

# Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

The Patient and Client Council is required to address the 4 questions below in relation to all its policies.

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)

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

To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)

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

# SCREENING TEMPLATE

See [Guidance Notes](#) for further information on the 'why' 'what' 'when', and 'who' in relation to screening, for background information on the relevant legislation and for help in answering the questions on this template.

## (1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

<b>1.1 Title of policy or decision</b>  PCC Social Media Policy
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<b>1.2 Description of policy or decision</b>  <p>The policy's purpose is to protect the PCC, its staff and service users by minimising the associated business, legal and personal risks.</p> <p>The PCC uses Social Media platforms and fora as part of its communication with internal staff, and external customers and stakeholders. This policy lays out the good practice in the use of social media, and measures to eradicate unacceptable use.</p> <p>The policy also ensures that freedom of expression can be maintained and balanced against reputational and information governance risks. PCC staff are the organisation's best ambassadors so the policy aims to support the responsible use of social media, not restrict it. It should enable staff to get the best out of the available tools whilst maintaining a safe professional environment and protecting both themselves and the organisation.</p>
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<b>1.3 Main stakeholders affected (internal and external)</b>  This policy applies to the following groups:
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- staff of PCC and Council members including permanent and temporary staff;
- agency staff;
- The Public and all Public Bodies
  - Act 1998HSC Service Users

### 1.3 Other policies or decisions with a bearing on this policy or decision

#### Regionally:

Legislation: Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. Owner:  
N/A

#### Locally:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Working Well Together Policy
- Information Governance Policy
- Your Right to Raise a Concern
- Conflict, Bullying and Harassment Disciplinary Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Code of Practice on Protecting the Confidentiality of Service User Information [DHSSPS 2012]
- Defamation Act (1996);
- Protection from Harassment Order (1996);
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018);
- Department of Health circulars

**(2) CONSIDERATION OF EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS ISSUES AND EVIDENCE USED**

**2.1 Data gathering**

**What information did you use to inform this equality screening? For example previous consultations, statistics, research, Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), complaints. Provide details of how you involved stakeholders, views of colleagues, service users, staff side or other stakeholders.**

PCC Workforce Data (Sep 2024)  
Northern Ireland Census 2021

**2.2 Quantitative Data**

**Who is affected by the policy or decision? Please provide a statistical profile. Note if policy affects both staff and service users, please provide profile for both. Also give consideration to multiple identities. Date of data - Sept 2023.**

<b>Category</b>	<i>What is the makeup of the affected group? ( %) Are there any issues or problems? For example, a lower uptake that needs to be addressed or greater involvement of a particular group?</i>						
<b>NI CENSUS 2021: IN PROFILE - POPULATION</b>							
Population Profile (% population unless stated), 2021 Census							
	<b>0-15</b>	<b>16-24</b>	<b>25-34</b>	<b>35-44</b>	<b>45-54</b>	<b>55-64</b>	<b>65+</b>
<b>Age</b>	19%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	17%
	<b>F</b>		<b>M</b>				
<b>Sex</b>	51%		49%				
			<b>Protestant or Other</b>				
	<b>Catholic (Note 1)</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Other</b>			

<b>Religion/ Religion brought up in</b>	46%	43%	2%	9%	
<hr/>					
	<b>White</b>	<b>Other</b>			
<b>Ethnic Group</b>	97%	3%			
<hr/>					
	<b>British Only</b>	<b>Irish Only</b>	<b>Northern Irish Only</b>	<b>Other</b>	
<b>National Identity</b>	32%	29%	20%	19%	
<hr/>					
	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Other European countries</b>	<b>Other countries in the world</b>	
<b>Passports held</b>	52.6%	32.3%	3.9%	1.6%	
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	<b>English</b>	<b>Main language not English</b>			
<b>Main language</b>	95.4%	4.6%			
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	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>Other EU Countries</b>	<b>Republic of Ireland</b>	<b>Other countries in the world</b>
<b>Country of birth</b>	86.5%	4.8%	4%	2%	3%

	<b>PCC Staff</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	Male	33.33%	
	Female	66.67%	
<b>Age Group</b>	16-24	0.00%	
	25-29	0.00%	
	30-34	11.90%	
	35-39	9.52%	
	40-44	9.52%	

	45-49	19.05%	
	50-54	9.52%	
	55-59	21.43%	
	60-64	11.90%	
	>=65	7.14%	
Community Background	Perceived Protestant	2.38%	
	Protestant	9.52%	
	Perceived Roman Catholic	2.38%	
	Roman Catholic	38.10%	
	Neither	9.52%	
	Perceived Neither	0.00%	
	Not assigned	38.10%	
Marital Status	Divorced	4.76%	
	Mar/CP	21.43%	
	Other	2.38%	
	Separated	0.00%	
	Single	14.29%	
	Unknown	57.14%	
	Widow/R	0.00%	
	Not assigned	0.00%	
Ethnicity	Not assigned	69.05%	
	White	30.95%	
	Other	0.00%	
	Black African	0.00%	
	Indian	0.00%	
	Chinese	0.00%	
Disability	No	26.19%	
	Not assigned	66.67%	
	Yes	7.14%	
Dependents	Yes	14.29%	
	Not assigned	76.19%	
	No	9.52%	
Sexual Orientation	Do not wish to answer	7.14%	
	Not assigned	69.05%	
	Opposite sex	23.81%	
	Both Sexes	0.00%	
	same sex	0.00%	
Political Opinion	Broadly Nationalist	14.29%	
	Other	7.14%	
	Broadly Unionist	0.00%	
	Not assigned	71.43%	
	Do not wish to answer	7.14%	

## 2.3 Qualitative Data

**What are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the categories in relation to this policy or decision and what equality issues emerge from this? Note if policy affects both staff and service users, please discuss issues for both. Also give consideration to multiple identities (such as single parents for example).**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Needs and Experiences</i>
Gender	Evidence shows that females use social media more in personal use, however males more for business use. Social Media policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use. However evidence shows that females are more expressive about personal views on social media and may be more affected by this policy. However, this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but rather to promote the safe and secure use
Age	Evidence shows that the younger population traditionally and therefore younger employees used social media more frequently than older people. PCC to consider the needs of older people who may be key stakeholders, as older people may be more likely to be recipients of health and social care services and also more likely to be carers themselves and may have a particular interest in the work of the PCC and may require information and advice from PCC through other communication channels. However evidence shows that the increase use of social media affects all ages. There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as this policy are not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use
Religion	There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as the aim of this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use.
Political Opinion	There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as the aim of this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use.
Marital Status	There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as the aim of this policy

	is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use.
Dependent Status	There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as the aim of this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use.
Disability	Individuals with learning disabilities may be more likely to share personal information on social media, and are more vulnerable to the online exploitation. Individuals with sensory problems will have specific requirements with regards to communication of the policy. Also, those with learning difficulties may require additional support in order to get an understanding of how the policy works and the processes involved. There may be different needs for disabled people who are key stakeholders of the Council in relation to how they access information through the Council's social media platforms. We welcome the commitment of the Council to give consideration to the requirements and additional support for disabled people in respect of the outworking of the social media policy. However, again, the aim of this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use.
Ethnicity	There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as the aim of this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use. However there may also be additional specific needs in relation to the S75 category of Ethnicity and the language needs and requirements of those members of the public whose first language isn't English in relation to accessing news, information on the work of the PCC and services provided and invitations to events through the PCC social media platforms
Sexual Orientation	There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category as the aim of this policy is not to inhibit the use of social media but to promote the safe and secure use.

## 2.4 Multiple Identities

**Are there any potential impacts of the policy or decision on people with multiple identities? For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people.**

There are no further identified different needs or experiences on the basis of the 9 Equality groups.  
 While acknowledging that most people will fall under more than one identity, it is not anticipated the policy will impact directly on people with multiple identities. The Raising a Concern in the Public Interest (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure is being developed to set out the accountability and governance within PCC to encourage people to engage with the process for raising a concern and ensure they feel safe while doing so. It will apply to all individuals equally regardless of category.

## 2.5 Making Changes

**Based on the equality issues you identified in 2.2 and 2.3, what changes did you make or do you intend to make in relation to the policy or decision in order to promote equality of opportunity?**

<b><i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i></b>	<b><i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i></b>
<p>Disability: Given the additional needs of those with a Learning Disability in relation to internet safety and social media, the policy states that managers should make their staff aware of the policy, and what it contains.</p> <p>PCC commits to ensure that its communication channels, including social media platforms, are accessible to key stakeholders/members of the public/staff who may be older and /or from different ethnic backgrounds.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

<p>Consideration will be given to highlighting the main points/ safety issues from the policy with PCC staff at agency days and regular information governance awareness sessions. There are strict guidelines as to when this policy applies and on what bases disciplinary action would be taken..</p>	
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## 2.6 Good Relations

**What changes to the policy or decision – if any – or what additional measures would you suggest to ensure that it promotes good relations? (refer to guidance notes for guidance on impact)**

<b><i>Group</i></b>	<b><i>Impact</i></b>	<b><i>Suggestions</i></b>
Religion	None identified.	
Political Opinion	None identified.	
Ethnicity	None identified.	

**(3) SHOULD THE POLICY OR DECISION BE SUBJECT TO A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT?**

A full equality impact assessment (EQIA) is usually confined to those policies or decisions considered to have major implications for equality of opportunity

**How would you categorise the impacts of this decision or policy?  
(refer to guidance notes for guidance on impact)**

**Please tick:**

Major impact	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minor impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No further impact	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Do you consider that this policy or decision needs to be subjected to a full equality impact assessment?**

**Please tick:**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please give reasons for your decisions.

It is not felt that a full EQIA will highlight any further issues with regards to equality of opportunity for the Section 75 groups.

#### (4) CONSIDERATION OF DISABILITY DUTIES

##### 4.1 In what ways does the policy or decision encourage disabled people to participate in public life and what else could you do to do so?

<i>How does the policy or decision currently encourage disabled people to participate in public life?</i>	<i>What else could you do to encourage disabled people to participate in public life?</i>
Equality Commission Guidance <a href="#">Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life</a> includes advice in relation to social media and advocates the use of social media to raise awareness of public life positions and encourage disabled people to apply for public life positions.	

##### 4.2 In what ways does the policy or decision promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and what else could you do to do so?

<i>How does the policy or decision currently promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>	<i>What else could you do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>
Equality Commission Guidance <a href="#">Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life</a> includes advice in relation to social media and advocates the use of social media to raise awareness of public life positions and encourage disabled people to apply for public life positions.	

## (5) CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

### 5.1 Does the policy or decision affect anyone's Human Rights? Complete for each of the articles

ARTICLE	Yes/No
Article 2 – Right to life	No
Article 3 – Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	No
Article 4 – Right to freedom from slavery, servitude & forced or compulsory labour	No
Article 5 – Right to liberty & security of person	No
Article 6 – Right to a fair & public trial within a reasonable time	No
Article 7 – Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law	No
Article 8 – Right to respect for private & family life, home and correspondence.	No
Article 9 – Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion	No
Article 10 – Right to freedom of expression	Yes
Article 11 – Right to freedom of assembly & association	No
Article 12 – Right to marry & found a family	No
Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights	No
1 <sup>st</sup> protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property	No
1 <sup>st</sup> protocol Article 2 – Right of access to education	No

*If you have answered no to all of the above please move on to **Question 6** on monitoring*

**5.2 If you have answered yes to any of the Articles in 5.1, does the policy or decision interfere with any of these rights? If so, what is the interference and who does it impact upon?**

List the Article Number	Interfered with? Yes/No	What is the interference and who does it impact upon?	Does this raise legal issues?*
			Yes/No
10	Yes	Inhibited in line with promoting harmonious working environment and other organisational obligations.	No

*\* It is important to speak to your line manager on this and if necessary seek legal opinion to clarify this*

**5.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy or decision.**

Circulate to staff  
 Staff inductions  
 Publish in PCC Post

## (6) MONITORING

6.1 What data will you collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy or decision on any of the categories (for equality of opportunity and good relations, disability duties and human rights)?

Equality & Good Relations	Disability Duties	Human Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PCC have monitoring arrangements in place to monitor implementation of the outworking of the social media policy. For example, monitoring of complaints received, as per S75 category of the complainant, in respect of information posted/communicated through social media channels by the Council; and that staff compliance with the policy will also be monitored.</li></ul>		

Approved Lead Officer: Fionnuala Murphy  
Business and Governance Manager

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 15 May 2025

Policy/Decision Screened by: Fionnuala Murphy

**Please note that having completed the screening you are required by statute to publish the completed screening template, as per your organisation’s equality scheme. If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, you will need to review the screening decision.**

**Please forward completed template to:  
Equality.Unit@hscni.net**

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered.  
Please contact:

Email: [Equality.Unit@hscni.net](mailto:Equality.Unit@hscni.net) Telephone: 028 9536 3961