

Equality and Human Rights Screening Template



The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) 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:

Equality Unit
Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast BT2 8DQ
028 90535564
email: equality.unit@hscni.net

SCREENING TEMPLATE

(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

1.1 Title of policy or decision

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Strategic Plan 2026-2030

1.2 Description of policy or decision

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) was set up under the Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011 and is the statutory body responsible for coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of its 21 member bodies and its six independent persons for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is the key strategic leadership and management organisation for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

The SBNI is a partnership organisation consisting of all of the key statutory bodies, the major voluntary agencies and appointed independent persons that operate and resource the safeguarding and child protection system in Northern Ireland.

The SBNI Independent Chair, senior representatives from the 21 member bodies and the five independent persons are members of the Board of the SBNI. The independent persons are the SBNI Independent Chair, the Case Management Review Panel Chair, two Safeguarding Panel Chairs and two Independent Lay Persons.

Additionally, other partner organisations involved in safeguarding and child protection in Northern Ireland are represented on the various statutory and non-statutory committees and sub-groups that support the Board in its work.

The Board and its statutory and non-statutory committees are supported in its aims and priorities by a small SBNI Central Support Team (currently eight staff). For more details on the SBNI see: www.safeguardingni.org

The SBNI is an unincorporated statutory body and relies on the Public Health Agency (PHA) for key corporate accountability, business and governance arrangements

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 SBNI has developed a draft Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2030. This draft strategy sets out the strategic direction for the SBNI for the next four years, taking into account the vision and priorities set out by the SBNI Board and builds upon its previous strategic plan 2022-2026.

The draft Strategic Plan details our purpose, focus and outcomes and is a high level document setting out the mission, vision, values, direction and priorities for the SBNI over the next four years.

The draft Strategic Plan will be supported by annual business plans enabling the SBNI to incorporate new priorities and challenges that may arise over this period. It is the key core accountability tool, along with our annual assurance statement for the Department of Health (DoH), the SBNI sponsor department.

The SBNI will deliver on its mission and vision based on the following strategic priorities:

- To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people
- To hear and respond to the voices of children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse
- To support children and young people to exercise their rights to enjoy the benefits of the online world free from harm, fear and abuse

To help prevent, protect and safeguard children and young people affected by child exploitation (sexual, criminal, radicalisation and other emerging forms of exploitation). The Programme for Government (PfG) includes a Children's Rights Impact Assessment, which ensures that policies and decisions are informed by the views and experiences of children and young people.

It commits to engaging directly with children and young people during consultations and programme development, recognising their voices as essential to shaping services that affect them.

The priority areas for Children and Young People within PfG include:

- Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is one of the nine immediate priorities.
- Delivering more affordable, accessible, high-quality early learning and childcare, which supports both children's development and family wellbeing.
- There is a focus on safer communities and ending violence against women and girls, which includes safeguarding children and young people.

All of this is underscored by an agreed corporate value base that places children and young people at the heart of what we do.

The current context of restricted finances and upcoming health and social care reform must be noted as potential constraints for this strategy. Both of these have been considered throughout the strategic planning development process.

1.3 Main stakeholders affected (internal and external)

Internal:

- SBNI Independent Chair
- SBNI Member Bodies (21)
- SBNI Independent Persons (5)
- SBNI Partner Agencies
- SBNI Statutory and Non-Statutory Committees
- Those other safeguarding and child protection agencies who sit on the five local SBNI Safeguarding Panels
- Those organisations whose goods and services are commissioned by the SBNI
- SBNI Central Support Team

External:

- Children and Young People
- Their families and carers

- Wider Public
- Department of Health (as the SBNI sponsor department)
- Public Health Agency (as the SBNI corporate host)
- Business Services Organisation Equality Unit (as the SBNI Equality Partner).

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

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 Equality and Disability Action Plan 2023-2028
- SBNI Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- SBNI Annual Report 2024-2025
- SBNI Safeguarding Statistics Snapshot 2024-2025
- SBNI Corporate Annual Business Plan 2025-2026
- SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2023
- SBNI Communications Strategy 2021-2023
- SBNI Engagement Strategy 2021-2023

External:

- DoH - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland Policy Document November 2024
- Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'
- End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG): Strategic Framework
- Child Criminal Exploitation Action Plan 2024
- Strategy for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/Conflict
- Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy 2024-2031
- Modern slavery and human trafficking strategy 2024-27
- UNCRC and International Conventions
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Department of Health Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031
- Department of Health NI: Health and Wellbeing 2026-Delivering Together
- Children's Services Cooperation Act 2015
- Northern Ireland's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2025-2035

Central to obtaining and analysing all pertinent and relevant information to inform the development of the strategic plan and its associated equality screening has been the involvement of children and young people, their parents and carers in proactively eliciting their views on what the SBNI should focus on and prioritise for the next four years, with some guidance as to what Board members believe should be the SBNI 2026-2030 priorities and objectives. This is in keeping with the SBNI's statutory functions to promote communication between the SBNI Board and children and young people for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Specific direct proactive engagements have been and still are being conducted with:

- at least seven events with children and young people
- three events with parents and carers
- three opportunities for the SBNI Independent Chair to meet with children and young people directly to listen to their views.

The outputs from these engagement exercises will form the basis of a public consultation between 10 December 2025 to 23 February 2026.

A review of the consultation responses and production of a draft Strategic Plan will be review by the DoH between 24 February 2026 – 13 March 2026, with the final strategic plan being presented to the SBNI Board on 15 April 2026.

(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 2023-2024
- SBNI Statistics Snapshot 2021 – 2022 and 2022 - 2023
- 2011 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
- Department of Health Children’s Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2019-2020
- Department of Education School Enrolments 2022-2023 statistical bulletins
- NI Young Life and Times Survey 2024 – Religion [summary24.pdf](#)
- [Tables from health survey Northern Ireland | Department of Health](#)
- [Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2023 - GOV.UK](#)
- Articles 8 and 6 Humans Rights Act 1998
- Equality Commission for NI (2022) Shadow Report from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the Fifth Monitoring Report of the United Kingdom. Available at: <https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/AdvisoryCommittee-FCNM-5thMonitoringReportUK.pdf?ext=.pdf>

The SBNI commissioned Barnardo’s NI to undertake consultation exercises to ensure that the views and voices of children and young people, parents and carers are heard and responded to in relation to the safeguarding and child protection system in Northern Ireland. The remit specified that there needed to be a representative sample of children and young people to be engaged with and that this must include coverage of Section 75 categories where applicable and these must include:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability

The above must also include those children and young people, and parents and carers who may be difficult to engage with due to their vulnerability and/or marginalisation; and ensure a rural/urban representation of children and young people, and parents and carers.

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	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	<p>General population: 1,903,175 – people in Northern Ireland 967,043 (50.8%) – female 936,132 (49.2%) – male</p> <p>SBNI Statistics: 2,298 – Children on the Child protection Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1220 Males • 1087 Females <p>3,281 Children in Care of HSC Trusts (LAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53% Male • 47% Female <p>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 (8%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Transgender Research suggests for the Northern Ireland population as a whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender nonconforming to some degree (1%)

- likely to seek medical treatment for their condition at some stage (0.2%)
- receiving such treatment already (0.03%)
- having already undergone transition (0.02%)
- having a GRC (0.005%)
- likely to begin treatment during the year (0.004%).

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).

Workforce statistics available at time of screening:

Health and Social Care workforce (March 2024 statistics) consisted of 66,119 WTE (whole time equivalent) members of staff employed across 75,069 active posts.

26.7% of the HSC workforce are registered nurses and midwives (17,622 WTE)

6.5% nursing & midwifery support

13.4% social services staff (excluding domiciliary care)

7.9% medical & dental

1.8% ambulance

19.9% admin & clerical

1.2% estates services

7.6% support services

15% professional & technical

Of these staff:

78% were female

22% male

NICS (NI Civil Service) Equality statistics (January 2024)

50.2% of workforce was female.

0.6% are from a minority ethnic group (economically active population is 3%).

Community and Voluntary sectors

No statistics were found to inform this screening.

Education: 2024 census:

number of fulltime equivalent teachers is 19,893.6; teacher headcount is 21,513.

	4916 were male (23%)
Age	<p>General Population</p> <p>Age profile of the NI population (Census 2021):</p> <p>Age band Population Percentage</p> <p>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%</p> <p>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</p> <p>Male</p> <p>0-15 – 3% 16-44 – 5% 45 – 64 – 16% 65 and over – 33%</p> <p>Female</p> <p>0 – 15 – 2% 16 – 44 – 5% 45 – 64 – 17% 65 and over – 38%</p> <p>Overall there are greater proportions of older people with a disability.</p> <p>SBNI Statistics:</p> <p>437,800 – children under 18 years old (22.4% of total NI population)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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% <p>24,112 – Children known to Social Services as a Child in Need</p> <p>4,147 Children in Care of HSC Trusts (LAC)</p> <p>2,283 – Children on the Child Protection Register</p>

	<p>343,420 – pupils in schools 172,980 – pupils in primary schools 146,680 – pupils in post-primary schools 23,760 – pupils in funded pre-school education</p>																		
Religion	<p>Census 2021 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) 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%</p> <p>The NI Young Life and Times Survey 2024, for those who responded to belonging to a religion, gave the following percentages:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Church of Ireland (Anglican)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Catholic</td> <td style="text-align: right;">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Presbyterian</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Methodist</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Baptist</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Free Presbyterian</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brethren</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> </table>	Church of Ireland (Anglican)	7%	Catholic	60%	Presbyterian	19%	Methodist	2%	Baptist	2%	Free Presbyterian	2%	Brethren	1%	Muslim	2%	Other	6%
Church of Ireland (Anglican)	7%																		
Catholic	60%																		
Presbyterian	19%																		
Methodist	2%																		
Baptist	2%																		
Free Presbyterian	2%																		
Brethren	1%																		
Muslim	2%																		
Other	6%																		
Political Opinion	Census 2021																		

	<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% <p>National identity (person based) (Number – Percentage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Northern Ireland Life and Times (2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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% <p>Data from the 2021 Census informs us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married or in a civil partnership 45%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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.</p>
<p>Dependent Status</p>	<p>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.)</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% 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%</p> <p>Information from Carers NI suggests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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+.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>It may be concluded that a considerable share of people with a disability are carers themselves.</p>																						
Disability	<p>20.7% (374,700) regard themselves as having a disability or long – 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.</p> <p>The breakdown of the various long-term conditions in the census 2021 is:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="424 1055 1551 2027"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="424 1055 987 1173">Type of long-term condition</th> <th data-bbox="987 1055 1551 1173">Percentage of population with condition</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1173 987 1249">Deafness or partial hearing loss</td> <td data-bbox="987 1173 1551 1249">5.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1249 987 1326">Blindness or partial sight loss</td> <td data-bbox="987 1249 1551 1326">1.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1326 987 1442">Mobility of dexterity difficulty that requires wheelchair use</td> <td data-bbox="987 1326 1551 1442">1.48</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1442 987 1559">Mobility of dexterity difficulty that limits basic physical activities</td> <td data-bbox="987 1442 1551 1559">10.91</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1559 987 1635">Intellectual or learning disability</td> <td data-bbox="987 1559 1551 1635">0.89</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1635 987 1711">Learning difficulty</td> <td data-bbox="987 1635 1551 1711">3.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1711 987 1787">Autism or Asperger syndrome</td> <td data-bbox="987 1711 1551 1787">1.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1787 987 1863">An emotional., psychological or mental health condition</td> <td data-bbox="987 1787 1551 1863">8.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1863 987 1957">Frequent periods of confusion or memory loss</td> <td data-bbox="987 1863 1551 1957">1.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1957 987 2027">Long-term pain or discomfort</td> <td data-bbox="987 1957 1551 2027">11.58</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	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
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
Ethnicity	<p>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)</p> <p>The rare Disease Partnership www.nirdp.org.uk suggests that 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 NI. A 'disease' is 'rare' if it affects fewer than 1 person in 2000.</p> <p>Research using data from 2011 (Getting and staying in Employment: Limiting long-term illness (Ijpelaar & Hughes; 2023) suggest that the disability employment gap was 52.3 percentage points (pps) - the difference in employment rate between those with (31.4%) and without a long-term health problem or disability (83.7%) of the household population aged 30 to 59 years. The employment gap was noted to range from 14.4 pps for deafness or partial hearing loss to 61.8pps for those with frequent periods of confusion or memory loss.</p> <p>SBNI Annual Report 2023-2024 Statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 children on the Child Protection Register with a disability • 5,636 children known to social services with a disability • 556 Children in care recorded as having a disability. <p>Equality</p> <p>In the general population the 2021 Census indicated that 3.4% (65,600) of the usual resident population belonged to minority ethnic groups.</p> <p>Ethnic Group</p> <p>Ethnic Group Number Percentage</p> <p>White 1,837,600 96.6%</p> <p>Minority Ethnic Group 65,600 3.4%</p> <p>Black 11,000 0.6%</p> <p>Indian 9,900 0.5%</p> <p>Chinese 9,500 0.5%</p> <p>Filipino 4,500 0.2%</p>	

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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Top languages spoken by newcomers</p> <p>Polish Lithuanian Portuguese Other growing languages include Arabic, Romanian, and Bulgarian</p> <p>Workforces: NICS (NI Civil Service) Equality statistics (January 2024) 0.6% are from a minority ethnic group (economically active population is 3%).</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Census 2021 data relating to sexual orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1% of the population aged 16 and over identified as LGB+, with significant variations across different regions and age groups. • 90.0% identified as 'straight or heterosexual' and 7.9% either did not answer the question or ticked 'prefer not to say'. • 4.6% of people aged 16 to 24 identified as LGB+, this falls to 0.3% of people aged 65 and over. • Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland (2.1%) has the lowest percentage of people who identify as LGB+ <p>A Department of Education report revealed that 67% of LGBT young people in Northern Ireland feel their schools are unwelcoming. The Rainbow Project highlighted systemic issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homophobic and transphobic language being commonplace. • Trans students being forced to wear incorrect uniforms. • Lack of inclusive relationship and sexuality education. <p>These findings underscore institutional bias and a failure to uphold statutory duties to promote equality.</p> <p>The Rainbow Project’s current strategy outlines continued challenges, such as, LGBTQIA+ individuals still face violence in homes, schools, and</p>

	workplaces; Health inequalities persist, including higher rates of HIV, depression, self-harm, and suicide ideation.
--	--

2.3 Qualitative Data

What are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the categories in relation to this policy or decision and what equality issues emerge from this? Note if policy affects both staff and service users, please discuss issues for both.

Category	Needs and Experiences
Gender	<p>The SBNI Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030 is a high level document which sets out the strategic direction of the organisation over the next four years. This strategy will be supported by annual business plans, work programmes, policies and business cases as appropriate. The plan covers a wide range of issues across safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland. The direction set out in the plan is closely aligned with the core functions of the SBNI as defined by legislation and with other key strategies, including the draft NI Executive Programme for Government Framework.</p> <p>The SBNI recognises that the needs, experiences and priorities of the groups within each Section 75 category may vary substantially in relation to the work emanating from this strategic plan. A top level screening of the draft strategy will not do justice to giving consideration to the needs of all the Section 75 groups. Therefore, the SBNI is committed to undertaking, where appropriate, the screening of associated pieces of work as they are taken forward, for example, annual business plans.</p> <p>When associated annual business and work plans fall out of this high level strategy, the SBNI gives a commitment to considering in detail the equality issues that may affect the equality groups in respect of these particular products. At this juncture the SBNI feels that the following will need to be considered in respect of the screening of the products relating to its priorities in the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, as determined through consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement and communication issues for older and younger children (to include those with disability) • Gender appropriate engagement and communication channels for males and females <p>Additionally, some people with a disability may require the draft Strategy to be written in plain English or other medium.</p>
Age	
Religion	
Political Opinion	
Marital Status	
Dependent Status	
Disability	
Ethnicity	
Sexual Orientation	

2.4 Multiple Identities

Are there any potential impacts of the policy or decision on people with multiple identities? For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people.

It is possible that some of the work taken forward under the priorities and aims set out in the Strategic Plan, may impact on people with multiple identities. The SBNI recognises that the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities will vary across our work.

In our commitment 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>
<p>The draft strategy will be written in a manner to make it accessible to a wide group of stakeholders and the general public.</p> <p>Where specific priorities and aims result in products being commissioned and created, the SBNI will ensure that such relevant work will be screened.</p>	<p>As an integral part of the annual business planning process, each statutory and non-statutory committee and sub-group within SBNI formulates its own specific work plan to deliver on its work, mandated by our strategic and annual business plans in the financial year ahead.</p> <p>A range of actions to be delivered as part of the overarching Business Plan will be Equality Screened and where appropriate, and Equality Impact Assessed.</p>

<p>When preparing the Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030, we took the opportunity to review our mission, vision and values to ensure their continued relevance to our work and our population.</p> <p>An easy read version of both the draft consultation and final plan will be produced.</p> <p>A child-friendly version of both the draft consultation and final plan will be produced.</p>	
--	--

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	Tackling any inequalities in the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people will help promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	Continued focus on partnership working and public participation where appropriate.
Political Opinion	Tackling any inequalities in the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people will help promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	Continued focus on partnership working and public participation where appropriate.
Ethnicity	Tackling any inequalities in the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people will help promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	Continued focus on partnership working and public participation where appropriate.

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

The SBNI Strategic Plan 2026-2030 sets out the focus and direction of the SBNI over the next four years from 01 April 2026.

The plan covers a wide range of issues across the safeguarding and protection of children landscape in Northern Ireland. It has the aim of improving the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and young people by ensuring all member and partner agencies work together in partnership to prevent and protect them from risk and harm for all children and young people in NI (inclusive of all relevant section 75 groups).

The SBNI recognises the need to consider the impact on Section 75 groups of this draft strategy and subsequent policies and programmes of work. The needs, experiences and priorities of these groups will vary and annual business plans, work programmes, policies and business cases will be equality screened as appropriate as they are developed and taken forward over the next four years.

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

As an integral part of this strategy and the annual business planning processes emanating from it, each statutory and non-statutory committee and sub-group within the SBNI will formulate its own work plan to deliver on its work in each the financial year ahead within this strategic planning cycle. A range of actions to be delivered as part of the overarching Business Plan will be Equality Screened and where appropriate, Equality Impact Assessed.

(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.	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
N/A			

** 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
Monitoring data will be identified through screening of work streams emanating from the draft Strategy	Monitoring data will be identified through screening of work streams emanating from the draft Strategy	Monitoring data will be identified through screening of work streams emanating from the draft Strategy
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:



Position:

Director of Operations

Date:

10/11/2025

Policy/Decision Screened by:

Paul McNeill: Business Support Manager

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 9023 2304