

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 and Human Rights Information Bank on the BSO website:

[Equality Screening - Business Services Organisation \(BSO\) Website](#)

SCREENING TEMPLATE

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

(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

1.1 Title of policy or decision

BSO Annual Business Plan 2026-27

1.2 Description of policy or decision

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

Business Service Organisation (BSO) Annual Business Plan 2026-27 sets out clearly how it will best utilise resources to achieve its key strategic aims and objectives. The three objectives are:

- **BSO Objective 1:** Build strategic partnerships with our customers to deliver high quality services, demonstrating value and effective ways of working.

We will strengthen our partnerships with customers by improving transparency, value for money and service quality. Our key actions will include finalising the new charging model, realising cost savings through operational efficiencies, benchmarking our services, enhancing our performance, and embedding a more commercial approach across BSO.

- **BSO Objective 2:** Support and invest in our people, their potential and their contribution in ensuring BSO is a great place to work.

We will invest in our workforce by supporting and investing in our staff. Our key actions will include delivering the first year of our refreshed People Strategy, developing a strategic workforce plan and strengthening our staff engagement,

as well as health and well-being.

- **BSO Objective 3:** Offer opportunities that continue to enable and support innovative improvements across HSC.

We will prioritise innovative improvements across BSO and Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland. Our key actions will include the development of the BSO Innovation Hub, supporting digital transformation by ensuring BSO is ready for Equip and progressing our Sustainability Strategy by embedding cleaner and greener practices across BSO.

The BSO Business Plan 2026-27 is clearly aligned to the three key strategic objectives of the organisation. It is focused on our customers, our service delivery and our staff:

- Support the system reset through financial focus and further investment.
- Embed commercial mindset.
- Maximise Performance through our Performance & Improvement Framework.
- Implementing the Year 1 of refreshed people Strategy.
- Deliver strategic Workforce planning.
- Prioritise Health and Wellbeing and strengthen staff engagement.
- Develop the BSO Innovation Hub.
- Support staff with a major digital transformation across BSO.
- Deliver our Sustainability Strategy.

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

Main stakeholders are BSO staff, current and potential organisational customers of BSO, consumers of BSO services, DoH (in particular Sponsor Branch).

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

- **what are they?**

“Transforming Your Care”, a review of Health and Social Care in NI (DoH, 2011)
‘Quality 2020’, a 10-year strategy to Protect and Improve Quality in Health and Social Care in NI (DoH, 2011)

‘Making Life Better’: a whole system strategic framework for public health 2013-2023 (DoH, 2016)

Health and Wellbeing 2026: ‘Delivering Together’ (DoH, 2016)

Department of Health (2017) HSC Collective Leadership Strategy

BSO Service Offerings and Service Level Agreements

Smith, J. and Coveney, S. (2020) New Decade, New Approach United Kingdom
Government legislation (2020) Coronavirus Act 2020

- **who owns them?**

NI Assembly

DoH

BSO

SPPG

Public Health Agency

HSC Trusts

Other HSC customer organisations

(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.

- [Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'- Documents | The Northern Ireland Executive](#)
- Census 2021
- Equality Commissions NI, 2006
- [Policy and research | Carers NI \(carersuk.org\)](#)
- GIRES. The Number of Gender Variant People in the UK - Update 2011. Available at; [Prevalence2011.pdf](#)
- [ECNI - Delivering Gender Equality in Northern Ireland](#)
- Health Survey NI 2012-13
http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-public-health.htm
- Electoral Office NI, 2011 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) 2007
- BSO Workforce Data (HRPTS) 2024
- [Sexual identity, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

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	<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	<p>No questions relating to gender identity were asked in the NI Census. UK Census data 2021 for England and Wales reported: 0.5% of the population answered 'no' to the question 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'</p> <p>Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (0.24%) answered "No" but did not provide a write-in response • (0.10%) identified as a trans man • (0.10%) identified as a trans woman • (0.06%) identified as non-binary • (0.04%) wrote in a different gender identity
Age	<p>Age profile of the NI population (Census 2021):</p> <p>Age band Population Percentage</p> <p>0-14 365,200 19.2%</p> <p>(15-64 1,211,500 63.7%)</p> <p>15-39 594,400 31.2%</p> <p>40-64 617,100 32.4%</p> <p>(65+ 326,500 17.2%)</p> <p>65-84 287,100 15.1%</p> <p>85+ 39,400 2.1%</p> <p>All ages 1,903,200 100%</p> <p>BSO STAFF</p> <p>Male 48.12%</p> <p>Female 51.88%</p>

Religion	<p>Current Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '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%). <p>Religion/religion of upbringing (Number - Percentage)</p> <p>Catholic 869,800 45.7%</p> <p>Current religion 805,200 42.3%</p> <p>Religion of upbringing 64,600 3.4%</p> <p>Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related) 827,500 43.5%</p> <p>Current religion 711,000 37.4%</p> <p>Religion of upbringing 116,600 6.1%</p> <p>Other religions 28,500 1.5%</p> <p>Current religion 25,500 1.3%</p> <p>Religion of upbringing 3,000 0.2%</p> <p>None 177,400 9.3%</p> <p>All usual residents 1,903,200 100.0%</p>
Political Opinion	<p>National identity (nationality based) (Number – Percentage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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% <p>All usual residents 1,903,200 100.0%</p> <p>BSO STAFF</p> <p>Broadly Nationalist 3.71% Other 4.20% Broadly Unionist 3.76% Not assigned 82.15% Do not wish to answer 6.18%</p>
Marital Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45.59% (690, 509) of those aged 16 or over were married • 38.07% (576, 708) were single • 0.18% (2,742) were registered in civil partnerships (more than double since 2011) • 6.02% (91,128) were either divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved • 6.36% (96, 384) were either widowed or a surviving partner from a civil partnership <p>3.78% (57, 272) were separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)</p> <p>BSO STAFF</p> <p>Divorced 1.63% Mar/CP 33.53% Other 0.89% Separated 0.25% Single 11.37% Unknown 51.53% Widow/R 0.59% Not assigned 0.20%</p>

Dependent Status	<p>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.)</p> <p>Northern Ireland All usual residents aged 5 and over 1,789,348 Percentage of usual residents aged 5 and over who provide:</p> <p>No unpaid care 87.58%</p> <p>1-19 hours unpaid care per week 5.63%</p> <p>20-34 hours unpaid care per week 1.38%</p> <p>35-49 hours unpaid care per week 1.57%</p> <p>50+ hours unpaid care per week 3.84%</p> <p>Carers NI (State of Caring 2022 report)</p> <p>There are over 290,000 people providing some form of unpaid care for a sick or disabled family member or friend in Northern Ireland – around 1 in 5 adults. (Carers UK (2022). Carers Week research report 2022.)</p> <p>Of those participating in the survey...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% identified as female and 17% identified as male. • 4% are aged 25-34, 17% are aged 35-44, 33% are aged 45-54, 31% are aged 55-64 and 14% are aged 65+. • 24% have a disability. • 98% described their ethnicity as white. • 28% have childcare responsibilities for a non-disabled child under the age of 18 alongside their caring role. • 56% are in some form of employment and 18% are retired from work. • 31% have been caring for 15 year or more, 16% for between 10-14 years, 25% for 5-9 years, 25% for 1-4 years, and 3% for less than a year.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% provide 90 hours or more of care per week, 13% care for 50-89 hours, 23% care for 20-49 hours, and 19% care for 1-19 hours per week. • 67% care for one person, 25% care for two people, 5% care for three people and 3% care for four or more people. <p>BSO STAFF Yes 11.72% Not assigned 81.31% No 6.97%</p>										
Disability	<p>Out of all usual residents (n=1,903,179), the Percentage of usual residents whose day-to-day activities are:</p> <p>Limited a lot – 11.45%</p> <p>Limited a little – 12.88%</p> <p>Not limited – 75.67%</p> <p>('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.)</p> <p>The breakdown of the various long-term conditions as outlined in the 2021 Census is:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1435 1437 1984"> <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> </tbody> </table>	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
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	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
	BSO STAFF No 33.78% Not assigned 64.39% Yes 1.83%	
Ethnicity	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%

	<p>Romanian 5,600 0.3%</p> <p>Portuguese 5,000 0.3%</p> <p>Arabic 3,600 0.2%</p> <p>Bulgarian 3,600 0.2%</p> <p>Other languages 32,200 1.8%</p> <p>All usual residents aged 3 and over 1,836,600 100.0%</p> <p>BSO STAFF</p> <p>Not assigned 76.41%</p> <p>White 23.19%</p> <p>Other 0.25%</p> <p>Black African 0.00%</p> <p>Indian 0.10%</p> <p>Chinese 0.05%</p>
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight or heterosexual: 90.04% (1,363,859) • Gay or lesbian: 1.17% (17,713) • Bisexual: 0.75% (11,306) • Other sexual orientation: 0.17 (2,597) • Prefer not to say: 4.58% (69,307) <p>Not stated: 3.3% (49,961)</p> <p>BSO STAFF</p> <p>Do not wish to answer 1.43%</p> <p>Not assigned 82.00%</p> <p>Opposite sex 15.38%</p> <p>Both Sexes 0.25%</p> <p>same sex 0.94%</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. Also give consideration to multiple identities (such as single parents for example).

Category	Needs and Experience
	This Business Plan sets out the key areas of work for 2026-27, aligned with the Strategic and Corporate direction of the BSO. The BSO recognises that these areas of work as defined in the Business Plan are too top level to meaningfully undertake screening at this stage. We therefore make a commitment to equality screen relevant work areas as they are taken forward.
Gender	There is no evidence to suggest that the needs and experiences on the basis of basis of gender.
Age	Consideration should be given to older groups when considering the delivery of engagement and digital transformation to ensure there is an appropriate balance and accessibility to services.
Religion	There is no evidence to suggest that the needs and experiences differ on the basis of religion.
Political Opinion	There is no evidence to suggest that the needs and experiences differ on the basis of political opinion.
Marital Status	There is no evidence to suggest that the needs and experiences differ on the basis of marital status.
Dependent Status	There is no evidence to suggest that the needs and experiences differ on the basis of dependent status.
Disability	Consideration must be given at all times to how people with a disability can access BSO services so that they are not disadvantaged in any way and have a quality experience when using our services and engaging with us. Consideration must be given to the range of disabilities.
Ethnicity	Consideration must be given to those whose first language is not English, and who may require access to documentation in a different language.
Sexual Orientation	There is no evidence to suggest that the needs and experiences differ on the basis of sexual orientation.

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>In screening the BSO Annual Business Plan 2026-27, BSO are aware that individual service areas will need to equality screen their own individual service area business plans.</p> <p>Issues relating to accessible information for people with disabilities are considered.</p> <p>Those whose first language is not English: As part of HSCNI, people can access the regional interpreting, translation and transcription services.</p>	<p>BSO can make available on request alternative formats of publications.</p>

2.4 Good Relations

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

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

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

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

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

Please tick:

Major impact	
Minor impact	x
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	x

Please give reasons for your decisions.

The main equality issues associated with the BSO Annual Business Plan 2026-27 have been outlined and addressed above. Individual Service Areas will be required to screen their own service area business plans. It is not thought that subjecting the BSO business plan to a full EQIA will identify any further opportunities to promote equality of opportunity.

(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>
N/A	N/A

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>
N/A	N/A

(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.

N/A

(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
N/A	N/A	N/A

Approved Lead Officer: Karen Hunter
Position: Director of Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement (SP&CE)
Contact Details _____
Date: February 2026
Policy/Decision Screened by: _____

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