



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Mánnystrie o tha Laa

DOJ Section 75

EQUALITY SCREENING FORM

Title of Policy:

SINGLE COMMUNITY ORDER

February 2025

The Legal Background – Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department is required **to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:**

- between person of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and,
- between persons with dependants and persons without¹.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the Department is also required to:

- **have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group; and**
- **meet legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order.**

Introduction

Part 1. Policy scoping – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the

likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Part 4. Monitoring – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

Part 5. Approval and authorisation – verifies the public authority's approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

The [flowchart](#) details the equality screening process.

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:

The development of a new single community order for children

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

A revised policy – the intention is to replace the existing 7 community orders with a single order.

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

The aim of the revised policy is to streamline and simplify the existing community sentencing framework in NI as it applies to children, with better outcomes for children, families, victims and communities being the ultimate goal. In order to do this, we intend to:

- replace the current 7 existing community orders with one single, flexible order which can be adapted to meet the changing circumstances/needs of children in receipt of it.
- designate one organisation to be responsible for the supervision of the new single community order.

- ensure that restorative practice/victim involvement is central to the process but is delivered in such a way as to be flexible to the needs of all parties; and
- underpin the changes, including the new order, in legislation.

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

If so, explain how.

There is potential for the following benefits to arise from the intended policy once implemented:

Children/Young People – it is intended that the new policy will help simplify the community sentencing process for children and young people who are involved in offending behaviour. It will remove the current scenario whereby a child can be subject to multiple community orders at the same time, supervised by different organisations, which can result in difficulties around compliance. The new order will also be designed to better address changing circumstances and the individual needs of children. This will hopefully show reduced levels of reoffending as a result of children’s needs being more adequately addressed.

Males – are particularly likely to benefit. This is due to the fact that the proportion of males in the youth justice system is significantly higher than females.

Catholics – while information in relation to the religious background of those in receipt of community orders is not gathered, more young people spending time in youth custody have identified as being from a Catholic background.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Department of Justice

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Reducing Offending Division, Department of Justice is the owner of the policy. Implementation will be in partnership with other criminal justice organisations, namely the Youth Justice Agency, Probation Board NI, the

Judiciary, Police Service NI, Public Prosecution Service and the NI Courts and Tribunals Service.

Implementation factors

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

Yes

If yes, are they (please delete as appropriate)

Legislative – primary legislation is required to make the amendment.

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

other public sector organisations

voluntary/community/trade unions

other, please specify: Families of children in the justice system

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?
 - Youth Justice Review (2011)
 - Youth Justice Scoping Study (2015-2016)
 - Transitioning Youth Justice (2019)
 - Strategic Framework for Youth Justice (2022)

- who owns them?

The Department of Justice

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.

The current community sentencing landscape for youth court disposals is complex, with seven community orders available to the courts, some of which are rarely, if ever, used. These seven orders are provided for through different pieces of legislation and are supervised by two different organisations – YJA and PBNI. Each of the orders has specified components and requirements, some of which are unique to a particular order, and others that may be common to more than one order. Not all of the current youth community orders require or explicitly allow for victim views or engagement and children can be subject to multiple and differing orders at any one time

In 2015/16, an end-to-end Scoping Study of the youth justice system was undertaken with a view to simplifying and streamlining the system. The plethora of community sentences was examined as part of this work, and one of the recommendations of the study was that the seven existing orders should be replaced by a single, flexible community order for children. This was examined again as part of the development of a new Strategic Framework for Youth Justice and was included as a key action to be undertaken within the timeframe of the Framework (2022-2027).

The tables below provide information on the number of community sentences handed down between 2019/20 and 2023/24. These have been separated into two tables. The first shows the number of court ordered youth conference orders and the second details all other community orders handed down. The information clearly shows that youth conference orders are the most commonly used community sentence for children.

USAGE OF CURRENT COMMUNITY SENTENCES FOR CHILDREN 2019/20 - 2023/24

Court Ordered Youth Conference Orders:

Financial Year	Youth Conference Orders
2019/20	468
2020/21	291
2021/22	366
2022/23	367
2023/24	367
Total	1,859

All other Orders:

Financial Year	Attendance Centre Order	Combination Order	Community Responsibility Order	Community Service Order	Probation Order	Reparation Order	Total
2019/20	11	3	25	2	18	0	59
2020/21	12	0	13	0	16	0	41
2021/22	16	0	4	4	10	0	34
2022/23	18	7	3	2	12	0	42
2023/24	11	0	1	6	38	0	56
Total	68	10	46	14	94	0	232

Source: YJA & PBNI

In advance of commencing work to look at a new single community order, the Department carried out an exercise to obtain the views of those with lived experience of the community sentencing framework for children, including both young people and parents/carers. Our engagement found there was widespread support for the proposal to replace multiple orders with a single order. Many of those who responded to our questionnaire reported a lack of understanding about the sentences the court had given and what was involved, and having multiple orders in force at the one time added to the confusion. The feedback indicated that a single order would be easier for the young person to understand, and to complete.

In relation to qualitative data, information in relation to many of the section 75 categories is collected for those in contact with the youth justice system who

spend time in custody in the Juvenile Justice Centre, but with the exception of age and gender, is not routinely collected for those who receive community sentences, although there will be some cross-over between both. We have used the information available to us to complete the sections below, including information relating to children in custody, as this gives some context.

Details of Evidence/Information

Section 75 Category – Religious Belief

While information relating to the religious beliefs of those who received community orders is not available, data included in the *Over-Representation of Children in the Youth Justice System in NI* report, published in October 2022, showed the following self-reported information concerning children who received a community referral to the YJA or who were admitted into custody during 2018/19:

Religion	Percent
Catholic	27.9
Protestant	15.9
Other religion	1.7
No religion	11.5
Missing/unknown	43.0

In 2023/24, the proportion of children in custody in the Juvenile Justice Centre who identified as being Catholic was 46.2% while 24.0% identified as being Protestant. The remaining were split between 5.8% having other religious beliefs, 15.4% with no religious belief and 8.7% were unknown.

Information in relation to the preceding 5 years is shown below:

Financial Year	Catholic	Protestant	Other	No Religious Belief	Unknown	Total Children
2018/19	62.5%	18.8%	2.5%	4.4%	11.9%	100.0%
2019/20	66.7%	12.7%	2.4%	5.6%	12.7%	100.0%
2020/21	59.3%	17.6%	2.8%	8.3%	12.0%	100.0%
2021/22	51.9%	19.8%	6.6%	9.4%	12.3%	100.0%
2022/23	57.3%	13.6%	6.4%	7.3%	15.5%	100.0%

Source – Youth Justice Agency Annual Workload Statistics Report 2023/24 – all data on religion is self-reported.

Section 75 Category – Political Opinion

There is limited data available in relation to the political opinions of children in the justice system in Northern Ireland.

Section 75 Category – Racial Group

There is limited data available in relation to the racial profile of children in the justice system in Northern Ireland. Some information has been provided through YJA admissions records of those admitted to custody in Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in 2023/24. This data shows:

- White – 84.6%
- Irish Traveller – 5.8%
- Other – 6.7%
- Unknown – 2.9%

Source – Youth Justice Agency JJC management information 2023/24

The *Over-Representation of Children in the Youth Justice System in NI* report (published Oct 2022) showed the following self-reported information concerning children who received a community referral to the YJA or who were admitted into custody during 2018/19:

Ethnicity	Percent
White	65.5
Non-white & Irish Traveller	3.1
Did not wish to answer	1.1
Missing/unknown	30.3

Section 75 Category – Age

Information in relation to the ages of children in receipt of community sentences is not routinely gathered. However, the YJA provides data in its annual workload statistics which relates to the ages of children referred to its youth justice services:

Individual children referred to YJS by age, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Financial Year	10 to 13	14	15	16	17 and over	Total Children
2019/20	16.3%	15.8%	18.7%	19.7%	29.5%	100.0%
2020/21	14.9%	12.5%	18.2%	20.3%	34.1%	100.0%
2021/22	17.0%	14.9%	18.5%	19.0%	30.5%	100.0%
2022/23	19.5%	15.2%	19.5%	19.8%	26.0%	100.0%
2023/24	20.8%	14.7%	17.2%	21.5%	25.8%	100.0%

Source – Youth Justice Agency Annual Workload Statistics Report 2023/24

On average, over 47% of referrals to youth justice services for the past 3 years are for children aged 16 or 17 years. When it comes to prosecutions at court*, this figure increases to over 60%.

**Source – Analytical Services Group – DoJ*

Section 75 Category – Marital Status

There is limited data available in relation to the marital status of children in the justice system in Northern Ireland. However, given the age range being addressed in this policy, it is likely that the vast majority of children, if not all, will not be married.

Section 75 Category – Sexual Orientation

There is limited data available on the sexual orientation of children in the justice system in Northern Ireland.

Section 75 Category – Men and Women Generally

The number and percentage of males in contact with the youth justice system is significantly higher than females, as demonstrated by information available in relation to children referred to the Youth Justice Agency.

Youth Justice Services referrals by gender, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Financial Year	Male	Female	Total Children [Note 1]
2019/20	78.2%	21.4%	99.6%
2020/21	77.7%	21.9%	99.6%
2021/22	77.5%	22.2%	99.8%
2022/23	76.5%	22.6%	99.1%
2023/24	74.8%	24.6%	99.4%

1. Figures for each gender may not sum to total number of referrals as providing gender is optional and for a small proportion is not available.

Source – Youth Justice Agency Annual Workload Statistics Report 2023/24

While the percentage of females being referred has increased year on year since 19/20, they are still considerably outnumbered when compared to males.

Section 75 Category – Disability

There is limited data available in relation to the number of children in contact with the criminal justice system who have a disability. A Health Needs Analysis carried out amongst children held in the Juvenile Justice Centre between January and December 2019, reported that almost 50% had moderate learning difficulties and 10% displayed severe learning difficulties.

These findings are in line with published research which indicates the prevalence of neurodevelopmental disabilities in children who are in contact with the justice system is higher than their peers. [Source: see, for example, Hughes et al (2012) “Nobody made the connection: the prevalence of neurodisability in young people who offend”.]

Section 75 Category – Dependents

There is limited data available in relation to the existence of dependents of children in the justice system in Northern Ireland.

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:

Details of Evidence/Information

Section 75 Category – Religious Belief

The proposal to introduce a new, single order to replace the current seven orders available to courts may have a greater impact on children from the Catholic community. This is based on information provided by the YJA, which would indicate that there are more Catholic children in contact with the criminal justice system, based on the numbers held in custody. The impact is expected to be a positive one, however, as we aim to introduce a sentencing framework which is based on children first principles, removing the potential for multiple orders and streamlining the process for children and their carers.

Section 75 Category – Political Opinion

There is no evidence that the proposal to introduce a new, single order to replace the current seven orders available to courts will have a significant differential effect on the needs, experiences and priorities of this category. Children will hold differing political opinions or none.

Section 75 Category – Racial Group

There is no evidence that the proposal to introduce a new, single order to replace the current seven orders available to courts will have a significant differential effect on the needs, experiences and priorities of this category.

Section 75 Category – Age

The policy is restricted specifically to children between the ages of 10 (the current Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility in Northern Ireland) and 17 years old. The aim is to remove the current situation whereby a child can be subject to multiple community orders and potentially youth conferences and plans at any one time. This can result in confusion and frustration, potentially leading to disengagement and an increased likelihood of further involvement in the youth justice system.

Section 75 Category – Marital Status

There is no evidence that the proposal to introduce a new, single order to replace the current seven orders available to courts will have a significant differential effect on the needs, experiences and priorities of this category. The new order will apply only to children who offend, who are unlikely to be married.

Section 75 Category – Sexual Orientation

There is no evidence that the proposal to introduce a new, single order to replace the current seven orders available to courts will have a significant differential effect on the needs, experiences and priorities of this category. Children, who could possibly be impacted by the change, may come from different sexual orientation backgrounds.

Section 75 Category – Men and Women Generally

Children in the youth justice system are significantly more likely to be male, therefore the proposed revision to the current system will have a greater impact on this section of society. The impact will be beneficial, as it seeks to enhance the experiences of children drawn into the youth justice system. It aims to assist them with comprehending their actions, take measures to prevent future offences, and make reparations to their victims.

Section 75 Category – Disability

While information is not available for all children who engage with the youth justice system, the information available in relation to those in custody indicates that a higher proportion have either moderate or severe learning difficulties than would be found in the general population. Given that the aim of the revised policy is to address underlying needs in order to improve outcomes for children and reduce their likelihood of reoffending, it is envisaged that it will have a positive impact on those children with a learning disability who offend and are sentenced to a community order. The fact that they will no longer be subject to multiple orders or supervised by multiple organisations is also expected to assist with their understanding of, and compliance with, the requirements of the order.

Section 75 Category – Dependents

There is no evidence that the proposal to introduce a new, single order to replace the current seven orders available to courts will have a significant differential effect on the needs, experiences and priorities of this category. Given that the age bracket for the revised policy is under 18s, it is likely that the numbers in this category with dependents will be small.

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 detailed below.

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 on the likely impacts on **Religious Belief**:

This policy will have a greater impact on children from the Catholic community as available evidence would indicate that they make up the greatest proportion of children coming into contact with the Youth Justice System in recent years.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None
(Positive not adverse)

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

Any revised policy change to replace the existing seven orders with a new, single order would apply equally to all within this S75 category. It is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on equality of opportunity for this category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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

Any revised policy change to replace the existing seven orders with a new, single order would apply equally to all within this S75 category. It is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on equality of opportunity for this category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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

The policy is restricted specifically to children between the ages of 10 (the current Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility in Northern Ireland) and under the age of 18 years old. The policy will simplify the current community sentencing framework for this age-group and provide positive opportunities to help reduce reoffending.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None
(Positive not adverse)

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

Any revised policy change to replace the existing seven orders with a new, single order would apply equally to all within this S75 category. The legal age to marry in Northern Ireland is 16 years old, whilst 16 to 17 year olds will need permission from their parent/guardian, or potentially a court order, if suitable.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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

Any revised policy change to replace the existing seven orders with a new, single order would apply equally to all within this S75 category. It is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on equality of opportunity for this category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

Details on the likely impacts on **Men and Women Generally**:

The policy will have the greatest impact on the young male population of Northern Ireland, as young offenders in Northern Ireland are overwhelmingly male. The policy will provide positive opportunities to help reduce reoffending.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

(Positive not adverse)

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

Evidence available would indicate that neurodiverse children are over-represented in the justice system. The revised policy aims to have a positive impact on children between the ages of 10 to 18 years old, including individuals that present with a disability, such as learning difficulties.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

(Positive not adverse)

Details on the likely impacts on **Dependents**:

Any revised policy change to replace the existing seven orders with a new, single order would apply equally to all within this S75 category. There is no evidence that there would be any adverse impact on equality of opportunity for this category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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

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

Religious Belief – If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

Yes - These proposals are not targeted at any particular Section 75 category but at those children who are in receipt of a community order. However, there may be an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for Catholic children as the available evidence would point towards this demographic being disproportionately represented within the youth justice system.

Political Opinion - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

No - the policy will be equally applicable to all individuals interacting with the Youth Justice System, regardless of their political beliefs.

Racial Group - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

No - the policy will be equally applicable to all individuals interacting with the Youth Justice System, regardless of their racial profile.

Age - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

Yes - the policy is restricted specifically to children between the ages of 10 (the current Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility in Northern Ireland) and under the age of 18 years old. The policy will provide positive opportunities to help reduce reoffending.

Marital Status - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

No - the policy will be equally applicable to all individuals interacting with the Youth Justice System, regardless of their marital status.

Sexual Orientation - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

No - the policy will be equally applicable to all individuals interacting with the Youth Justice System, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Men and Women Generally - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

Yes - the policy will have the greatest impact on the young male population of Northern Ireland, as young offenders in Northern Ireland are overwhelmingly male. The policy will provide positive opportunities to help reduce reoffending.

Disability - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

Yes - an opportunity exists to advance equal opportunities for young children with disabilities who interact with the youth justice system. The existing scenario of multiple

orders can lead to confusion and disengagement. A new, single order can be tailored to the individual and can potentially identify unaddressed needs and conditions.

Dependents - If “Yes”, provide details. If “No, provide details.

No - the policy will be equally applicable to all individuals interacting with the Youth Justice System, regardless of whether they have dependents or not.

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**:

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None

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 “Yes” provide details; If “No”, provide details:

No - the Policy is expected to benefit all young individuals who come into contact with the youth justice system, irrespective of their religious belief.

Political Opinion - If “Yes” provide details; If “No”, provide details:

No - the Policy is expected to benefit all young individuals who come into contact with the youth justice system, irrespective of their political opinion.

Racial Group - If “Yes” provide details; If “No”, provide details:

No - the Policy is expected to benefit all young individuals who come into contact with the youth justice system, irrespective of their racial group.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

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

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

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

- Young Male Catholics between the age of 10 to 18 years old.
- Young Children between the age of 10 to 18 years old who present with disabilities.

Information on these groups has been provided above.

Part 3. Screening decision

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

We have not recognised any potential adverse effects on any Section 75 Group stemming from the proposed Policy revision. The modification of existing legislation to introduce a new, single order is expected to benefit specific groups, as previously outlined.

Consequently, it has been determined that an equality impact assessment will not be necessary.

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.

Having considered the equality implications of the revised policy as a result of the screening process, we are content that the policy does not require to be amended or an alternative policy introduced.

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.*

Any impacts which have been identified as a result of the screening process have been positive ones, therefore, we are satisfied that there are no modifications required.

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.

Further advice on monitoring can be found at: [ECNI Monitoring Guidance for Public Authorities](#)

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Paddy Coughlan
Position/Job Title: Staff Officer
Date: 25/02/2025

Approved by: Jenny McAlarney
Position/Job Title: Grade 7 (Acting)
Date: 25/02/2025

Prior to final approval the Screening Form should be forwarded to DOJESSS@justice-ni.gov.uk for comment/quality assurance. Contact the branch should you require advice or have any queries prior to this stage.

Any NIPS forms should also be forwarded to Peter.Grant@justice-ni.gov.uk

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 DoJ website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

Separately from undertaking screening of the policy, consideration must also be given in respect of undertaking a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). This is to ensure that public authorities comply with their duty under Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. Full information including templates and a useful checklist are available on the [DAERA website](#).