



EQUALITY SCREENING TEMPLATE

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

(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

1.1 Title of policy (incl. doc. reference number) or decision :

NIBTS Working from Home Policy

1.2 Description of policy or decision

- **what is it trying to achieve? (aims and objectives)**

This policy is intended to provide guidance and good practice to enable employees to work from home effectively and safely. It is intended to assist both managers and employees in implementing working from home by highlighting areas for consideration and providing practical advice and information.

To work effectively, any working from home arrangement must primarily meet the business needs of NIBTS, followed by the individual needs of employees, to ultimately ensure the continued delivery of safe and high quality services.

It is accepted that this policy cannot be applied to all roles within NIBTS. Where service needs can accommodate, this policy is applicable to permanent, temporary, full time and part time employees and may on some occasions be extended to Agency Workers. The relevant Senior Manager / Head of Department will determine that working from home arrangements will be viable.

- **how will this be achieved? (key elements)**

- In accordance with government guidance in response to COVID-19 and any other public health/government recommendations
- To facilitate social distancing in the offices
- Requested by the employee as part of a flexible working arrangement;
- Agreed time away from a work base to complete work uninterrupted;
- As part of a reasonable accommodation for employees with a disability;

These circumstances are not exhaustive as there may be other situations when homeworking options may be explored.

- **what are the key constraints? (for example financial, legislative or other)**

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

**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

- Current NIBTS employees
- Trade union representatives.
- NIBTS Agency Staff

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

- **what are they?**
- **who owns them?**
- Inspire Wellbeing Hub (<https://www.inspiresupporthub.org/>)
- NIBTS Accessible Formats Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Capability Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality Scheme
- Code of Conduct Policy
- PHA COVID Questions and Answers
- Partial Retirement Policy
- Legislative changes
- Work life Balance



(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.

- Organisation wide staff equality data
- Census data (2011)
- Engagement with Trade Union colleagues conducted via Joint Negotiating forums (JNF) and other meetings with representation of the section 75 groups
- Engagement with Tapestry members re: COVID-19 and working life
- University College London (UCL) and Sussex University (2020) The mental health and experiences of discrimination of LGBTQ+ people during the COVID-19 pandemic: Initial findings from the Quarantine Study. Summary available at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/aug/05/lockdown-having-pernicious-impact-on-lgbt-communitys-mental-health>

Research Reports

- <https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/coronavirus/faqs/remote-working-business-closures>
- <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/more-than-3700-domestic-abuse-calls-to-psni-during-coronavirus-lockdown-in-ni-39202985.html>
- <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/covid-19-guide-to-support-ethnic-minority-employees>
- Northern Ireland Life and Times, 2018
- Northern Ireland Pooled Household Survey (NIPHS) tables, published 2017.
- Office For National Statistics (ONS) 2019. Employment and Labour Market statistics.
- NI Health Survey
- CarersNI State of Caring 2019 Annual Survey



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	NIBTS Staff Data: 68% female, 32% male														
Age	NIBTS Staff Data: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th><th>%</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16-24</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr> <td>25-34</td><td>18%</td></tr> <tr> <td>35-44</td><td>25%</td></tr> <tr> <td>45-54</td><td>25%</td></tr> <tr> <td>55-64</td><td>23%</td></tr> <tr> <td>>=65</td><td>3%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	%	16-24	6%	25-34	18%	35-44	25%	45-54	25%	55-64	23%	>=65	3%
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35-44	25%														
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>=65	3%														
Religion	NIBTS Staff Data: 39% Catholic 45% Protestant 6% Neither 10% Not determined														
Political Opinion	Staff Data: 9% Broadly Nationalist 9% Broadly Unionist 16% Other 66% No answer Given the high level of missing staff data, the following figures for the population levels has been used and it suggest that: 26% see themselves as Unionist; 21% see themselves as Nationalist; 50% see themselves as Neither; 1% see themselves as Other; and 2% Don't know. (Northern Ireland Life and Times, 2018)														
Marital Status	Staff Data: 12% Unknown 31% Single 55% Married / Civil Partnership 1% Divorced 0.5% Widowed 0.5% Separated														
Dependent Status	Staff Data: 28% Staff with dependents 26% Staff without dependants														



	<p>46% Not assigned</p> <p>Carers NI suggests that 1 in 8 people in NI are providing unpaid care. Similarly, Census data show that 11.81% of the usually resident population provide unpaid care to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill – health/disabilities or problems related to old age.</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. However, in the last Census, 33.86% of households contained dependent children.</p>
Disability	<p>Staff Data: 55% No Disability 3% With Disability 42% Not Assigned</p> <p>The NI Health Survey found that 43% of the NI population had a longstanding illness, with 32% describing this as limiting and 11% non-limiting illness. Also, the prevalence of disability increases with age. Limiting longstanding illness increases from 17% among young adults aged 25 -34 years to 56% among those who are 75 plus years.</p>
Ethnicity	<p>Staff Data: 69% White 1% Pakistani 1% Indian 1 % Other 30% Not Assigned</p> <p>Data from the pooled household surveys in NI show that approximately 2% of the population belong to a minority ethnic group.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Staff Data: 51% Someone of the opposite sex 3% Someone of the same sex 3% Do not wish to answer 43% Not assigned</p> <p>Although there are no reliable estimates for the numbers of LGB individuals in NI, it is estimated that around 1 in 10 of the population are LGB.</p> <p>Census Data:</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	<p>Evidence suggests that women are less likely to want to travel longer distances from home (particularly if they have caring or childcare responsibilities) than men. From a recent WFH staff survey, 80% of staff reported a good work-life balance. 89% of staff are more optimistic about working from home. Staff reported a number of benefits including less travel time to work; fewer expenses (e.g. no car parking charges etc.)</p> <p>Working from home may be more beneficial in these aspects however working at home may have an impact due to not having social interaction with colleagues.</p> <p>Both partners working from home can create more stress in the household. Domestic violence has also been identified as an issue particularly for females during lockdown and is a consideration given 68% of employees in NIBTS are female.</p>
Age	<p>Employees may find it more beneficial working from home in terms of surroundings and not having to travel to work. However there may be an impact on the social aspect in terms of engaging with colleagues, particularly for older employees with no children at home who may be more likely to experience isolation.</p>
Religion	<p>There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category.</p>
Political Opinion	<p>There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or experiences arising within this category.</p>
Marital Status	<p>Employees of different marital status who have children (e.g. single parents) may find working from home difficult due to not having support from a partner in terms of childcare and may have an effect on family life and childcare arrangements. Also those married tend to have children which can impact working from home. Workers with no spouse/partner at home may experience isolation than those married/ co-habiting.</p>
Dependent Status	<p>Employees with dependants may be affected with home working. Especially during times of COVID in which childcare facilities and schools may be closed. Working from home with young dependents and/or caring responsibilities for dependent adults may have an impact on productivity. Flexible working arrangements should be honoured to assist with caring arrangements.</p> <p>Also, staff living with individuals who were or will be “shielding” in the future may well wish to work from home to limit their contact with other people and reduce the chances of COVID transmission.</p>



Category	Needs and Experiences
Disability	<p>Individuals with sensory problems will have specific requirements with regards to communication of the policy. Additional support may be needed by employees with sensory disabilities, physical disabilities (e.g. arthritis), and learning disabilities in setting up home working equipment. Also, those with learning difficulties may require additional support in order to get an understanding of how the policy works and the processes involved.</p> <p>However there may be an impact on the social aspect in terms of engaging with colleagues especially those with Learning Difficulties in which social interaction is beneficial to their wellbeing. Engagement with Tapestry, our staff Disability Network, found that isolation was one of the reported challenges in Working From Home. However, people reported that the advantages of Working From Home far outweighed the disadvantages. People found that stress from travelling to and from work was removed; people could now use the facilities (especially toilet facilities) in their own homes where they were more comfortable; and the greater flexibility around working hours meant that those who found it difficult to start work early because of medicines, early morning pain etc. were under less pressure.</p> <p>People who took part in the Tapestry engagement exercise said that organisations, managers and teams had been effective in putting in reasonable adjustments and offering support and guidance.</p> <p>It is recognised that flexible working can also reduce absence rates, allows employees to manage disability and long-term health conditions, as well as supporting their mental health and stress (CIPD 2020).</p>
Ethnicity	<p>Research in the UK suggests that those from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities are more likely to contract COVID, and more likely to experience serious adverse effects from the virus. It can be assumed that staff from a BAME background may prefer to work from home as a consequence.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>There is data to suggest that LGB (particularly young LGB adults who have not yet left home) have been forced back 'into the closet', impacting on their emotional and mental wellbeing. Working in the office may provide a respite.</p>



2.4 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>Disability: Social interaction will be accessible via virtual means to assist employees working from home. Employees will be provided with technology to assist with working from home. Should an individual experience difficulties setting up equipment at home, a risk assessment can be carried out and a member of their team or line manager give assistance in setting up equipment.</p> <p>Employees with disabilities may be more likely to suffer from mental health issues and isolation, NIBTS has sources of support for anyone who may need it.</p> <p>Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means. The working from home policy encourages Line Managers to have regular contact with their team members.</p> <p>There is also a blended approach included in the working from home policy in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health.</p> <p>Dependent Status: Working from home policy allows for both the employee and organisation to be flexible in terms of working hours and allowing employees with dependents to work outside of normal office hours. Reduced hours and other flexible working arrangements to be considered to assist. Employment breaks may also be a consideration.</p> <p>Mental health may be affected for employees</p>	<p>NIBTS is committed to providing equality of opportunity, and strives to promote a good and harmonious working environment where every employee is treated with respect and dignity and in which no one is disadvantaged based on their age, disability, marital or civil partnership status, political opinion, race, religious belief, sex (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, with dependants or without dependants.</p>



with dependents; NIBTS has sources of support for anyone who may need it.

Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means. There is also a blended approach in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health.

Marital Status: For married staff with dependents flexibility in terms of working hours and allowing employees with dependents to work outside of normal office hours will be considered. Reduced hours and other flexible working arrangements to be considered to assist. Employment breaks may also be a consideration. Social interaction encouraged via technical means such as Zoom meetings and online forums. Employees without a spouse or partner may suffer from isolation and mental health may be affected. For employees experiencing mental health issues NIBTS has sources of support for anyone who may need it. Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means. There is also a blended approach in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health.

Age: Social interaction encouraged via technical means such as Zoom meetings and online forums. Mental health may be affected for employees, NIBTS has sources of support for anyone who may need it. Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means. There is also a blended approach in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health.

Gender: Organisation to be flexible in terms of working hours and allowing employees with dependents to work outside of normal office hours. Working from home policy allows for both the employee and the organisation to consider reduced hours and other flexible working arrangements. Employment breaks may also be a consideration. NIBTS encourage interaction



with staff and are happy to alter working arrangements if required. This includes full working from home, flexible outside of normal hours working, combination of home and office working or full time office working.

Management will regularly review working from home arrangements. However the policy does set out terms for a blended approach of both home and office working, reviewed in line with government guidelines. Mental health may be affected for employees, NIBTS has sources of support for anyone who may need it. Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means.

The working from home policy also includes a blended approach in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health, offering employees who may be experiencing difficulties at home the flexibility to work in the office or at home.

Sexual Orientation:

NIBTS encourage interaction with staff and are happy to alter working arrangements if required as per working from home policy and other flexible working policies. This includes full working from home, flexible outside of normal hours working, combination of home and office working or full time office working. Mental health may be affected for employees, NIBTS has sources of support for anyone who may need it. Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means. There is also a blended approach in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health.



2.5 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)

Group	Impact	Suggestions
Religion	None	
Political Opinion	None	
Ethnicity	None	

(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)

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

Please tick:

Major impact	
Minor impact	X
No further impact	

Please tick:

Yes	
No	X



Please give reasons for your decisions.

Issues for any of the Section 75 groups highlighted in this screening have been mitigated against. Implementation of this policy will give support and offer an avenue for those employees to explore whilst working from home.

(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>
<p>Tapestry Disability Staff Network engagement to establish needs in relation to work in terms of disability, have needs changed and are needs being met and if they have any suggestion to improve current work situation.</p> <p>All policies are developed fairly to encourage disabled people to participate in public life.</p>	

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>
<p>This policy may provide the opportunity for those employees and perspective employees to apply and obtain positions within NIBTS allowing remote working should a disability inhibit those from travelling to a place of work.</p>	



(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.

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**(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
Any issues raised will be considered and monitored.	Any issues raised will be considered and monitored.	Any issues raised will be considered and monitored.

Approved Lead Officer: Rumy Collins
 Position: HR & Training Manager
 Date: 10.11.2020
 Policy/Decision Screened by: Rumy Collins

Please note that having completed the screening you are required by statute to publish the completed screening template, as per NIBTS 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 a copy of the completed screening template and policy/strategy to the HR Office for publishing.

If you require this document in an alternative format (such as large print, Braille, disk, audio file, audio cassette, Easy Read or in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English) please contact a member of the HR department.