

# Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

The BSO 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?

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.

#### **SCREENING TEMPLATE**

#### (1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

### 1.1 Title of policy or decision

**BSO Interim Working from Home Policy** 

#### 1.2 Description of policy or decision

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

The purpose of this policy is to set out the criteria and arrangements for working from home as the BSO responds to COVID-19 pandemic ensuring a consistent approach which meets the needs of our business. It will also act as a pilot for the organisation's longer term Working from Home (WFH) Policy which may look further at hot desking /mobile working. This policy replaces the Working from Home Protocol that was issued in April 2020.

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

As the BSO have responded to COVID-19 we have developed a number of Health & Well Being & Mental Health Resources alongside our PHA colleagues.

### 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. As aforementioned any future

Policy may require a need to accommodate mobile workers who are required to mainly work away from their base.

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. Those primarily affected by the policy are:

Current BSO employees

#### External

- Trade union representatives.
- BSO Agency Staff
- Statutory Enforcement bodies such as the Equality Commission for NI,
   Commission for Racial Equality, Fair Employment and Industrial Tribunal

NB: The above list is not exhaustive

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

what are they? (This list is not exhaustive)

Staff Health & Wellbeing site

(https://regional.sharepoint.hscni.net/sites/shw/SitePages/Home.aspx)

Inspire Wellbeing Hub (<a href="https://www.inspiresupporthub.org/">https://www.inspiresupporthub.org/</a>)

**BSO Accessible Formats Policy** 

Grievance Policy

Disciplinary Procedure

Capability Procedure

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

**Equality Scheme** 

Code of Conduct for Staff

PHA COVID Questions and Answers

Partial Retirement Policy

Legislative changes

Work life Balance

who owns them?
 BSO, HSC, DoH, NI Assembly

# (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.
- BSO Internal Working from Home Survey 2020
- 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

- <a href="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.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/more-than-3700-domestic-abuse-calls-to-psni-during-coronavirus-lockdown-in-ni-39202985.html</a>
- <a href="https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/covid-19-guide-to-support-ethnic-minority-employees">https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/covid-19-guide-to-support-ethnic-minority-employees</a>
- 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. Available at <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/thecommutinggapwomenaremorelikelythanmentoleavetheirjoboveralongcommute/2019-09-04">https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/thecommutinggapwomenaremorelikelythanmentoleavetheirjoboveralongcommute/2019-09-04</a>
- 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. Also give consideration to multiple identities.

Category	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?		
Gender	Male	44.45%	
	Female	55.55%	
Age	0-15	0.00%	
	16-24	3.51%	
	25-29	8.27%	
	30-34	12.82%	
	35-39	13.30%	
	40-44	14.89%	
	45-49	13.58%	
	50-54	14.47%	
	55-59	13.09%	
	60-64	4.89%	
	>=65	1.17%	

Community
Background

Perceived Protestant	2.34%
Protestant	30.46%
Perceived Roman Catholic	2.76%
Roman Catholic	42.59%
Neither	5.72%
Perceived Neither	0.00%
Not assigned	16.13%

Given the high level of missing staff data, the following figures from the last census have been used also:

- 45.14% of the population were either Catholic or **brought up** as Catholic.
- 48.36% stated that they were Protestant or **brought up** as Protestant.
- 0.92% of the population belonged to or had been **brought up** in other religions and Philosophies.

5.59% neither belonged to, nor had been brought up in a religion. (Census 2011)

# Political Opinion

Broadly Nationalist	2.89%
Other	3.79%
Broadly Unionist	3.65%
Not assigned	84.91%
Do not wish to answer	4.76%

Population level data suggest that:

26% see themselves as Unionist; 21% see themselves as Nationalist; 50% see themselves as Neither 50%; 1% see themselves as Other; and 2% Don't know. (Northern Ireland Life and Times, 2018)

#### Marital Status

Divorced	2.69%
Mar/CP	45.62%
Other	0.76%
Separt	0.83%
Single	17.30%
Unknwn	31.70%
Widw/R	0.90%
Not assigned	0.21%

Dependent	Yes	10.54%
Status	Not assigned	82.43%
	No	7.03%
	suggested by other resignoup 30-49 make up 55 commonly known as 'sal dependents to care for.  Carers NI suggests that Similarly, Census data is population provide unpor others because of loor problems related to Census data also show Almost 2 in 5 householding – term health pro-	s that 3.11% provided 50 hours care or more. ds (40.29%) contained a least one person with a
	ermaren.	
Disability	No Not assigned	52.10% 46.45%
	Yes	1.45%
	longstanding illness, w limiting illness. Also, th Limiting longstanding i	ound that 43% of the NI population had a th 32% describing this as limiting and 11% none prevalence of disability increases with age. Iness increases from 17% among young adults 6% among those who are 75 plus years.
Ethnicity	Not assigned	72.71%
	White	27.08%
	Other	0.14%
	Black African	0.00%

	Indian	0.07%	
	Chinese	0.00%	
	Data from the pooled	household surv	veys in NI show that approximately
	2% of the population belong to a minority ethnic group.		
Sexual			
Orientation	Do not wish to answer	1.65%	
	Not assigned	83.32%	
	Opposite sex	13.99%	
	same sex	96.00%	
	Both sexes	0.07%	
	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.		

#### 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).

Catego ry	Needs and Experiences
Gender	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.)
	Working from home may be more beneficial in the aspect however working at home may have an impact due to not having social interaction with colleagues. However, the BSO Staff survey about working from home found that almost ¾ (74%) feel they are still connected to their colleagues while WFH.:  • 27% of managers used video conferencing (53% of all staff said

they enjoyed engaging in video conferencing) 28% of managers used teleconferencing 37% of managers used e-mail • 57% used whatsapp as a form of communication In addition, staff interaction appeared to be happening on a regular basis: 70% of managers reported daily communication with their wider • 20% of managers reported communicating with their wider team more than twice weekly. 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 55% of employees in BSO are female. Employees may find in more beneficial working from home in terms of Age 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 experience isolation. 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 There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or Religion experiences arising within this category. There is no data to suggest that there are specific needs or **Political** experiences arising within this category. Opinion Employees of different marital status who have children (e.g. single Marital parents) may find working from difficult due to not having support from Status a partner in terms of childcare and may have an effect on family life and child care arrangements. Also those married tend to have children which working from home may have an impact. Workers with no spouse/partner at home may experience isolation than those married/ co-habiting. Employees with dependants may be affected with home working. Depend Especially during times of COVID in which childcare facilities and ent schools may be closed. Working from home with young dependents **Status** and/or caring responsibilities for dependent adults may have an impact on productivity. Flexible working arrangements should be honoured to assist with caring arrangements. Also, staff living with individuals who were or will be "shielding" in the

future may well wish to WFH to limit their contact with other people and reduce the chances of COVID transmission.

The majority of respondents to the BSO HR staff survey were aged 30-49 (53%), while 32% were aged 50 upwards (who often have caring responsibilities). Respondents said the five greatest benefits of working from home are;

- 1. Less travel time during rush hour (83%)
- 2. Saving money travelling to and from work (73%)
- 3. A more flexible schedule (60%)
- 4. Better work-life balance (57%)
- 5. More productive (55%)

#### Disabilit y

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.

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. 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.

The BSO Staff survey about working from home asked about communication with teams, most of these were using accessible forms of communication:

27% of managers used video conferencing

	<ul> <li>28% of managers used teleconferencing</li> <li>37% of managers used e-mail</li> <li>57% used whatsapp as a form of communication</li> <li>Also, most managers (70%) reported daily communication with their wider team, and 20% of managers reported communicating with their wider team more than twice weekly.</li> </ul>
	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).
Ethnicit y	Research in the UK suggests that those from BAME 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 WFH as a consequence.
Sexual Orientat ion	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.

### 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?

In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?	What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?
Disability: Social interaction will be accessible via virtual means to assist employees working from home. Employees will be provided with technology to assist with WFH. Should an individual experience difficulties setting up equipment at home, a risk assessment can be carried out and a member of their	The Business Services Organisation (BSO) 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

team or line manager give assistance in setting up equipment.

Employees with disabilities may be more likely to suffer from mental health issues and isolation, so BSO have a number of online support for staff which are referred to in the WFH policy. This is also communicated via corporate communication on a regular basis.

Information from the staff survey found that the corporate communications were effective: over 98% of respondents reported receiving information from the H&WB group, and more than half (53%) had accessed the Health & Wellbeing SharePoint site created by the group.

Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means. The WFH policy encourages Line Managers to have regular contact with their team members.

There is also a blended approach included in the WFH policy in terms of part office and part home working to assist with social interaction and mental health. Regular WFH staff surveys will be conducted to monitor impact on all section 75 groups.

Dependent Status: WFH 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

age, disability, marital or civil partnership status, political opinion, race, religious belief, sex (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, with dependants or without dependants.

A survey is planned to explore the out workings of the pilot WFH policy to see if organisations, managers and teams have been effective in putting in reasonable adjustments and offering support and guidance.

assist. Employment breaks may also be a consideration.

Also, to assist those with caring responsibilities who may need greater flexibility in working hours, BSO have opened premises late night and over the weekend. This will be communicated to staff on a regular basis through email.

Mental health may be affected for employees with dependents and there is regular corporate communication relation to the online support services available in BSO. 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 BSO to 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. Social interaction encouraged via technical means such as Zoom meetings and online forums. Employees without a spouse of partner may suffer from isolation and mental health may be affected. For employees experiencing mental health issues there is regular corporate communication relation to the online support services available in BSO. 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 and there is regular corporate communication relation to the online support services available in BSO. 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. WFH policy allows for both the employee and the organisation consider reduced hours and other flexible working arrangements. Employment breaks may also be a consideration. BSO 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.

BSO also have a number of online support services to cover all aspects of home working and has particular support services for Employees who may or may know someone who is experiencing domestic abuse. Extra support

services have been set up in order to assist employees through COVID. All are available via an online support hub and regular communication is circulated to remind employees of the services available. Management will regularly review WFH 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 and there is regular corporate communication relation to the online support services available in BSO. Staff interaction is also vitally important and this can also be via virtual means.

The WFH 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:**

BSO encourage interaction with staff and are happy to alter working arrangements if required as per WFH 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. BSO also have a number of online support services to cover all aspects of home working. Mental health may be affected for employees and there is regular corporate communication relation to the online

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#### 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.

Whilst there has been a major change in the delivering of services by BSO in terms of moving from an office based organisation to working from home. This policy to support the current working arrangements.

The BSO will monitor its implementation.

#### (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?

How does the policy or decision currently encourage disabled people to participate in public life?	What else could you do to encourage disabled people to participate in public life?
BSO engaged with Tapestry Disability Staff Network to establish needs are in relation to work in terms of their disability, have needs changed and are their needs being met and if they have any suggestion to improve their current work situation •whether these needs have changed and are being met and •whether they have any suggestions on how their work situation could be made better  All polices are developed fairly to encourage disabled people to participate in public life.	BSO plan to liaise and explore policy development with the Tapestry, Disability Staff Network to help encourage disabled people to participate in public life

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?

How does the policy or decision currently promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?	What else could you do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
This policy may provide the	Further engagement via the Tapestry
opportunity for those employees and	Network in order to identify specific
perspective employees to apply and	needs and shape policy and procedure
obtain positions within BSO allowing	to encourage disabled people to
remote working should a disability	engage.

inhibit those from travelling to a place	
of work.	

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

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

<sup>\*</sup> 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.

#### (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
BSO HR also intend on conduct Working from Home surveys to ascertain the effectiveness of this policy and consideration of permanently changing how BSO deliver services. A WFH staff survey was conducted 3 months post the commencement of lockdown and another survey is planned for October 2020. This will be a regular occurrence and WFH will continually be monitored as government rules change and as the organisation continues to work from home.  This will be monitored via government guidance and advice and consideration given to those employees from any of the Section 75 groups	Regular staff surveys and online forums.	Regular staff surveys and online forums.

Approved Lead Officer: Peter Laverty

Position:	Senior HR Manager
Date:	02/10/2020
Policy/Decision Screened by:	Richard McGoldrick

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 the Equality Unit:

Equality Unit|BSO|James House|2-4 Cromac Avenue|Belfast|BT7 2JA

Tel: 028 9536 3961