustainable communities.

### **Transformational Initiatives**

As part of delivering its responsibilities for Transport, Water and Planning, the Department is taking forward a number of transformational initiatives across six key policy areas. These include: Embedding Inclusion within the Department; Climate Change; Intelligent Road Maintenance; Blue-Green Water Management; Planning and Major Projects Programme.

### **Capital**

The Capital Budget is built from a zero-baseline, 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
2023-24 - £792.4m
2024-25 - £820.1m
Draft 2025-26 - £932.7m

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget ever proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This draft budget is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. However, it still falls short of the overall bid of £1.4bn.

Of the total draft budget, £390.7m is for specific schemes and £542.1m is a general allocation (does not add to £932.7m due to roundings).

In line with previous years and good financial management the Department overplans against its capital budget allocation. This reflects that: capital schemes can face delays and therefore costs can reduce in year; and DfI has historically

benefitted from additional in-year capital allocations through the monitoring round process. For the purposes of this screening, an overplanning amount of £42.8m has been added to the draft budget figure to give a total draft figure for allocation of £975.5m. By overplanning the Department seeks to maximise the budget outcome to effectively spend in-year.

Proposed outcomes from the draft 2025-26 capital budget, compared to opening 2024-25 capital budgets by key spending area within the Department are set out in the table below.

	Opening 2024-25 £m	Proposed 2025-26 £m
<b>Ringfenced Allocations (provided for specific schemes)</b>		
Flagship - A5	88.5	189.8
Flagship – A6	6.4	5.9
Flagship - Belfast Transport Hub	79.9	39.9
City Deal – Lagan Bridge	0.5	2.7
City Deal – Belfast Rapid Transit 2	5	20.0
City Deal – Newry Southern Relief Road	1.3	1.3
City Deal – A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass	0.9	16.7
City Deal – Strabane Footbridge	-	1.2
City Deal – Derry Riverfront	-	1.1
EU Matching Funding (Enterprise Rolling Stock)	6.4	6.4
EU peace Plus NIW	0.9	
RRI Borrowing - NIW	-	105.7
<b>Ringfenced Total</b>	<b>189.8</b>	<b>390.7</b>
<b>General Allocation</b>		
NI Water	323.7	244.3
Translink (includes earmarked funding for Coleraine to Derry track renewal)	159.4	195.0
Driver Vehicle Agency	0.4	-
Waterways Ireland	2.4	2.7
<b>Arms' Length Bodies Total</b>	<b>485.9</b>	<b>442.0</b>
Transport and Road Asset Management	143.1	121.8
Rivers	21.4	15.4
Living With Water Programme	4.0	3.0
Water and Departmental Delivery	0.9	0.6
Climate, Planning and Public Transport	1.1	2.0
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>170.5</b>	<b>142.8</b>
<b>General Allocation Total</b>	<b>656.4</b>	<b>584.8</b>
<b>Overall Total (including overplanning)</b>	<b>846.2</b>	<b>975.5</b>

No decisions have been taken by the Minister on the distribution of the Department's budget, this screening is based on a scenario following the outcome of the Draft budget. Decisions will be made following agreement on the final budget by the Executive and consideration of this and any further equality screening.

In the scenario presented, NI Water would receive £350m, Translink £241m and TRAM £360m (reflecting the increased spend on the A5). This would allow key infrastructure schemes to progress e.g. the A5, A1, City Deal schemes including Belfast Rapid Transit 2, the Enniskillen Bypass and the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and also Phase 3 Derry to Coleraine track improvements, the Transport Hub, essential rail and bus safety works; and some structural maintenance of our road network as well as investment in water and wastewater treatment works and the public transport network.

As is usually the case, the scenario would not facilitate the high level of investment initially identified and therefore would likely result in the delay on progress for some schemes. These schemes would have to be considered in future years depending on priorities and budget availability, eg Park and Ride sites, Local Transport Safety schemes, reduced replacement of TRAM, Rivers and Translink fleet and reduced safety related works. There would also be a shortfall for NI Water of £188m compared to the Mid Term Review figure, but an increase of £26m compared to the 2024-25 opening budget. NI Water has advised previously that it will prioritise safe drinking water, resulting in less investment in wastewater works, including for new homes. It would also mean less capital maintenance spend on the road network and street lighting column replacement.

### **Impact on NI Water**

The budget allocation for NI Water will allow investment in water and waste water treatment works including assisting with housing supply. However, it would not fund all of the Price Control (PC) 21 requirements and it will be for NI Water as a Non Departmental Public Body and Company to prioritise projects and protect the supply of safe drinking water.

### **Impact on Translink and The Department**



Translink would be able to progress key schemes including Phase 3 Derry to Coleraine track improvements, the Transport Hub and essential rail and bus safety works. Translink will however, not be able to progress all schemes, replace the required fleet and carry out all health and safety related work and so will be required to prioritise schemes within the draft general allocation of £195.8m, an increase of £36.4m compared to the 2024-25 opening budget.

Following Capital Budget decisions, it is the responsibility of business areas within the Department and its ALBs, led by their Accounting Officers, to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to reduce health and safety risks and adhere to Section 75 equality obligations. This will necessitate screening forms of the schemes, capital maintenance plans etc. whether progressing or not within this financial year to be reviewed to reflect the current position.

### **Implementation factors**

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

None

### **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
- The Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039

## 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.

***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.

A recent report by the Institute of Engineers (ICE) examined the resilience of infrastructure in Northern Ireland and included recommendations on how to resolve the issues. It draws from examples from across infrastructure systems, local and global networks, and stakeholders. In recognising that infrastructure underpins most of what society needs to function, it is important to prioritise investment and the disconnect that underinvestment in infrastructure can create.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) in its recent report on funding water infrastructure has pointed out the inadequate investment in water infrastructure as a long-term issue in Northern Ireland. When deciding how best to use the available resources, statutory responsibility to ensure the water delivered to consumers is safe is at the forefront. This means that projects related to safe water delivery have tended to be prioritised over investment in the sewerage and wastewater infrastructure. This has the potential to restrict society in general in broad economic terms, environmentally and socially.

The NIHRC report shows that the social housing stock is also highly segregated by religious community background, with around 90% of social housing estates being single identity where social housing developments are restricted in areas of deprivation, this may impact on religious belief linked to economically deprived

areas.

Data from the 2021 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland shows there are no differences between Protestants and Catholics when considering the percentage of journeys by cycling (both 1%) and also the percentage of journeys by public transport (both 2%). Looking at walking journeys, Catholics make a higher percentage of journeys by walking (28%) than Protestants (21%) in 2021. Comparing these groups with those who are of other/no religion, there were no real differences in the percentage of journeys taken by any of these 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, impacting the requirement to maintain our public transport infrastructure. Ongoing historic regional imbalance can also impact on religious belief, particularly in the NorthWest. (The Anti-Poverty Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report and NISRA Census 2021 statistics refer).

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

In the 2021 Census, out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for “Religion Brought Up In”:

45.7%	Catholic
43.48%	Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related)
1.5%	Other Religions
9.32%	No Religion

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

Quantitative:

- [Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland – Statistical bulletin – Religion \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DfI Travel Survey 2021](#)

Qualitative:

- [DfI Audit of Inequalities](#)
- [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](#)
- [Resilient Infrastructure for Northern Ireland – Institute of Civil Engineers \(ICE\)](#)
- [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 that 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.

The assessment for impact on religious belief is likely to be similar for people of 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. However, there has been a focus in 2024-25 on releasing capacity constraints, with the Minister ring-fencing £19.5m for NI Water following the October monitoring round to enable 2,300 new properties to connect to the water and sewerage infrastructure.

With the Department in receipt of greater funding in 2025-26 (based on the draft budget), in comparison to previous years, which is reflective of the historic underfunding the Department has faced for many years, this should allow for an improvement in the level of investment although still not to the optimum amount.

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

### **Political Opinion evidence / information:**

In the 2021 Census, out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for “National Identity”:

British only	31.86%
Irish only	29.13%
Northern Irish only	19.78%
British and Irish only	0.62%
British and Northern Irish only	7.95%
Irish and Northern Irish only	1.76%
British Irish and Northern Irish only	1.47%
Other	7.43%

Source: [NI Census 2021 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, impacting the requirement to maintain effective infrastructure. 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. 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. The Audit identified language issues as a potential barrier to usage of public transport for new migrants and asylum seekers.

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.

The Audit identified language issues as a potential barrier to usage of public transport for new migrants and asylum seekers.

Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people of minority ethnic groups, 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 minority ethnic groups.

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

In the 2021 Census, out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for Ethnic Group

White	96.55%
Irish Traveller	0.14%
Roma	0.08%
Indian	0.52%
Chinese	0.50%
Filipino	0.23%
Pakistani	0.08%
Arab	0.10%
Other Asian	0.28%
Black African	0.42%
Black Other	0.16%
Mixed	0.76%
Other ethnicities	0.19%

Source: NI Census 2021

#### Quantitative:

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

#### Qualitative:

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

## **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.

The DfI Audit of Inequalities highlighted that older people 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 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, the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) and The AA suggest that poor maintenance of pavements poses a particular difficulty to older people's ability to get out and about. There is also substantial research and 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 streetlights at all might increase their sense of insecurity where a number of street lights have ceased to work.

Per the 2023-24 passenger analysis, older people make up approximately 17% of Metro passengers, 16% of NIR passengers and 11% of Ulsterbus passengers which equates to an overall 14% of Translink's £78.2m total passenger journeys. This evidence is based on the journeys taken by people over 60 years old who hold concessionary fare passes. This overall percentage compares to the percentage of older people (60+) in Northern Ireland which is 24% of the population based on NISRA population statistics.

Translink carries around 109k school children to school every school day, representing just over 28% (21.7m journeys) of its total 2023/24 passenger

journeys. This is comparable with the 2023 NISRA population statistics indicating that those aged up to 19, make up 25% of the NI population. Children and young people share many of the concerns and criticisms of public transport expressed by adults (DfI Audit of Inequalities refers) and as well as young people, older people in rural areas are more dependent on public 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.

Comparing the 0-24 age group with the 25-59 and 60+ age groups using data from the 2021 Travel Survey, shows that there is no real difference between these groups when looking at the percentage of journeys by walking (0-24 21%, 25-59 24%, 60+ 26%) or the percentage of journeys by cycling (0-24 2%, 25-59 1%, 60+ 1%). However, the 0-24 age group makes a higher percentage of their journeys by public transport (7%) than the other age groups (25-59 1%, 60+ 2%).

Children and young people make the majority of their trips by bus, to get to school or college, leisure facilities and work. Therefore, affordability can be a barrier for older children and young people. Lack of provision in rural areas particularly affects young people who cannot drive.

Road fatalities for 2022-23 were 61 compared to 73 for 2023-24. The number of fatal and serious casualties i.e. the number of KSI casualties overall stood at 995 in 2023-24, this was 60 more KSIs or a 6% increase on the previous year. In comparison with ten years ago, the number of fatal and serious collisions for 2023-24 was 178 more than 2014-15, with 188 additional KSI casualties. In 2024 nearly half (42%) 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.

When considering road traffic collisions often young drivers are overrepresented, and children are at risk in areas of social deprivation. While older people are much more vulnerable as road users due to issues with mobility, worsening eyesight and frailty (less likely to survive a crash) as well as those road users with a physical impairment.

There is a clear correlation between the older age group and disability. Unrepaired defects on a road or footpath could lead to tripping hazards and cause problems for those with a mobility related disability or visual impairment, therefore this group would have a greater need for roads and footpaths to be



kept in good repair to make it easier for this group to safely access the walking environment.

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. However, there has been a focus in 2024-25 on releasing capacity constraints, with the Minister ring-fencing £19.5m for NI Water following the October monitoring round to enable 2,300 new properties to connect to the water and sewerage infrastructure.

### Age evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census, out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for

0-15 years	20%
16-24 years	11%
25-34 years	13%
35-44 years	13%
45-54 years	13%
55-64 years	13%
65+ years	17%

Results from the most recent 2021 census show that the prevalence of disability increases with age. 56% of those aged 65 and over have a long time health problem or disability compared with 28% of those aged between 40 – 54 and 13% of those aged 15-39%, highlighting that disability increases with age.

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

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 – \(NIHRC\)](#)
- [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](#)

**Marital Status** evidence / information:

In 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.

Due to the size of the achieved sample, 2017-2019 is the latest Travel Survey available for analysis by marital status. This data shows that there is no real difference in the percentage of journeys by cycling across the different marital status groups. Those who are married or in a civil partnership made a similar proportion of journeys by walking (15%) as those who are cohabiting (17%) in 2017-2019. However, single people and those who are divorced or widowed made a higher percentage of their journeys by walking (single 26%, divorced 25%, widowed 22%) than those who are married or in a civil partnership (15%). Likewise, there was no real difference between the percentage of journeys by public transport taken by those who are married or in a civil partnership (3%) and those who are cohabiting (5%). However, single people and those who are divorced or widowed made a higher percentage of their journeys by public transport (single 9%, divorced 6%, widowed 7%) than those who are married or in a civil partnership (3%).

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission report on the impact of public spending points out 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.

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

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

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.

Although much of the information in religious belief is applicable for people of marital status, 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 marital status.

## Marital Status evidence / information:

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for Marital Status:

47.56%	Married
36.14%	Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil
6.78%	Widowed or surviving partner from a same sex civil partnership
5.45%	Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
3.98%	Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)
0.09%	In a registered same sex civil partnership

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

Quantitative:

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

Qualitative

- [The impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland – NIHRC](#)

## **Sexual Orientation** evidence / information:

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 2016 The Rainbow Project (supported by DAERA) conducted a study OUTstanding in your field: Experience of LGBTQI+ people in rural areas. This showed 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.

### **Sexual Orientation evidence / information:**

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for:

- 90% Straight or heterosexual
- 2% Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other
- 8% Prefer not to say or not stated

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

Quantitative:

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

Qualitative

- [OUTstanding in your field: Experience of LGBT people in rural areas](#)

### **Men & Women generally evidence / information:**

Census data showed that, in 2021 in Northern Ireland females were 50.81% of the population and males were 49.19% of the population.

The Department's services provide benefit to all citizens across NI. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the draft resource budget on this group, of the responses to the Travel Survey in 2021 there were 1,520 respondents interviewed of which 712 (47%) were male and 808 (53%) female.

The 2021 Travel Survey results show that cycle usage is higher among males: 35% of males had cycled in the last 12 months compared with 25% of females. Therefore, active travel spend promoting cycling may benefit men more.

The 2021 Survey also showed that there is no real difference in how frequently males and females use public transport: 21% of males and 25% of females said they travel by bus or train at least once a month.

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

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 Expert Advisory Panel Report to the Social Inclusion Strategy for Gender 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.

Women are generally more likely than men to live in poverty across their lifetimes and are more likely to be on benefits and low paid insecure work, or not working due to caring responsibilities.

The EAP Report outlines that 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.

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 73 people killed on Northern Ireland’s roads in 2023-24, 52 were male and 21 were female.

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

### **Men & Women evidence / information:**

In the 2021 Census out of a population of 1.9 million the following statistics were recorded for Sex:

50.81% Female  
49.91% Male

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

Quantitative:

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

### **Disability evidence / information:**

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

Results from the DfI Travel Survey in 2021 show that 20% of respondents said they had some difficulty with travel due to a physical disability or long-standing health problem. There was no difference between men and women (both 20%). Difficulty with travel due to a physical disability or long-standing health problem increases with age: 6% of 16-34 year olds had difficulty with travel compared to 35% of those aged 65 and over.

In 2021, there was no real difference between those with and those without a disability when considering the percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport (26% for those with a disability, 27% for those without a disability). 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 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.

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 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. (Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Report).

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

### **Disability evidence / information:**

In the 2021 Census, out of a population of 1.9 million, a total of 11.45% recorded that they had a Long-term health problem or disability resulting in “Day-to-day activities limited a lot”.

For those over 65 years of age this was 27.73%, while those aged between 0-14 are recorded as 2.98% “Day-to-day activities limited a lot”, highlighting that disability increases with age.

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

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 2021 NI Census indicated that 31% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children.

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 research and 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 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."

Initial analysis of the limited data available on this area has not provided evidence of adverse impacts on people who are or with dependants.

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

It can be assumed that some of those under Disability would fall into this group as would young infants and older people in general.

In the 2021 Census, out of a population of 1.79 million (over 5 years old) the following statistics were recorded for Provision of Unpaid Care:

12.42% of the population provides more than one hour of unpaid care per week.  
6.79% provides more than 20 hours unpaid care per week, with  
3.84% providing more than 50 hours per week.

20.19% of those aged 40-64 provided unpaid care of any duration per week compared to 9.45% of those aged between 15-39.

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

Quantitative:

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

Qualitative:

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

## **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**

The previous section illustrated evidence that outlines how infrastructure is necessary for participation in society no matter what the reason or the Section 75 group and as such the Department's services are embedded in the fabric of daily life for all of society.

Without adequate investment to maintain and upgrade these will potentially impact each S75 group within society differently and/or the same. Various reports, for example the General Consumer Counsel, the Social Inclusion Strategies, the NIAO report on funding for NI Water etc. illustrate the lack of investment in our services, and the potential to socially exclude people of a religious belief from participating in society, supporting the economy, accessing jobs etc., particularly in rural areas.

While the Department has no specific detailed research or data to support the particular needs etc of people of religious belief on the Dfi services, 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. Ongoing historic regional imbalance can also impact on religious belief, particularly in the NorthWest.

### **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 and as noted in the previous section, 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, impacting the requirement to maintain effective infrastructure. 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.

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 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 measures.

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).

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.

Older people also tend to have lower incomes, are more benefit dependent and spend more on necessities than the rest of the population. Older people in rural areas are more dependent on public transport with the lack of leading to 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. (DfI Audit of Inequalities refers).

Where social housing developments are restricted due to wastewater and sewerage constraints this may impact elderly people and children on social housing waiting lists.

### **Marital status**

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

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission report on the impact of public spending points out 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.

## **Sexual orientation**

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

The 2021 Travel Survey showed there is no real difference in how frequently males and females use public transport.

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**

As noted in the 'Available Evidence' section, there are a range of issues relating to public transport which have a particular relevance to disabled people. 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 146,000 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**

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefiting all citizens across NI. As noted in the 'Available Evidence' section, there are a range of issues relating to public transport which have a particular relevance to people with or are dependant. Other than that, outlined in the previous section no other specific needs for people with dependants has been identified.

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."

## **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**:

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still well short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

What is the level of impact?

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

What is the level of impact?

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and Dfl has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

What is the level of impact?

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and Dfl has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

What is the level of impact?

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and Dfl has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow

a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

**What is the level of impact?**

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

**What is the level of impact?**

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bid and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

**What is the level of impact?**

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

**What is the level of impact?**

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress in year. However, the draft allocation is still short of the £1.4bn bids and those schemes that will not progress within this financial year will have to be considered in future years. The draft budget has the potential to increase connectivity across all aspects of society.

**What is the level of impact?**

A positive impact for priority schemes progressing this year. A potentially minor negative impact due to schemes not able to be progressed this year.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget ever received by any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. This is an increase on last year of £112.6m representing an increase of almost 14%, highlighting the important role infrastructure has in our society. This is a

positive outcome and will allow a number of prioritised schemes to progress which will allow better equality of opportunity within the S75 categories. However, as the draft allocation falls short of the £1.4bn bids, prioritisation of schemes will be required which will push some schemes into future years.

Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities.

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

**Religious Belief** – Yes, provide reasons:

There are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for S75 groups with the increased draft capital budget.

**Political Opinion** - Yes, provide reasons: [As outlined above.](#)

**Racial Group** - Yes, provide details: [As outlined above.](#)

**Age** - Yes, provide details: [As outlined above.](#)

**Marital Status** - Yes, provide details: [As outlined above.](#)

**Sexual Orientation** - Yes, provide details: [As outlined above.](#)

**Men and Women generally** - Yes, provide details: [As outlined above.](#)

**Disability** - Yes, provide details: [As outlined above.](#)

**Dependants** - Yes, provide details: [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 Capital schemes that go ahead e.g. the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme has the potential to impact on good relations for this group due to connectivity between different parts of the city. Progression on all key infrastructure schemes has the potential to impact on good relations for this group.

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:  
[As outlined above.](#)

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:  
[As outlined above.](#)

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

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

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

**Religious Belief** - If No, provide reasons: [Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. The Capital schemes that go ahead have the potential to impact on good relations for this group. Progression on key infrastructure schemes has the potential to impact on good relations for this group.](#)

**Political Opinion** - If No, provide reasons [As outlined above.](#)

**Racial Group** - If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above.](#)

## **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 draft Capital Budget scenario, it is highly likely that those in society impacted by the increased allocation will fall into multiple Section 75 categories.

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure and as such the population, as multiple S75 identities, may be impacted by schemes that progress as a result of the Capital Budget allocation.

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.

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.

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

The draft capital budget for 2025-26 of £932.7m is the largest capital budget ever proposed for any NICS Department, and DfI has received the third highest combined draft capital and resource budget across all departments. It is £113m (14%) higher than last year which is a positive outcome for the Department. The draft budget will allow for the progression on a large number of key infrastructure schemes which will positively impact on S75 Groups.

In the scenario presented, NI Water would receive £350m, Translink £241m and TRAM £360m (reflecting the increased spend on the A5). This would allow key infrastructure schemes to progress e.g. the A5, A1, City Deal schemes including Belfast Rapid Transit 2, the Enniskillen Bypass and the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and also Phase 3 Derry to Coleraine track improvements, the Transport Hub, essential rail and bus safety works; and some structural maintenance of our road network as well as investment in water and wastewater treatment works and the public transport network.

As is usually the case, the scenario would not facilitate the high level of investment initially identified and therefore would likely result in the delay on progress for some schemes and would result in less investment in e.g. wastewater works, including for new homes, less capital maintenance spend on the road network and street lighting column replacements.

However, the schemes would be considered in future years depending on priorities and budget availability, eg Park and Ride sites, Local Transport Safety schemes, reduced replacement of TRAM, Rivers and Translink fleet and reduced



safety related works. There would also be a shortfall for NI Water of £188m compared to the Mid Term Review figure, but an increase of £26m compared to the 2024-25 opening budget. NI Water has advised previously that it will prioritise safe drinking water.

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

## Mitigation

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

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

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

Not considered necessary at this stage. The Department's 2025-26 draft Capital Budget outcome of £932.7m is the largest capital budget ever received by any NICS Department and is £113m (14%) higher than last year which is a positive outcome for the Department and will allow for the progression on a large number of key infrastructure schemes which will positively impact on S75 Groups. Some schemes will not be able to be progressed in the current year however these will be considered in future years depending on priorities and budget availability. Over the next year 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

Social need

Effect on people's daily lives

Relevance to a public authority's functions

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.

N/a

## **Part 4. Monitoring**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

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.

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: Brighdin Mc Aleenan  
Position/Job Title: Financial Controller  
Date: 14/01/2025

Approved by: Susan Anderson  
Position/Job Title: Finance Director  
Date: 14/01/2025

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

**For Equality Team Completion:**

Date Received:	02.01.25
Amendments Requested:	Yes
Date Returned to Business Area:	08.01.25
Date Final Version Confirmed:	14.01.25
Date Published on Dfl's Section 75 webpage:	