

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) Draft Resource 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 Draft Resource Budget for 2025-26 is to enable the Department to fulfil its legal obligations and deliver essential public services within the agreed draft budget total. This screening assessment is being completed to assess the equality impact on these services from the draft 2025-26 resource budget agreed by the Executive, which is £633.3m resource, an increase of £73.8m (13%) from the prior year opening budget.

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 draft budget outcome on the essential services that the Department provides. The Department's draft resource budget outcome has increased by £73.8m (13% increase) from its opening 2024-25 resource budget, and an increase of £22.5m (3.7% increase)

from its current 2024-25 resource budget position. This is the largest resource budget proposed for DfI since its inception, although it is 8% less than the amount that would be needed to deliver everything that the Department identified and will therefore require prioritisation, although not to the extent experienced in recent years.

Prior to the draft budget outcome, the Department had initially assessed at a very high-level that a similar level of funding would impact on all S75 Groups. However, the draft budget outcome has improved, and following further assessment of proposed options and equality impacts through this screening form, it is anticipated that this improved financial position will potentially have a minor positive impact on S75 Groups.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

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

Who owns and who implements the policy?

This screening form is based on the Draft Resource 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 Resource Budget.

Following agreement by the Executive on the Final Resource 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 transformational initiatives across a number of key policy areas. These include: Embedding Inclusion within the Department; Climate Change; Intelligent Road Maintenance; Blue-Green Water Management; Planning and Major Projects Programme.

Draft Resource Budget 2025-26

The Draft Resource Budget outcome for the Department is an increase of £73.8m (13% increase) from the Department's opening 2024-25 resource budget, and an increase of £22.5m (3.7% increase) from the Department's current 2024-25 resource budget position.

This is a welcome increase in the Department's draft resource budget allocation and is reflective of the historic underfunded baseline that the Department has faced for many years.

This allocation meets the Department's highest priority measures and could allow an increase in the level of service that has been provided in its essential services such as an increase from the limited level of service for essential road maintenance and flood risk management. Although the draft budget outcome is a positive one it still will not allow the Department to deliver all it wanted to and will therefore require some prioritisation.

Given the increase in the Department draft resource budget outcome, when compared to previous years, the Department is proposing the options below in allocating its draft resource budget outcome. In addition to these the Department expects that exceptional costs, outside of its control will be funded centrally, such as the increase in employers NIC to be introduced from 1 April 2025 and Bear Scotland (holiday pay) liabilities. Transformation projects will be progressed if additional funding is provided from the Transformation Fund.

The impact of the increased employers NIC and increased minimum wage on service providers, such as community transport providers, will need to be considered as part of any budget decisions, recognising the strong support for this service from the Department's 2023-24 Budget Equality Impact Consultation, as any reduction in services could have negative impacts on all S75 categories especially Age, Disability, Dependants and (Men and) Women.

Department

- Increase the level of funding for essential road maintenance, to allow the level of service to ramp up towards a standard level of service, which is an increase in the limited level of service that the Department has been delivering for many years;
- Increase the level of funding for flood risk management towards a standard level, which is an increase in the limited level of service that the Department has been providing for many years;
- Increase the level of funding for road safety advertising, and to include transport decarbonisation communications;
- Increase the opening resource budget for NI Water, an increase of £11.5m (8% increase);
- Increase the opening resource budget for Translink, an increase of £7m (5% increase);
- Provide DVA with its 2025-26 subsidy in full;
- Fund Waterways Ireland to its approved 2025 Business Plan; and
- Fund business as usual climate action plan enabling actions.

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

| Business Area | 2024-25 Opening Budget | 2025-26 Draft Budget Proposed options outcome |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | £m | £m |
| ALBs | | |
| NI Water | 137.7 | 149.2 |
| Translink | 143.95 | 151.1 |
| DVA (subsidy only) | - | 8 |
| Waterways Ireland | 5.2 | 4.6 |
| Total | 286.9 | 312.9 |
| Department | | |
| TRAM | 125.5 | 155.3 |
| WDD | 39.9 | 46.9 |
| CPPT | 4.8 | 5 |
| People Directorate | 0.4 | 0.9 |
| Salaries | 103.3 | 112.3 |
| Total | 273.9 | 320.3 |
| Overall Total | 560.7 | 633.3 |

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, previous Equality Impact Consultations and any further equality screening.

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
- 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.

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 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.

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) 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.

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 of 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).

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management, although not to the extent that the Department wanted to. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25

opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

Religious belief evidence / information:

Quantitative:

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

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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. 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.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

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.

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, 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.

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.

The Concessionary Fares Scheme was established to promote access to public transport for members of the community who are most at risk of social exclusion, through providing free and discounted travel on bus and rail services.

As of June 2024, 369,478 Smart Passes were held by older people. Comparing this to the 2023 mid-year population estimate of those persons aged 60 and over (461,430 persons), there was an approximately 80% uptake of these Smart Passes. The number of passes used by older people in 2023-24 was 224,919; which represents approx. 61% of active passes held by this demographic.

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.

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

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.

There is no evidence that any change to the level of service provision in relation to water and sewerage services would have a higher or lower impact for any Section 75 group, however, restricted provision of wastewater and sewage services is constraining social housing developments which may impact elderly people and families with children who are on social housing waiting lists.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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 – 64 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](#)
- [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 draft resource budget on this group, in 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.

Due to size of the achieved sample, 2017-2019 is the latest Travel Survey for Northern Ireland data 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, 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, those who are divorced or widowed made a higher percentage of their journeys by public transport (single 9%, divorced 6%, widowed 7%) than those who are married or in a civil partnership (3%). The NIHRC' report on the impact of public spending changes in Northern Ireland highlights that single parents are more likely to be on benefits, and therefore, more likely to rely on public transport or social housing and to be women. The 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 constrains social housing developments which may impact on people of differing marital status who are on social housing waiting lists.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)
- [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 draft 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.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)
- [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 draft resource budget on this group, of the responses to the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland

(TSNI) in 2021 there were 1,520 respondents interviewed of which 712 (47%) were male and 808 (53%) female.

The 2021 TSNI 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. NISRA population statistics indicate that males and females make up roughly equal parts of NI's 1.9m population. The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021 showed there is no real difference in how frequently males and females use public transport: 21% of males and 25% of females said they travel by bus or train at least once a month.

Looking at journeys taken by the 16+ age group using any form of transport, on average men made a similar number of journeys (830) to women (868) in 2021. However, men tend to travel further, averaging 5,846 miles per year, compared to 4,725 miles for women in 2021. Women tended to use grant funded Community Transport services in 2023-24 more than men, Dial-a- Lift (69%), the Disability Action Transport Scheme (54% of new members) and Shopmobility (58%). This highlights the importance of these services to women.

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

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".

Men, particularly young men are heavily represented in road traffic fatalities and are a key target audience along with other vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, children and older motorcyclists.

PSNI Road Fatalities statistics shows that of the 71 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.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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](#)
- [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).

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).

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 research and anecdotal evidence from the Department's own advisory body, [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.

Unrepaired defects could lead to tripping hazards which would be especially dangerous 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.

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.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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 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 research and anecdotal evidence from the Department’s own advisory body, [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'](#), citing that: "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.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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](#)
- [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 could have a disproportionate impact on racial group, particularly as there are restrictions on asylum seekers and migrants obtaining a driver's 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 'Available Evidence' section outlined issues relating to roads asset management regarding maintenance 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.

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 (Social Inclusion Gender Strategy 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, any 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).

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

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. 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 any 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 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 make up a significant proportion of community transport users in rural and urban areas in 2024-25.

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'](#), citing that: "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 XX-XX 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**:

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall

position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on Men and Women:

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on Disability:

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on Dependants:

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially minor positive

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

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

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide reasons:

Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities and 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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, this should allow for an improvement in the level of services for S75 identities.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide reasons: As outlined above

Racial Group - If Yes, provide reasons: As outlined above

Age - If Yes, provide reasons: As outlined above

Marital Status - If Yes, provide reasons: As outlined above

Sexual Orientation - If No, provide reasons: As outlined above

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide reasons: As outlined above

Disability - If Yes, provide reasons: As outlined above

Dependants - If Yes, 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 improved draft resource budget has the potential to impact on good relations for this group.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Minor positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: As above.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Minor positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: As outlined above.

What is the level of impact? Potentially Minor positive.

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

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

Religious Belief - If No, provide reasons: Potentially positive
Infrastructure has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities. The improved draft resource budget has the potential to impact on good relations.

Political Opinion - If No, provide reasons: Potentially positive

As outlined above

Racial Group - If No, provide reasons: Potentially positive

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).

As outlined above our society, irrespective of Section 75 identity, depends on infrastructure with our services benefiting all citizens across NI.

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

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

Therefore, the draft resource budget outcome could have a positive impact on people with multiple identities. For example, as disability (whatever gender and/or orientation) increases with age, older disabled people, women, single parents particularly in rural areas could be impacted positively by improved services.

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.

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 services, such as essential road maintenance and flood risk management. It should also allow Translink and NI Water to receive increases from 2024-25 opening positions. Therefore, in considering the overall position it is anticipated that the improved financial position will have a minor positive equality impact for this S75 Group.

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

N/A

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.

The improved draft resource budget outcome, in comparison to previous years, could impact positively on S75 Groups, and therefore no mitigations are required. Should mitigation be required as potential policies are implemented this will be considered as part of the in-year monitoring process.

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 | N/A |
| Social need | N/A |
| Effect on people's daily lives | N/A |
| Relevance to a public authority's functions | N/A |

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public

Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details.

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

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

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

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

The impact of the draft resource budget and the perceived positive impact will be monitored through service delivery by each business area within the Department.

Once final budgets have been agreed, the formal in year monitoring rounds will afford an opportunity to seek to address any impacts of the opening budget, which have not been identified at this stage, 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: [Naveed Agahi](#)
Position/Job Title: [Financial Planning and Management Branch – Dfl](#)
Date: [14.01.25](#)

Approved by: [Susan Anderson](#)
Position/Job Title: [Finance Director](#)
Date: [14.01.25](#)

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made

easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

For Equality Team Completion:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Date Received: | 23.12.25 |
| Amendments Requested: | Yes |
| Date Returned to Business Area: | 08.01.25 |
| Date Final Version Received / Confirmed: | 14.01.25 |
| Date Published on Dfl's Section 75 webpage: | |