

Screening flowchart and template

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.

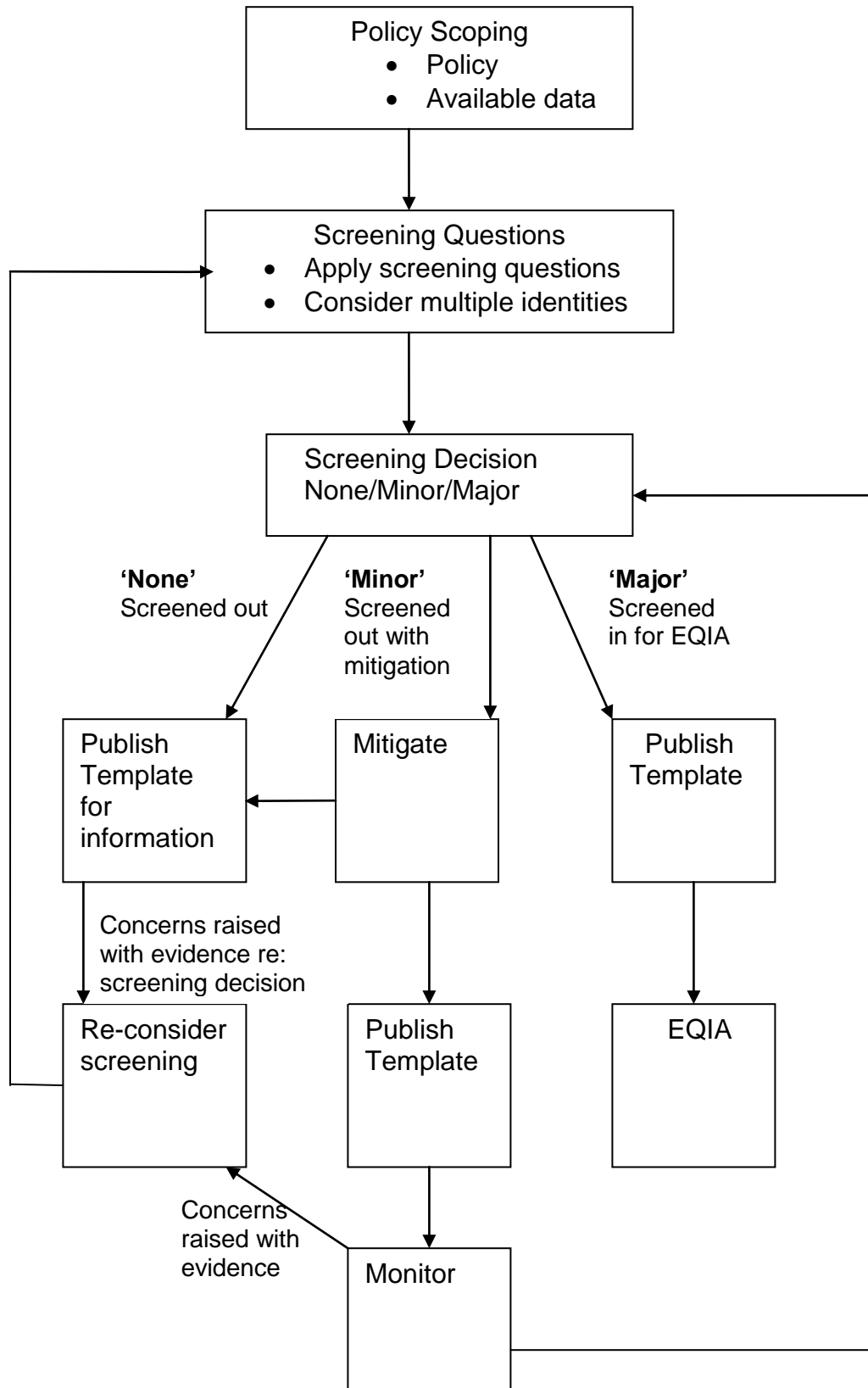
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

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.

A screening flowchart is provided overleaf.



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

NIAO Attendance Management Procedure

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revised

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

The procedure is intended to provide advice and information for both line managers and staff on matters relating to sick absence. It sets out the procedures to be followed by staff, line managers and HR (Corporate Services - Human Resources) in reporting and monitoring attendance in the Office.

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

If so, explain how.

No

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Northern Ireland Audit
Office.

Who owns and who implements the policy? Northern Ireland Audit Office

Implementation factors

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

None

If yes, are they

- financial
- legislative
- other, please specify _____

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations
- voluntary/community/trade unions
- other, please specify ___contractors_____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?

Disciplinary Policy

Grievance Policy

- who owns them?

Northern Ireland Audit Office

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.

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

| Section 75 category | Details of evidence/information |
|----------------------------|---|
| Religious belief | No evidence either qualitative or quantitative (sickness absence statistics) to suggest that procedures negatively impacts specific religious belief |
| Political opinion | This information is not collected by the Northern Ireland Audit Office |
| Racial group | No evidence either qualitative or quantitative (sickness absence statistics) to suggest that internal procedures negatively impacts racial opinion |
| Age | No evidence either qualitative or quantitative (sickness absence statistics) to suggest that internal procedures negatively impacts age. |
| Marital status | No evidence either qualitative or quantitative (sickness absence statistics) to suggest that internal procedures negatively impacts marital status |
| Sexual orientation | This information is not collected by the Northern Ireland Audit Office |
| Men and women generally | No evidence either qualitative or quantitative (spend, number of complaints) to suggest that internal procedures negatively impacts specific section 75 groups |
| Disability | No evidence either qualitative or quantitative (spend, number of complaints) to suggest that internal procedures negatively impacts specific section 75 groups |
| Dependants | This information is not collected by the Northern Ireland Audit Office |

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 for each of the Section 75 categories

| Section 75 category | Details of needs/experiences/priorities |
|----------------------------|---|
| Religious belief | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Political opinion | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Racial group | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Age | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Marital status | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Sexual orientation | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Men and women generally | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |
| Disability | Reasonable adjustments will be considered as necessary |
| Dependants | No evidence of specific needs or priorities in relation to this policy. |

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

| 1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Section 75 category | Details of policy impact | Level of impact? minor/major/none |
| Religious belief | | none |
| Political opinion | | none |
| Racial group | | none |
| Age | | none |
| Marital status | | none |
| Sexual orientation | | none |
| Men and women generally | | minor |
| Disability | | minor |
| Dependants | | none |

| 2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? | | |
|---|--|--|
| Section 75 category | If Yes , provide details | If No , provide reasons |
| Religious belief | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Political opinion | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Racial group | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Age | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Marital status | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Sexual orientation | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Men and women generally | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for managing attendance |
| Disability | Reasonable adjustments will be considered when necessary | |
| | | No – internal procedure setting out responsibilities for |

| | | |
|------------|--|---------------------|
| Dependants | | managing attendance |
|------------|--|---------------------|

| 3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Good relations category | Details of policy impact | Level of impact minor/major/none |
| Religious belief | No impact | none |
| Political opinion | No impact | none |
| Racial group | No impact | none |

| 4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Good relations category | If Yes , provide details | If No , provide reasons |
| Religious belief | | No – internal procedure based on best practice and legislation |
| Political opinion | | No – internal procedure based on best practice and legislation |
| Racial group | | No – internal procedure based on best practice and legislation |

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).

No impact on those falling within more than one section 75 category.

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

Part 3. Screening decision

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

Screened out with mitigation. Internal procedure based on best practice and legislation. Steps have been taken within the policy to address potential equality issues arising from disability and pregnancy related illness.

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.

Procedure has been mitigated with specific reference to disability and pregnancy related illness.

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

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 procedure is an internal document based on best practice and legislation applicable to staff within the NIAO only. The procedure has been amended to include specific reference to disability and pregnancy related illness which research suggests are two groups most likely to be impacted by an attendance policy.

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 | Rating (1-3) |
|--|--------------|
| 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

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.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

| Screened by: | Position/Job Title | Date |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Roisin McKeating | Head of HR | 29.03.12 |
| Approved by: | | |
| Janet Sides | AAG | 29.03.12 |

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.