



Equality Screening Report

Section 75 & Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Revised Equality Scheme 2016

Human Resources
August 2016

Protecting Our Community

Equality screening under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Background

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75) NIFRS has a specific statutory obligation as a public authority to have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the following groups:

Section 75	Categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;• men and women generally;• persons with a disability and persons without; and• persons with dependants and persons without.	

Under Schedule 9 of the Act, NIFRS must also have regard to the promotion of good relations between those of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. Our Equality Scheme explains how we implement our Section 75 obligations. A copy of the most recent Scheme, approved by the Equality Commission, is available on our website at www.nifrs.org/equality.

We are required under Section 75 to screen and, where necessary, conduct Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) on strategies, policies, plans and key decisions. The primary function of screening is to assess whether policy proposals would have a differential impact and in particular, an adverse differential impact on the categories of persons listed in Section 75, and any sub-groups within these categories.¹ If a policy shows a possible 'adverse impact' on any group, we must consider how this might be reduced. This would include how an alternative policy or approach might lessen this effect and serve to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies e.g. relating to our employees and to external policies relating to the community we serve.

Equality screening involves gathering evidence on the potential impacts of the proposal, focusing on the nine Section 75 equality groups. This information is used to help inform the 'screening decision', i.e. whether a full EQIA is required where a potential for *significant* impact on equality of opportunity has been identified.

¹ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment' April 2001 (revised 2005)

Section 75 equality screening outcomes are defined in terms of impact e.g. **‘major’**, **‘minor’** or **‘none’**. Possible screening decision outcomes are as follows:

Section 75	Equality Screening Outcomes
<p>If the conclusion is that there is a ‘major’ impact for one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should be given to carrying out a full EQIA (<i>described as ‘screened in for EQIA’</i>).</p> <p>If the conclusion is ‘minor’ for one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an EQIA, or to measures/ amendments to mitigate the adverse impact; or to consider an alternative policy (<i>described as ‘screened out for EQIA – with mitigation’</i>).</p> <p>Where the conclusion is ‘none’ in that no significant impact has been identified on all of the Section 75 categories, then decision can be taken to not proceed with a full EQIA (<i>described as ‘screened out for EQIA – no mitigation’</i>).</p>	
Section 75	A conclusion in favour of a ‘major’ impact would arise when:-
<p>a) The policy shows actual or potential for unlawful discrimination.</p>	
Section 75	A conclusion in favour of a ‘minor’ impact would arise when:-
<p>b) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;</p> <p>c) 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;</p> <p>d) Any equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people; and</p> <p>e) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.</p>	
Section 75	A conclusion in favour of ‘none’ e.g. no impact, would arise when:-
<p>a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations; and</p> <p>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 Section 75 equality and good relations categories.</p>	

The Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) screening report on the Revised Equality Scheme has indicated no significant adverse impact for any of the Section 75 groups and decision has been taken ‘screen out’.

NIFRS Section 75 Screening Report on the Revised Equality Scheme 2016

Part 1: Policy Scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy or policy area. Policy scoping helps 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.

You should note that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for NIFRS), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by NIFRS).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy or policy area:

Revised Equality Scheme 2016

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy/policy area?

Existing	Revised	New
	X	

Brief Description

NIFRS has had a statutory Equality Scheme in place since 2011 and a number of revisions have taken place since then. In 2016 the 'Equality Scheme and Action Plan' was updated to maintain statutory compliance with the Section 75 equality duties and to reflect changes to the NIFRS Board and management structure.

The format and content of the revised Scheme follow the model scheme suggested by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

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

The Equality Scheme sets out how NIFRS intends to implement the requirements of the Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 statutory equality duties. The intended aim of the revised Scheme is to provide up to date detail on the mechanisms that NIFRS will implement to support mainstreaming equality into all of its functions. Revision to the Scheme has resulted in a number of changes:

Amendments made:

- Foreword – slight revisions relating to training and an expansion of our duties in paragraph 2.
- **Chapter 1 – Introduction - Who we are and what we do**
Paragraph 2, 3 and 4 have been amended to reflect the current management structure.
- Paragraph 6 gives a greater overview of some of the Operational activity undertaken by NIFRS. Statistics provided on Home Fire Safety Checks and Road Traffic Collisions
- **Chapter 2 - Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 duties**
Page 9 – reflects changes to the Board and that Senior Management Team is now referred to as the Corporate Management Team
Page 10 – reflects the changes to names of Directorates. Amendment of reference to organisational structure review. Accountability structure now refers to Department of Health and not DHSSPS
Page 11 – new reference to Equality & Inclusion Steering Group (previously Equality & Diversity Forum) – now to be chaired by Chief Executive not Board Member.
Page 11 – now states Director of HR not HR Manager EIL has responsibility for implementation of the Scheme in discharge of Boards duties under Section 75
Page 13 – refers to new composition of E&I Steering Group
Page 13 – further expansion of info on Audit of Inequalities
- **Chapter 5 – Staff Training**
5.3 – slight revision to training objectives
5.6 – monitoring and evaluation – revision to last paragraph. Equality & Inclusion Steering Group review of further training needs requirements through engagement with Area Command, Headquarters and Training & Organisational Development line managers.
Chapter 8 – Our complaints Procedure
- **Revision to para 8.3**
Director of HR now Complaints Officer for complaints relating to NIFRS failure to comply with Scheme. Formerly Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Protection).
Appendix 1 – Organisation Chart amended to reflect current structure.
Appendix 3 – List of Consultees updated

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

YES	NO	N/A
X		

If YES, explain how:

The revised Equality Scheme 2016 sets out the arrangements for NIFRS for implementing Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 into all of its functions. The Scheme is written in the interests of all 9 equality categories both within the workforce and amongst service-users.

Who initiated or wrote the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

The Scheme was developed by the HR Manager Equality Inclusion & Legal in line with the model scheme recommended by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Who owns and who implements the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

The revised NIFRS Equality Scheme is owned by the NIFRS Board. The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer, as Equal Opportunities Officer, is responsible for ensuring the Scheme is corporately recognised and maintained. The Director of HR is responsible for ensuring strategic compliance with Scheme requirements.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the NIFRS Equality Scheme?

YES	NO	N/A
X		

If YES, are they

Financial? YES/NO (If YES, please detail)

Financial factors that would contribute to successful implementation of the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

Sufficient budget allocation required to enable training of all employees on Section 75 awareness; to facilitate screening processes and to support wide ranging stakeholder engagement and consultation methodologies

Financial factors that would detract from successful implementation of the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

Potential for unforeseen significant in-year cuts that negatively impact on resourcing of training, screening and engagement.

Legislative?: YES/NO (If YES, please detail)

Legislative factors that would contribute to successful implementation of the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

As a public authority, it is a statutory requirement for NIFRS to have an up to date Equality Scheme and Action Plan in place and to submit annual progress reports on Section 75 and Schedule 9 progress, along with progress in meeting the disability equality duties under the Disability Discrimination Order 2006.

Legislative factors that would detract from successful implementation of the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

Any instance where NIFRS breaches the Equality Scheme resulting in complaint under the complaints process outlined in the Scheme; or any breaches of anti-discrimination legislation resulting in fair employment or industrial relations claims against the Service, or where NIFRS is impeded in fulfilling its statutory compliance by the actions of other parties or due to budget constraints.

Other, please specify:

Other factors that would contribute to successful implementation of the revised NIFRS Equality Scheme

- Board, Corporate Management Team and Senior Management Team awareness and support for Equality Scheme requirements eg screening at early stages of policy development/review; early stakeholder engagement; inclusion of Section 75 training in Directorate and operational training plans
- Resourcing of Equality, Inclusion & Legal function to ensure guidance and advice fully available to lead officers and employees; and consultation and engagement methodologies progressed appropriately
- Awareness and training delivered across all employee groups.

Main stakeholders affected

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

Employees:

- NIFRS Board
- The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
- The Director of HR
- HR Manager Equality Inclusion & Legal
- HR Advisors Equality Inclusion & Legal
- All employees

Service users:

NIFRS serves the entire population of Northern Ireland (1.81million). The Equality Scheme relates to NIFRS promoting equality in all of its functions for individuals on the basis of Section 75 group:

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

Under Schedule 9 NIFRS is also required to seek to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group eg as a public authority contribute to tackling racism and sectarianism in our society.

Other public sector organisations:

The Department of Health, (DoH) sets out the financial, legislative and policy framework within which NIFRS operates. This extends to ensuring NIFRS meets its legal obligations in relation to equality and inclusion.

Voluntary/community/trade unions:

The Representative Bodies have an interest in how NIFRS implements equality, fairness and inclusion for their Members during the course of their employment.

Other, please specify:

Not applicable.

Other policies with a bearing on these documents

What are they and who owns them?

NIFRS has other equality related documents:

- Equality & Inclusion Statement and Equal Opportunities Policy
- Joint Declaration of Protection & Good and Harmonious Working Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Discipline Policy & Procedure;
- Equality & Diversity Strategy 2010-2020
- Disability Action Plan 2016
- Consultation Strategy
- Transgender Awareness Guide and Information Guide for Managers

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 relevant Section 75 categories.

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
All Section 75 categories	<p>NIFRS has not had any complaints under the Equality Scheme in the last ten years.</p> <p>In terms of NIFRS workforce there are areas of under-representation notably in relation to gender, disability and ethnic minority groups. The NIFRS overall workforce is 90% male and 10% female. Of total employees 55% are Protestant, 40% are Catholic and 5% non-determined. The minority ethnic composition remains at 0.2% and 6% of employees consider themselves to have a disability (taken from a Section 75 staff profile survey). The current economically active ethnic population (migrant or second generation ethnic) in Northern Ireland is 0.7%.</p> <p>NIFRS uses standardised Section 75 screening templates designed collaboratively with Health & Social Care colleagues who meet as part of the DoH Equality & Human Rights Steering Group.</p> <p>Screening and consultation processes are embedded in NIFRS and are led by the HR Manager Equality, Inclusion & Legal.</p> <p>No evidence is available to suggest any adverse impact on employees/service users as a result of the revised Equality Scheme.</p>
Persons of different religious belief/ political opinion/ racial group/age	<p>NIFRS has a number of Community Protection initiatives and strategies which support the fostering Good Relations in the community whilst delivering on the Service's statutory remit, under the Fire Services Order 2006, to educate and inform the community.</p> <p>In addition to this, specific initiatives are targeted on grounds of age and also vulnerability eg youth engagement initiatives, Local Intervention Fire Education Schemes, People at Risk Strategy, Road Safety Strategy.</p> <p>NIFRS also facilitates Cadet Schemes for young persons at various station locations across Northern Ireland and strives to ensure these are inclusive of the local community.</p>

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
Persons with disabilities	<p>Employees and service users will have an expectation that NIFRS will make the Equality Scheme available in alternative formats upon request.</p>
All 9 categories	<p>Both internal and external stakeholders will expect NIFRS to adhere to its statutory commitments outlined in the Equality Scheme in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting • Assessing, monitoring and publishing the impacts of its policies • Ensuring and assessing public access to information and services NIFRS provides • Timetable for measures proposed • Training for staff • Complaints Procedure for breaches of the Scheme <p>In relation to NIFRS strategies on service delivery that have a specific bearing on service-users including but not limited to, for example, NIFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan; Emergency Response Standards; Community Development Strategy; stakeholders will have an expectation to be informed and engaged with at an early stage in strategy development and/or review.</p> <p>NIFRS will also maintain an annually reviewed equality Consultee List to ensure details on the representative Section 75 audience is up to date.</p> <p>NIFRS engaged with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and also with the Representative Bodies in relation to the revised Scheme. The Equality Commission verbally responded and noted that NIFRS had followed the model recommended by the Commission and it was content that the revisions were a matter of updating the Scheme as opposed to substantially changing the structure or content.</p> <p>NIPSA responded to highlight the absence of reference to support employees and their key contribution to service delivery and sought clarification on training and support for lead officers on training. NIPSA also suggested that examples of quantitative and qualitative data that could be gathered should be provided. The Union also comments in relation to the format and structure of the Scheme.</p> <p>NIFRS acted on these comments and further amended the Scheme accordingly.</p>

Part 2: Screening Questions

Introduction

1. If the conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 categories, then you may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out', you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.
2. If the conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to an EQIA.
3. If the conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an EQIA, or to measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or an alternative policy.

Taking into account the earlier evidence, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity / good relations for those affected by this policy, by applying the following screening questions and the 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 grounds? Minor/Major/None

Section 75 Category	Details of impact of revised NIFRS Equality Scheme	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Political opinion	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Racial / ethnic group	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Age	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Marital status	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Sexual orientation	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Men and women generally	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None
Disability	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact. NIFRS recognises that accessible formats of the Equality Scheme may be required on request	Minor
Dependants	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact	None

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories?		
Section 75 Category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Persons with disabilities	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact. NIFRS recognises that accessible formats of the Equality Scheme may be required on request	

3. To what extent are the documents 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	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact.	None
Political opinion	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive impact.	None
Racial group	The Revised NIFRS Equality Scheme intends to deliver a positive 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
		None

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).

None identified at this stage. Screening of all NIFRS policies includes consideration of impacts on groups from a multiple identity perspective.

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

None identified at this stage.

Part 3: Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please underline one):

1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)?
2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)?
3. Be subject to an EQIA?

If 1. or 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?

Not applicable.

In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative policy at a future date? YES / NO

If YES, when & why?

Not applicable

If 3. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

Not applicable

Timetabling and Prioritising EQIA

If 3, are the documents affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? YES/ NO

If YES, please provide details:

The revised Equality Scheme may be subject to further review at the request of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland as part of a good practice quinquennial review programme for all public authorities, or any other need for review as a result of legislative amendment to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabling the EQIA. On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policies in terms of its priority for EQIA.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	Not applicable
Social need	Not applicable
Effect on people's daily lives	Not applicable
Relevance to a public authority's functions	Not applicable

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist you in timetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in the quarterly Section 75 report.

Proposed date for commencing EQIA: Not Applicable

Any further comments on the screening process and any subsequent actions?

The NIFRS Board considered the amendments to the revised Equality Scheme and approved it on 25 October 2016.

The revised amendments are minor in nature and no further impact assessment is required at this stage.

Part 4: Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development. You should consider the guidance contained in the Equality 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, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

It is proposed that the NIFRS Equality Scheme is reviewed triennially in line with the NIFRS Policy Development Framework, or earlier if deemed necessary. Review should be programmed for the 2019/2020 financial year.

Part 5: Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Adèle Davidson	HR Manager (Equality, Inclusion & Legal)	March 2017
Approved by:		
David Moore	Director of HR	March 2017

Note: A copy of the Screening Report for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy. The Policy Lead Officer will have involved the HR Manager (Equality, Inclusion & Legal) from the outset and will make the Report accessible on the NIFRS website following completion. This is in compliance with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland requirements.