

Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council is required to address the 4 questions below in relation to all its policies. This template sets out a proforma to document consideration of each question.

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?

As part of the audit trail documentation needs to be made available for all policies and decisions examined for equality and human rights implications. The screening template is a pro forma to document consideration of each screening question.

For information (evidence, data, research etc.) on the Section 75 equality groups see the Equality Portal - [Screening Resources & Evidence](#).

For advice and support on screening contact:
Equality Unit|BSO|James House|2-4 Cromac Avenue|Belfast|BT7 2JA
Tel: 028 9536 3961

SCREENING TEMPLATE

(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

1.1 Title of policy or decision

Agile Working Policy

1.2 Description of policy or decision

- **what is it trying to achieve? (aims and objectives)**
- **how will this be achieved? (key elements)**
- **what are the key constraints? (for example financial, legislative or other)**

Following extension consultation with all staff over an 18-month period, and a pilot which ran from 2 May - 31 October 2022, all staff collectively designed an agile working approach to deliver the business and support all staff to work in an agile way.

The Policy provides for an approach based on our values and a range of behaviours including trust and individual and organisational maturity.

Staff opt into the Policy and may also opt out. Managers may remove access to the Policy for capability reasons. Those opting into the Policy must sign up to the arrangements set out in the Policy and the values and behaviours expected.

Staff's base remains the office and their Terms and Conditions remain office based. This is not a work from home policy.

1.3 Main stakeholders affected (internal and external)

For example staff, actual or potential service users, other public sector organisations, voluntary and community groups, trade unions or professional organisations or private sector organisations or others

- All Social Care Council staff (permanent, fixed term, part-time, agency)

1.4 Other policies or decisions with a bearing on this policy or decision

- **what are they?**
- **who owns them?**

- Business Transition Plan;
- Terms and Conditions;
- Flexi Scheme;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Special Leave Policy.

(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.

The Social Care Council carried out numerous Pulse Surveys with its staff and also carried out several online all staff events, including a face to face event (in October) to ascertain how staff were managing working remotely and how we move forward with a Policy.

- 10 Pulse Surveys
- 26 Townhalls (these are events where all staff come together [online or in person] to discuss work and other events and issues)
- 3 Agile Working Pilots (over 2020 - 2022); and
- Agile Working Pilot to try out the Policy approach - May to October 2022

We also carried out a survey about how agile working supported those with the menopause (or perimenopause). 100% of those surveyed indicated that the flexible working helped them manage symptoms including fatigue.

Staff were engaged in relation to –

- Mental health
- Psychological health
- Social health
- Physical disability needs
- Caring responsibilities
- IT and other skills
- Communications, connections and engagement

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.

Category	<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>
Gender	Social Care Council Workforce – majority are female Female = 67%; Male = 33%
Age	Social Care Council Workforce – Aged 24 and under (3.8%) 25 – 34 years (32.1%) 35 – 44 years (13.2%) 45 – 54 years (26.4%) 55 years and over (24.5%)
Religion	Social Care Council workforce: Catholic = 45% Protestant = 42% Not assigned = 13%
Political Opinion	Social Care Council workforce: Broadly Nationalist = 3.8% Broadly Unionist = 7.6%

	<p>Other = 1.9% Not assigned = 81.1% Do not wish to answer = 5.7%</p>
Marital Status	<p>Social Care Council workforce - Anecdotal evidence suggests that at least half of the employees are married/co-habiting</p>
Dependent Status	<p>Social Care Council workforce - Anecdotal evidence suggests that at least half of the employees have dependents). Yes = 9.4% No = 9.4% Not assigned = 81.1%</p> <p>Census data also shows that 3.11% provided 50 hours care or more. Almost 2 in 5 households (40.29%) contained a least one person with a long – term health problem or a disability. In the last Census, 33.86% of households contained dependent children.</p>
Disability	<p>Social Care Council workforce - Less than 5% of the workforce have declared a disability No = 67.9%; Yes = 3.8%; Not assigned = 28.3%</p>
Ethnicity	<p>Social Care Council workforce – less than 5% of the workforce: White = 75.5% Not assigned = 24.5%</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Social Care Council workforce – less than 5% of the workforce: Opposite sex = 18.87% Not assigned = 81.1%</p>

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.

Category	Needs and Experiences
Gender	Women who responded to the menopause survey indicated a

	positive experience of the pilot in enabling them to manage their symptoms better. Females are also more likely to be carers than their male counterparts and with 2/3rds of the organisation's workforce being female - the benefits of what the policy brings about in terms of flexibility and agility are particularly important.
Age	Members of staff approaching retirement age might wish to work more flexibly and this policy supports that.
Religion	The flexibility of the policy enables staff to manage their time for religious observance.
Political Opinion	There are no identified different needs or experiences on the basis of political opinion.
Marital Status	There are no identified different needs or experiences on the basis of marital status.
Dependent Status	<p>Staff with caring responsibilities have highlighted the impact of working from the office and managing these responsibilities. This included putting in place appropriate child care, and being able to collect children from school or look after a parent, taking them to medical and other appointments, and the need therefore for flexibility and agility in the approach.</p> <p>The Agile Working Policy allows manager flexibility to support short term needs for staff who may require operating arrangements outside of the pilot for a specified period of time.</p>
Disability	<p>Staff with a disability will be supported to carry out their work in a way that is safe and delivers the business. Each case will be managed in its own right to this end. However managers and staff need to be aware that agile working may be a reasonable adjustment in some cases to meet the needs of staff with a particular disability.</p> <p>Staff with certain sensory or learning disabilities may require communication support or materials provided in an alternative format.</p>
Ethnicity	There are no identified different needs or experiences on the basis of ethnicity.
Sexual Orientation	There are no identified different needs or experiences on the basis of sexual orientation.

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 issues identified for multiple identities.

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?

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<p>The Agile working policy provides for additional flexibility for those who require it for a specified period of time.</p> <p>Arrangements will be made for face to face engagement with registrants on an exceptional basis if they are unable to do this online.</p> <p><u>Disability:</u></p> <p>In August 2020 it was recognised that some staff needed an alternative work space to support their mental health wellbeing and the office was therefore made available from that time for that reason.</p> <p>Issues relating to accessible information for people with disabilities are considered in our Accessible Formats Policy</p> <p><u>Dependant Status</u></p> <p>Staff have been reminded to avail of the full range of policies that support carers – in addition staff were provided with time to plan for agile</p>	<p>The other policies (special leave, etc. will be actively promoted to all.</p> <p>Staff will be advised about how to provide support in this way and under which circumstances.</p>

<p>working ahead of the introduction of the agile pilot and policy.</p> <p><u>Ethnicity:</u></p> <p>Issues relating to accessible information for people whose first language is not English are considered in our Accessible Formats Policy</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)

<i>Group</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
Religion	None identified at this stage	
Political Opinion	None identified at this stage	
Ethnicity	None identified at this stage	

(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

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

Please tick:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
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No	✓
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Please give reasons for your decisions.

The issues identified through screening have been addressed. It is not felt that an EQIA will illustrate any further equality issues with the plan.

(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>
There are no opportunities identified	

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>
None identified	

(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	No
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 st protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property	No
1 st 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

** 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.

None identified

(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
We will monitor uptake in the policy including office attendance and the application of the policy.		

Approved Lead Officer: Sandra Stranaghan
Position: Head of Business Services
Date: 31 October 2022
Policy/Decision Screened by: Senior Leadership Team

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:

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