



Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

The Safeguarding Board NI 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?

For advice & support on screening contact:

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SCREENING TEMPLATE

(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

1.1 Title of policy or decision

Safer Recruitment Guidance

1.2 Description of policy or decision

The primary responsibility of the SBNI is to protect children and young people from risk and harm and ensure that effective work to protect children and young people is properly coordinated. The fundamental corporate strategic value associated with this intention is that the SBNI will listen to children and young people, their views, feelings and experiences and place them and these at the heart of what the SBNI does.

The requirement for the development of this Guidance is twofold;

Firstly, the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (membership, Procedures, Functions and Committee) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, Regulation 18 (c), requires it to:

“In exercising its function under section 3(1) of the Act (*developing policies and procedures*) the Safeguarding Board must put in place arrangements for the ongoing development and review of policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including policies and procedures in relation to

“recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;”

Secondly, public debate has highlighted the need to provide clarity as to the processes to be applied pertaining to ‘safer recruitment’ but also an explanation as to what information can and cannot be shared as part of that process. This arose on the back of coverage in the media of a number of high-profile political cases. The Department of Health (DoH) requested the SBNI to progress development of the guidance document to help address assumptions associated with the ‘safer recruitment’ process and associated information sharing in order to best safeguard children and young people.

The guidance document has been developed to assist organisations that engage with children

and young people to establish a safer recruitment process to promote a safe environment for children & young people to live, learn and play.

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 involved in engaging staff in regulated positions

- **Recruiters** in organisations using the guidance – statutory, community and voluntary sectors in respect of anyone undertaking a role, paid or unpaid that engages with children and young people involved in regulated activity.
- **Applicants:** Those who will be subject to checks.

Staff and volunteers are the backbone and are critical to the functioning of any organisation and it is vital that robust standards are applied when recruiting suitable staff to work with children and young people to create a safe and positive environment. This Safer Recruitment Guidance has been developed to support organisations develop strong practices when creating and backfilling posts to deter and prevent unsuitable people from being in positions where they can cause harm to children and young people.

The guidance outlines the steps that should be taken to promote safe practices when recruiting staff and volunteers to work with all children and young people.

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

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

Internal:

- Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- SBNI (Membership, Procedure, Functions and Committee) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

- SBNI Terms of Reference 2012
- DoH Guidance to the SBNI, as amended May 2014
- SBNI Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030
- SBNI Safeguarding Statistics Snapshot 2025-2026
- SBNI Corporate Annual Business Plan 2025-2026
- Regional Core child Protection Policies and Procedures for Northern Ireland (SBNI, 2017)

External:

- DoH - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland Policy Document – May 2026 v2.2
- Children's Services Cooperation Act (NI) 2015
- Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'
- End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG): Strategic Framework
- Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy 2024-2031
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (NI) 2015
- UNCRC and International Conventions
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Northern Ireland Children's and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030
- Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008
- Justice (NI) Act 2002
- Human Rights Act 1998

(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.

- SBNI Annual Report 2024-2025
- 2021 Census published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
- Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland 11 June 2020 release
- NI Young Life and Times Survey 2024 – Religion [summary24.pdf](#)
- [Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2023 - GOV.UK](#)
- Articles 8 and 6 Humans Rights Act 1998
- Stakeholder Engagement – consultation with practitioners, multi-agency workshops, and direct engagement with children and young people
- Programme for Government Outcomes – Thriving children, Caring Society, Safer Communities.

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	General Population: 1,927,900 – people in Northern Ireland 978,100 (50.7%) – female 949,800 (49.3%) – male 2,283 – Children on the Child protection Register • 1203 Males • 1080 Females 4,147 Children in Care of HSC Trusts (LAC) • 52% Male

	• 48% Female Population Statistics: There is a higher level of disability among adult females (23%) compared to adult males (19%). Girls (4%) are less likely to be disabled than boys (6%). • Male prevalence rates are only higher than female rates amongst the youngest adults (16 to 25): 6% of males compared with 4% of females; • 8% of boys aged 15 and under were found to have a disability, compared with 4% of girls of the same age. Transgender Research suggests for the Northern Ireland population as a whole: • 140-160 individuals are affiliated with transgender groups • 120 individuals have presented with Gender Identity Dysphoria • There are more trans women than trans men living in Northern Ireland. .(McBride, Ruari Santiago (2011): Healthcare Issues for Transgender People Living in Northern Ireland. Institute for Conflict Research.) The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) estimate the number of gender nonconforming employees and service users, based on the information that 7 GIRES assembled for the Home Office (2011) and subsequently updated (2014): • gender variant to some degree 1% • have sought some medical care 0.025% • having already undergone transition 0.015% The numbers who have sought treatment seems likely to continue growing at 20% per annum or even faster. Few younger people present for treatment despite the fact that most gender variant adults report experiencing the condition from a very early age. Yet, presentation for treatment among youngsters is growing even more rapidly (50% p.a.). Organisations should assume that there may be nearly equal numbers of people transitioning from male to female (trans women) and from female to male (trans men). Applying GIRES figures to NI population (using NISRA 2019 mid-year population estimates) N=1,893,700: • 18,937 people who do not identify with gender assigned to them at birth • 474 likely to have sought medical care • 284 likely to have undergone transition
Age	General Population Age profile of the NI population (Census 2021):

Age band Population Percentage

0-14 365,200 19.2%
(15-64 1,211,500 63.7%)
15-39 594,400 31.2%
40-64 617,100 32.4%
(65+ 326,500 17.2%)
65-84 287,100 15.1%
85+ 39,400 2.1%
All ages 1,903,200 100%

The most recent disability prevalence data from the **2021 Census** (published by NISRA) provides updated insights into how disability rates vary by **age and gender in Northern Ireland**

Male

0-15 – 3%
16-44 – 5%
45 – 64 – 16%
65 and over – 33%

Female

0 – 15 – 2%
16 – 44 – 5%
45 – 64 – 17%
65 and over – 38%

Overall there are greater proportions of older people with a disability.

SBNI Statistics:

436,705 – children under 18 years old (22.7% of total NI population)

- Children 0-4 years 1234,900 - 6.35% of the total population
- 5 to 9 years – 110,800 - 6.25%
- 10 to 14 years - 118,500 – 6.07%
- Young people 15 to 19 years- 126,000 – 6.46%

22,243 – Children known to Social Services as a Child in Need

4,188 Children in Care of HSC Trusts (LAC: 2,271 males and 1,917 females)

2,283 – Children on the Child Protection Register (1,140 males and 1,143 females)

354,780 – pupils in schools

167,707 – pupils in primary schools

156,889 – pupils in post-primary schools

	15,577 – pupils in funded pre-school education 21,352 – newcomer pupils																		
Religion	Census 2021 Current Religion • 'no religion' (17.4%) • 'religion not stated' (1.6%) • Catholic (42.3%) • Presbyterian Church in Ireland (16.6%) • Church of Ireland (11.5%) • Methodist (2.4%) • Other Christian denominations (6.9%) • Other non-Christian Religions (1.3%). Religion/religion of upbringing (Number - Percentage) Catholic 869,800 45.7% Current religion 805,200 42.3% Religion of upbringing 64,600 3.4% Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related) 827,500 43.5% Current religion 711,000 37.4% Religion of upbringing 116,600 6.1% Other religions 28,500 1.5% Current religion 25,500 1.3% Religion of upbringing 3,000 0.2% None 177,400 9.3% All usual residents 1,903,200 100.0% The NI Young Life and Times Survey for 2024, for those who responded to belonging to a religion, gave the following percentages: <table> <tr> <td>Church of Ireland (Anglican)</td><td>8%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Catholic</td><td>58%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Presbyterian</td><td>19%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Methodist</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Baptist</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Free Presbyterian</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Brethren</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other</td><td>7%</td></tr> </table>	Church of Ireland (Anglican)	8%	Catholic	58%	Presbyterian	19%	Methodist	2%	Baptist	3%	Free Presbyterian	1%	Brethren	1%	Muslim	2%	Other	7%
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Political Opinion	Census 2021 National identity (nationality based) (Number – Percentage) • British 814,600 42.8% • Irish 634,000 33.3%																		

	- Northern Irish 598,800 31.5% - English 16,800 0.9% - Scottish 10,200 0.5% - Welsh 2,000 0.1% - Other national identities 113,400 6.0% National identity (person based) (Number – Percentage) - British only 606,300 31.9% - Irish only 554,400 29.1% - Northern Irish only 376,400 19.8% - British & Northern Irish only 151,300 8.0% - Irish & Northern Irish only 33,600 1.8% - British, Irish & Northern Irish only 28,100 1.5% - British & Irish only 11,800 0.6% - English only/Scottish only/Welsh only 16,200 0.9% - Other combination of British/Irish/Northern Irish/English/Scottish/Welsh only 11,700 0.6% - Other national identities 113,400 6.0% - Polish only 23,900 1.3% - Lithuanian only 11,900 0.6% - Romanian only 7,100 0.4% - Portuguese only 6,900 0.4% - Bulgarian only 4,300 0.2% - Indian only 4,100 0.2% - Other national identity with one or more of British/Irish/Northern Irish/English/Scottish/Welsh only 12,700 0.7% - Other national identities 42,600 2.2% - All usual residents 1,903,200 100.0%
Marital Status	Northern Ireland Life and Times (2024) - Single (never married) 34% - Married and living with husband/wife 48% - A civil partner in a legally-registered civil partnership 1% - Married and separated from husband/wife 3% - Divorced 7% - Widowed 7% Data from the 2021 Census informs us that: - Married or in a civil partnership 45% - Single (never married or in a civil partnership) 39% - Separated 4% - Divorced 6% - Same Sex Civil Partnership 0.09% - Widowed or Surviving partner from SSCP 6 % - Same-sex civil partnership: Still a small proportion, included within the

	45% married/civil partnership category NB: the SBNI considers these as relevant for children and young people as they relate to aspects of identity, adversity, masculinity and understanding of social norms.
Dependent Status	Census 2021 Table 17: Provision of unpaid care (‘Provision of unpaid care’ covers looking after, giving help or support to anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. It excludes any activities carried out in paid employment.) Northern Ireland All usual residents aged 5 and over 1,789,348 Percentage of usual residents aged 5 and over who provide: No unpaid care 87.58% 1-19 hours unpaid care per week 5.63% 20-34 hours unpaid care per week 1.38% 35-49 hours unpaid care per week 1.57% 50+ hours unpaid care per week 3.84% Information from Carers NI suggests that: • 1 in every 8 adults is a carer • 2% of 0-17 year olds are carers, based on the 2011 Census • There are approximately 220,000 carers in Northern Ireland • Any one of us has a 6.6% chance of becoming a carer in any year • One quarter of all carers provide over 50 hours of care per week □ People providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled than the average person • 64% of carers are women; 36% are men. Unpaid Carers in Northern Ireland (2025 Update) There are over 295,000 people providing some form of unpaid care for a sick or disabled family member or friend in Northern Ireland – around 1 in 5 adults. • 81% identified as female and 18% identified as male. • 5% are aged 25-34, 16% are aged 35-44, 32% are aged 45-54, 31% are aged 55-64 and 16% are aged 65+. • 25% have a disability. • 97% described their ethnicity as white. • 29% have childcare responsibilities for a non-disabled child under the age of 18 alongside their caring role. • 55% are in some form of employment and 19% are retired from work. • 30% have been caring for 15 year or more, 17% for between 10-14 years, 26% for 5-9 years, 24% for 1-4 years, and 3% for less than a year. • 45% provide 90 hours or more of care per week, 14% care for 50-89 hours,

	22% care for 20-49 hours, and 19% care for 1-19 hours per week. 66% care for one person, 26% care for two people, 5% care for three people and 3% care for four or more people. It may be concluded that a considerable share of people with a disability are carers themselves.																										
Disability	Census 2021 Out of all usual residents (n=1,903,179), the Percentage of usual residents whose day-to-day activities are: Limited a lot – 11.45% Limited a little – 12.88% Not limited – 75.67% ('Day-to-day activities limited' covers any health problem or disability (including problems related to old age) which has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months.) The breakdown of the various long-term conditions as outlined in the 2021 Census is: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of long-term condition</th><th>Percentage of population with condition %</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Deafness or partial hearing loss</td><td>5.75</td></tr> <tr> <td>Blindness or partial sight loss</td><td>1.78</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mobility of Dexterity Difficulty that requires wheelchair use</td><td>1.48</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mobility of Dexterity Difficulty that limits basic physical activities</td><td>10.91</td></tr> <tr> <td>Intellectual or learning disability</td><td>0.89</td></tr> <tr> <td>Learning difficulty</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>Autism or Asperger syndrome</td><td>1.86</td></tr> <tr> <td>An emotional, psychological or mental health condition</td><td>8.68</td></tr> <tr> <td>Frequent periods of confusion or memory loss</td><td>1.99</td></tr> <tr> <td>Long – term pain or discomfort.</td><td>11.58</td></tr> <tr> <td>Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</td><td>10.29</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other condition</td><td>8.81</td></tr> </tbody> </table> Information on rare diseases provided by NI Rare Diseases Partnership www.nirdp.org.uk suggests 1 in 17 people is likely to be affected by a rare disease at some point in their lives; that is around 110,000 people in Northern Ireland. A disease is “rare” if it affects fewer than 1 people per 2,000. Research using data from 2011 (<u>Getting and staying in work - LLTI 2001 - Research Report</u> (nisra.gov.uk)) suggests that The disability employment gap in 2011 was 52.3 percentage points (pps) – the difference in employment rate between those with (31.4%) and without NI Population Statistics* 20.7% (374,700) regard themselves as having a disability or long	Type of long-term condition	Percentage of population with condition %	Deafness or partial hearing loss	5.75	Blindness or partial sight loss	1.78	Mobility of Dexterity Difficulty that requires wheelchair use	1.48	Mobility of Dexterity Difficulty that limits basic physical activities	10.91	Intellectual or learning disability	0.89	Learning difficulty	3.5	Autism or Asperger syndrome	1.86	An emotional, psychological or mental health condition	8.68	Frequent periods of confusion or memory loss	1.99	Long – term pain or discomfort.	11.58	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	10.29	Other condition	8.81
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	– term health problem, which has an impact on their day to day activities. 68.6% (1,241,700) of residents did not have a long – term health condition. Deafness or partial hearing loss – 5.1% (93,100) Blindness or partial sight loss – 1.7% (30,800) Communication Difficulty – 1.6% (29,900) Mobility of Dexterity Difficulty – 11.4% (207,200) A learning, intellectual, social or behavioural difficulty - 2.2% (40,200) An emotional, psychological or mental health condition - 5.8% (105,600) Long – term pain or discomfort – 10.1% (182,900) Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing – 8.7% (157,900) Frequent confusion or memory loss – 2% (35,700) A chronic illness (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, heart disease or epilepsy. – 6.6% (118,600) Other condition – 5.2% (94,500) It is estimated that in Northern Ireland, 42% have longstanding illness (30% limiting and 12% non-limiting illness) Health Survey NI (2017). Prevalence of longstanding limiting illness increases with age: approximately 8% among young adults aged 16 to 34 years, compared to 60% among those who are aged 65 years and over. (Census 2021)
Ethnicity	Equality In the general population the 2021 Census indicated that 3.4% (65,600) of the usual resident population belonged to minority ethnic groups. Ethnic Group Ethnic Group Number Percentage White 1,837,600 96.6% Minority Ethnic Group 65,600 3.4% Black 11,000 0.6% Indian 9,900 0.5% Chinese 9,500 0.5% Filipino 4,500 0.2% Irish Traveller 2,600 0.1% Arab 1,800 0.1% Pakistani 1,600 0.1% Roma 1,500 0.1% Mixed Ethnicities 14,400 0.8% Other Asian 5,200 0.3% Other Ethnicities 3,600 0.2% All usual residents 1,903,200 100.0% Country of birth Country of birth Number Percentage

Northern Ireland 1,646,300 86.5%
 Great Britain 92,300 4.8%
 England 72,900 3.8%
 Scotland 16,500 0.9%
 Wales 2,800 0.2%
 Republic of Ireland 40,400 2.1%
 Outside United Kingdom and Ireland 124,300 6.5%
 Europe (other EU countries) 67,500 3.5%
 Europe (other non-EU countries) 3,700 0.2%
 Other Countries in the World 53,100 2.8%
 All usual residents 1,903,200 100.0%

Main language of usual residents aged 3 and over

Main language Number Percentage
 English 1,751,500 95.4%
 Main language not English 85,100 4.6%
 Polish 20,100 1.1%
 Lithuanian 9,000 0.5%
 Irish 6,000 0.3%
 Romanian 5,600 0.3%
 Portuguese 5,000 0.3%
 Arabic 3,600 0.2%
 Bulgarian 3,600 0.2%
 Other languages 32,200 1.8%
 All usual residents aged 3 and over 1,836,600 100.0%

Figures from the 2011 Census provide the prevalence of disability among the following ethnic groups

Percentage of those whose disability limits their day to day activities a lot

All – 12%
 Irish Traveller – 20%
 White other – 12%
 Chinese – 3%
 Indian – 3%
 Pakistani – 6%
 Bangladeshi – 4%
 Other Asian – 2%

Considering the 2011 Census figures for the ethnic composition of the General Population alongside those of People whose disability limits their day to day activities a lot, it shows that, with the exception of Irish Travellers, black and

	minority ethnic people are underrepresented amongst those with a disability when compared with their share amongst the general population. White – 98.21% (1, 778, 449) – 99.40% Chinese – 0.35% (6, 338) – 0.10% Irish Traveller – 0.07% (1, 268) – 0.12% Indian – 0.34% (6, 157) – 0.08% Pakistani – 0.06% (1, 087) – 0.03% Bangladeshi – 0.03% (543) – 0.01% Other Asian – 0.28% (5, 070) – 0.03% Black Caribbean – 0.02% (362) – 0.01% Black African – 0.13% (2354) – 0.03% Black Other – 0.05% (905) – 0.02% Mixed – 0.33% (5976) – 0.10% Other – 0.13% (2354) – 0.08% The five most popularly requested languages in HSC settings (as reported by the HSC Translation Service) 1st July – 30th September 2021 were: 1. Polish (4515 requests); 2. Arabic (3518 requests); 3. Lithuanian (2382 requests); 4. Romanian (2316 requests) and 5. Bulgarian (1516 requests) Based on the 2024–2025 school census data from the Department of Education, here are the updated statistics on ethnic diversity and newcomer pupils in Northern Ireland schools. • Over 19,800 pupils are recorded as “non-white”, representing approximately 5.8% of the total school population. • This marks a continued increase from 17,500 pupils (5.0%) in 2019–2020. • There are now 18,900 newcomer pupils, accounting for 5.5% of the school population. • This is an increase of 1,500 pupils since 2019–2020 and nearly 7,000 more than five years prior. Top Languages Spoken by Newcomers Polish Lithuanian Portuguese Other growing languages include Arabic, Romanian, and Bulgarian
Sexual Orientation	Census 2021 data relating to sexual orientation:

	Among usual residents aged 16+:
	Straight or Heterosexual: 93.6%
	Gay or Lesbian: 0.9%
	Bisexual: 0.8%
	Other sexual orientation: 0.3%
	Did not answer: 4.4%
	Age-Based Trends
	Younger age groups (16–24) were more likely to identify as LGB+ than older age groups.
	The proportion of people identifying as bisexual or gay/lesbian was highest in urban areas like Belfast .

2.3 Qualitative Data

While the SBNI does not have operational responsibility over individual agencies' equality impacts, it will be the responsibility of individual SBNI member agencies and other relevant agencies to operationalise this guidance in respect of their own members of staff and volunteers, where relevant. As a result, it is not possible to identify and specify needs and experiences (and subsequent mitigations) particular to the SBNI in respect of the screening of this guidance.

The guidance highlights general equality issues that agencies must consider when applying it.

Category	Needs and Experiences
Recruiters	
Gender	The guidance acknowledges that transgender people may not wish to share their gender and name with an employer and that AccessNI can facilitate a background check via a separate process
Applicants	
Gender	As above and it is referenced in the guidance.
Age	Younger children have limited cognitive and emotional capacity to understand risks and require simplified, age-appropriate communication. Younger children rely heavily on parental/carers involvement; older teens may seek autonomy and confidentiality. Priorities when engaging with Children & Young people must focus on protecting them from harm and promoting access to trusted adults. The Safer Recruitment guidance has been developed in keeping with the paramountcy principle to safeguard children & young people (0 >18yr olds) through robust recruitment & selection standards
Applicants	Young adults who do not have a driving licence or a passport may present with an alternative formal type of ID
Religion	Cultural and faith considerations may influence how children and families engage with services. There is a need for culturally sensitive practice that respects religious beliefs while prioritising children and young people's safety. Practitioners must avoid assumptions based on faith and ensure safeguarding responses are equitable and inclusive. There are no identified issues based on religion in the development or

	expected adaptation of the Safer Recruitment guidance.
Political Opinion	In communities where, paramilitary influence or strong political identity exists, trust in external agencies may be affected. Safeguarding interventions must be sensitive to these dynamics while prioritising children and young people's safety. Recruitment exercises must remain impartial and avoid reinforcing political divisions. Interview panels should ensure decisions are based solely on merit, not political affiliation or community pressures. There are no identified issues specifically based on religion in the development or expected adaptation of the Safer Recruitment guidance.
Marital Status	Children and young people from households with one parent or with caring responsibilities may face additional vulnerabilities due to reduced support networks and increased stress within the home. Limited caregiver availability can affect supervision, engagement with services, and ability to attend appointments. Safeguarding responses must ensure equal access to support regardless of family structure. This may require flexible engagement approaches, additional practical support, and consideration of the family's caring responsibilities to avoid disadvantage. Practitioners may also have caring responsibilities that impact their availability for training, deployment, or out-of-hours work. Organisations should provide flexible working arrangements and avoid assumptions about staff capacity based on family status. Equality issues include ensuring equal opportunities for progression and training for staff with dependants and promoting a supportive workplace culture. These issues are the responsibility of the recruitment authority to be mindful of.
Recruiters & Applicants	Recruiters need to be mindful to name changes for eg if applicant has recently married and ensure documentation aligns with photographic ID
Dependent Status	Safeguarding responses must avoid assumptions about a parent or carer's capacity to protect based on dependency. Equal access to support should be maintained, with practical adjustments such as flexible appointments and tailored interventions. Practitioners with caring responsibilities may face challenges in attending training, working unsocial hours, or responding to emergencies. Organisations should provide flexible working arrangements and avoid

	assumptions about staff capacity or commitment based on family status. Equality issues include ensuring equal opportunities for progression and training for staff with dependants and fostering a supportive workplace culture. The Safer Recruitment guidance is generic in terms of its application. It is the responsibility of the recruitment agency to equally apply best practice as outlined in the guidance when creating or seeking to backfill a post irrespective of the terms and conditions of the post.
Disability	Children and young people with physical or learning disabilities may face significant barriers to disclosure and increased risk of exploitation due to dependency on others, communication challenges, and social isolation. They may require adapted safeguarding approaches, including accessible formats, specialist advocacy, and tailored interventions to ensure their voices are heard. Safeguarding responses must provide accessible communication formats, specialist support, and avoid discriminatory assumptions about capacity or credibility. There is a risk of under-identification of exploitation in disabled children if practitioners lack training or rely on stereotypes. Practitioners with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments to participate fully in safeguarding work, including flexible working arrangements, accessible training materials, and adapted environments. Equality issues include ensuring equal opportunities for progression and avoiding assumptions about capability based on disability. Organisations should promote an inclusive culture and comply with legal obligations for reasonable adjustments The focus of the Safer Recruitment guidance is to highlight key preventative measures in denying an unsuitable individual access to children/young people within organisations. It does not address considerations regarding the terms or conditions of a vacant post. This remains the responsibility of the employing authority.
Ethnicity	Newcomer families and minority ethnic groups may face language barriers and cultural differences that affect engagement with safeguarding services. Cultural norms may influence perceptions of authority and trust in agencies. Without appropriate support, these barriers can lead to under-reporting and increased vulnerability. There is a risk of exclusion without translation services and cultural competence training for practitioners. Agencies must provide interpreters, culturally sensitive practice, and avoid discriminatory assumptions based on ethnicity or immigration status. Safeguarding responses should actively promote inclusion and equity.

Recruiters	Practitioners from minority ethnic backgrounds may experience barriers to progression or feel isolated in predominantly homogenous teams. Equality issues include the need for inclusive workplace culture, equal access to training, and proactive measures to address racism or microaggressions. Organisations should also ensure recruitment and promotion practices are fair and representative. The Safer Recruitment guidance should complement respective organisations Selection & Recruitment policy & procedures. It highlights key preventative measures in denying an unsuitable individual access to children/young people within organisations. It does not address the wider considerations regarding the terms or conditions of a vacant post. This remains the responsibility of the employing authority. Recruiters will need to be aware of how to process criminal record checks for those who have lived in another country for more than 3 months in last 5 years and the guidance provides signposting to recruiters on how to do this. Applicants whose first language is not English may require some parts of the recruitment process to be translated or a more simplified version used to aid their understanding. This will be the responsibility of the employing authority.
Sexual Orientation	LGBTQ+ young people may experience targeted exploitation and stigma, which can increase vulnerability and reduce willingness to disclose abuse. Fear of discrimination or being outed can create additional barriers to engagement with safeguarding services. Inclusive, confidential, and affirming approaches are essential to ensure safety and trust. Safeguarding responses must be inclusive and avoid heteronormative assumptions. Practitioners should use appropriate language, respect confidentiality, and challenge discriminatory attitudes. There is a risk of under-identification of exploitation if services fail to recognise the specific vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQ+ young people. Practitioners who identify as LGBTQ+ may face workplace discrimination or feel uncomfortable disclosing their identity. Equality issues include ensuring an inclusive organisational culture, equal access to training and progression, and zero tolerance for homophobia or biphobia. Employers should provide clear policies and support networks to promote equality. The Safer Recruitment guidance should complement respective organisations Selection & Recruitment policy & procedures. It highlights key preventative measures in denying an unsuitable individual access to children/young people within organisations. It does not address the wider considerations regarding the terms or conditions of a vacant post. This remains the responsibility of the employing authority.

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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.

The SBNI are committed to ensuring that potential impacts are considered and mitigated, the SBNI will screen policies and strategies individually, where applicable, to ensure that the potential impacts of each policy or strategy are considered fully in that context.

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>
- The guidance has been written in a manner to make it accessible to a wide group of stakeholders and the general public. The guidance was co-designed through a number of task & finish groups made up of SBNI member agencies with specialist advice sought from experts in the fields of recruitment practices ie HR lead attached to a HSCT and the PHA. - The focus of the guidance is to provide advice on optimising safety when seeking to create or backfill a post and should complement the selection and recruitment policy and procedures held by respective organisations. Recruiters & Applicants Gender Marital status Ethnicity	The guidance acknowledges that transgender people may not wish to share their gender and name with an employer and that AccessNI can facilitate a background check via a separate process, Recruiters need to be mindful to name changes for eg if applicant has recently married and ensure documentation aligns with photographic ID. Applicants need to ensure they have the correct documentation Recruiters will need to be aware of how to process criminal record checks for those who have lived in another country for more than 3 months in last 5 years and the guidance

Applicants Age	provides signposting to recruiters on how to do this. Applicants whose first language is not English may require some parts of the recruitment process to be translated or a more simplified version used to aid their understanding. This will be the responsibility of the employing authority. Young adults who do not have a driving licence or a passport may need to present with an alternative formal type of ID. Where specific priorities and aims result in products being commissioned and created, the SBNI will continue to ensure that such relevant work will be screened.
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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)

Group	Impact	Suggestions
Religion	None identified	Focus on promoting safer recruitment guidance alongside respective agencies selection & recruitment policy & procedures
Political Opinion	None identified	Focus on promoting safer recruitment guidance alongside respective agencies selection & recruitment policy & procedures
Ethnicity	None identified.	Focus on promoting safer recruitment guidance alongside respective agencies selection & recruitment policy & procedures

(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	
Minor impact	√
No further impact	

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

Please tick:

Yes	
No	√

Please give reasons for your decisions.

The target audience includes all SBNI member agencies and organisations who recruit staff & volunteers to work alongside children. It is also relevant to all organisations and individuals who come into contact with children and young people and their families, including those working with adults who are parents or have contact with children. It is individual agency's responsibility to ensure that equality considerations are consistently kept under review and responded to.

The main equality issues that have been identified have been addressed in the guidance and the consultation thereof. It is not thought that subjecting the guidance to an EQIA will identify further opportunities to promote equality of opportunity.

The SBNI recognises the need to consider the impact on Section 75 groups of this guidance and subsequent policies and programmes of work. The needs, experiences and priorities of these groups will vary and any related policies and procedures will be equality screened as appropriate as they are developed and taken forward.

Therefore, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required at this stage.

(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>
Not applicable	Not applicable

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>
Not applicable	Not applicable

(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.	Yes
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
Article 8 Right to Privacy	Yes	Completion of application process, self-disclosure form, references and Accessni checks will include personal and sensitive information	No as the safeguarding of children is paramount.

** 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.

The Safer Recruitment guidance has been written taking cognisance of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in (NI) 2024, Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 amended 2012, Human Right Act 1998 and the UNCRC (1989)

In terms of the disclosure of personal and sensitive information through the recruitment process only key people within the recruiting organisation will have access to same.

(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
The SBNI will continue to monitor requests for alternative formats to inform the development of information in various formats at the time of publication.		

Approved Lead Officer:



Helen McKenzie

Position:

SBNI Director of Operations

Date:

14.8.26

Policy/Decision Screened by:

Sheila Simons

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**

Template produced June 2011

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 the Business Services Organisation's Equality Unit:

2 Franklin Street; Belfast; BT2 8DQ; email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net; phone: 028 90535531 (for Text Relay prefix with 18001); fax: 028 9

