

DRD SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING ANALYSIS FORM 2005

Section 1

Introduction

This form is intended 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 consultation on the outcome of the screening exercise and will be referenced in the quarterly review of progress made to the Minister and in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission. Copies of completed forms should be retained on file within business areas and reference should be made to the outcome of the screening exercise and subsequent consultation in any submission made to the Minister.

Background

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 persons 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 without.

The main groups within each of the nine categories, highlighted above, and identified at Appendix 1.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department is also required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

Advice on Completion of the Screening Form

It is important that the screening form is completed carefully and thoughtfully. Your Divisional or Agency Equality Officer and the Department's Equality Unit in room 413A will be happy to assist with all aspects of the screening process and will help with the completion of the form, if required.

Further advice on the screening process can be accessed at Section 4 of the Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties.

Policies included for EQIA

If, after screening, it is decided that a policy will require a full EQIA, a decision will be required on the priority and timing of the assessment. The screening form should be noted accordingly, signed off and copied to the Equality Unit for inclusion in the EQIA programme.

Policies excluded for EQIA

If a decision is taken to screen out the policy or where there is ambiguity about the equality implication of the proposal, the screening form should be signed off by a senior officer responsible for the policy and a copy sent to the Equality Unit to arrange for consultation. Copies of all screening out forms will be placed on the Department's consultation website.

Section 2 – Policy to be Screened

Definition of Policy

There have been some difficulties in defining what constitutes a policy in the context of Section 75. To be on the safe side it is recommended that you consider changes to or any new initiatives, proposals, schemes or programmes as policies. The policies covered in the Equality Scheme EQIA programme are a reasonable guide both to the nature of departmental policies and the level at which they should be considered.

The revised Guidance from The Equality Commission emphasises that the Statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the organisation) as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the organisations).

It is important to remember that even if a full EQIA has been carried out in respect of an “overarching” policy or strategy, it will still be necessary for the policy maker to consider if a further EQIA needs to be carried out in respect of those policies cascading from the overarching strategy.

OFMDFM Guidance on Legislative Procedures (Primary and Subordinate) sets out clearly the stages at which equality of opportunity considerations should be taken into consideration in the development of legislation.

Overview of Policy Proposals

The aims and objectives of the policy must be clear and well defined. You must take into account any available data of evidence that will enable you to come to a decision on whether or not a policy may or may not have a differential impact on any of the S75 categories. Evidence may be qualitative and or quantitative and may include research or internal information and or experience in relation to service and customer monitoring exercises. Where appropriate, arrangements should be made to obtain any data necessary to assist screening.

2.1 Please insert below a brief description of the policy/legislation, including the title and all the main aims and objectives

The Traffic Signs (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007

The Department's policy on traffic signs is consistent with that of the Department of Transport in GB and the Department of Transport's "Traffic Signs Manual" is used as the code of practice to be followed in the design, construction, use, siting and illumination of signs. This ensures a reliable and uniform system of traffic signing throughout the UK.

The Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 prescribe the size, colour and type of traffic signs for use in Northern Ireland. Additionally, some other signs are authorised for use by the Department.

The Traffic Signs (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 further amend the Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 by prescribing four new signs shown in diagrams 2711 (to indicate direction to emergency exit for pedestrians from a tunnel), 2713.1 (to advise of distance ahead to emergency telephone in a parking place), and 2714 and 2715 (signs for indicating emergency telephone box).

The aim of the changes is to better inform road users of the locations of emergency exits and telephones.

The Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 will further ensure that all traffic signage design, layout and citing is consistent with best practice recommendations regarding accessibility.

It is essential that all the aims/objectives of the policy be clearly and fully defined.

2.2 On whom will the policies/legislation impact? Please specify

Roads users and, in particular, drivers of vehicles.

2.3 Who is responsible for (a) devising and (b) delivering the policy eg is it DRD, a Whitehall Department or EU? What is the relationship and have they considered this issue and any equality issues?

DRD

2.4 What linkages are there to other NI Departments/NDPBs in relation to this policy/legislation?

None

2.5 What data are available to facilitate the screening of this policy/legislation?

None

2.6 Is additional data required to facilitate screening? If so, give details of how and when it will be obtained.

No.

See Appendix 4 of the Equality Commission Practical Guidance on EQIA which provides a list of Sources of S75 data or speak to Central Statistics Research Branch, (Stephanie Harcourt ext 40878) or Equality Unit (Liz Stewart, ext 40867, or Ciaran Crosbie ext 40850).

Section 3 – Screening Analysis

In cases where there is no available quantitative evidence, you will need to take a pragmatic, common sense judgement as to whether the policy/legislation you are screening may have a particular/differential impact on any of the groups. Discussions with Equality Unit, Statistics Branch and organisations representing the Section 75 Groups will be important and helpful at this stage in obtaining qualitative evidence of impacts. Every effort should be made to ensure that assessments are evidence based.

The following criteria must be considered when screening.

3.1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by the following Section 75 groups?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Sex		X
Disability		X
Dependency		X

Please give details

The proposed Regulations do not implement a new policy or a change to an existing policy. Neither do they implement any new restrictions, prohibitions or requirements. They simply prescribe the shape, colour, size and meaning of four new traffic signs.

3.2 Is there evidence that any of the following Section 75 groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

	Yes	No
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Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Sex		X
Disability		X
Dependency		X

Please give details

See answer to 3.1.

- 3.3 Have consultations with the relevant representative organisations or individuals within any of the Section 75 categories, indicated that policies of this type create problems specific to them?**

	Yes	No
Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Sex		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X

Please give details of any consultation carried out, and any problems identified.

No consultations have been carried out in respect of the proposed Regulations.

- 3.4 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or community relations by altering the policy, or by working with others, in Government, or in the larger community in the context of this policy?**

No.

Please give details

See answer to 3.1.

- 3.5 It may be that a policy/legislation has a differential impact on a certain Section 75 group, as the policy has been developed to address an existing or historical inequality or disadvantage. If this is the case, please give details below:**

This legislation is not being developed to address an existing or historical inequality.

3.6 Please consider if there is any way of adapting the policy to promote better equality of opportunity or good relations.

Please give details

See answer to 3.1.

Section 4

EQIA Recommendation

You should consider carefully in this section whether full EQIA is necessary, particularly where answers to any questions in Section 3 are affirmative.

4.1 Full EQIA procedures should be carried out on policies considered to have significant implications for equality of opportunity. Please fill in the following grid in relation to the policy/legislation.

Prioritisation Factors	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact
Social Need.			X
Effect on people's daily lives.			X
Effect on economic, social and human rights.			X
Strategic significance			X
Financial significance			X

Please give details

The Regulations will have a very low impact on the categories above. The signs will be placed only at specific locations where a need has been identified.

4.2 In view of the considerations in Section 3 and 4 do you consider that this policy/legislation should be subject to a full EQIA? Please give reasons for your considerations. If you are unsure, please consult with affected groups and revisit the screening analysis accordingly. Yes/No/Unsure

No..

4.3 If an EQIA is considered necessary please comment on the priority and timing in light of the factors in table 4.1.

N/A.

4.4 If an EQIA is considered necessary is any data required to carry it out/ ensure effective monitoring?

N/A.

Signed: Richard Newell

Division: Roads Service Headquarters (Lands and Legislation)

Date: 8 January 2007

PLEASE FORWARD A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM TO:

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