

Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

The RQIA 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: [BSO Equality Unit - Home](#)

For advice and support on screening contact:
Equality Unit, BSO, 2nd Floor, James House, 2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast, BT7 2JA.
email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net

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

RQIA Complaints Policy

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)**

This policy has been updated to reflect the The Health and Social Care Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) published on 1 July 2025.

This updated policy also reflects learning from previous complaints.

RQIA recognises the importance of having an accessible and impartial process for dealing efficiently and effectively with complaints about our performance.

RQIA are committed to listening to people and learning from their experiences of interacting with us. The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will address complaints in a timely and effective way. We will ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate training in complaints management.

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

Anyone directly affected by the way in which RQIA has carried out its functions, or anyone acting directly on their behalf, may make a complaint under this policy. This includes individuals or a person acting on behalf of an organisation.

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

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Guidance In Relation To The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Model Complaints Handling Procedure
- RQIA Unreasonable, Persistent, Vexatious Contacts Policy
- Grievance Procedure and other HR employment related policies / procedures – owned by BSO Human Resources

(2) CONSIDERATION OF EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS ISSUES AND EVIDENCE USED

2.1 Data gathering

Other sources of equality data include:

- Census 2021 data published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).
- Section 75 equality profile of our staff (Sept 2025)
- Human Resources statistics and workforce data for RQIA.
- McBride, R.S. (2011): Healthcare Issues for Transgender People Living in Northern Ireland. Belfast.
- Equality Commission NI, 2006.
- http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-public-health.htm - Health Survey NI 2012-13.
- Research Reports including from GIRES (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) and [Getting and staying in work - LLTI 2001 - Research Report \(nisra.gov.uk\)](http://www.nisra.gov.uk)
- Previous screening and equality impact assessment analysis where equality issues were highlighted.

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.

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	General Population Profile Mid-year population estimate (2022; published)

The size of the resident population in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2022 was 1,910,543.

Just over half (50.8 per cent) of the population were female, with 970,596 females compared to 939,947 males.

**From The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES):
2021 Census**

For the first time 2021 UK Census asked people aged over 16:

**“Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?”
45.7 million (94.0% of the population aged 16 years and over) answered
the question.**

**45.4 million (93.5%) answered “Yes” and 262,000 (0.5%) answered
“No”.**

2.9 million (6.0%) did not answer the question.

Of the 262,000 people (0.5%) who answered “No”, indicating that their gender
identity was different from their sex registered at birth:

**118,000 (0.24%) answered “No” but did not provide any further
information**

48,000 (0.10%) identified as a trans man

48,000 (0.10%) identified as a trans woman

30,000 (0.06%) identified as non-binary

18,000 (0.04%) wrote in a different gender identity

Data from other sources indicate that the Census figures may understate the size of
the trans and gender diverse population.

Internal surveys conducted in 2017 by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and the
BBC indicated **2%**.

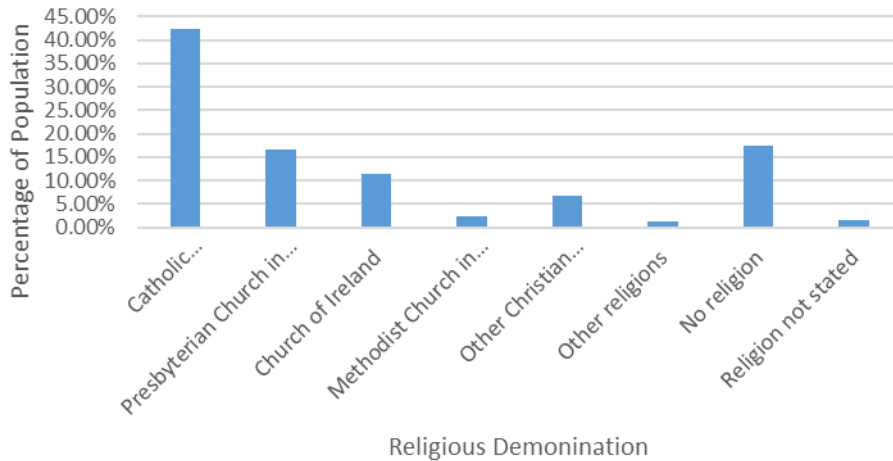
An Ipsos survey carried out in 2022 resulted in **3.1%** of people saying they were
trans, non-binary, gender queer or gender fluid, Agender or another gender that
was not male or female.

RQIA staff data as of September 2025:

Male	25.00%
Female	75.00%

Age	<p>General population Age profile of the NI population (Census 2021):</p> <p>Age band Population Percentage:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="331 371 879 707"> <tr><td>0-14</td><td>365,200</td><td>19.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>15-64</td><td>1,211,500</td><td>63.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>15-39</td><td>594,400</td><td>31.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>40-64</td><td>617,100</td><td>32.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>65+</td><td>326,500</td><td>17.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>65-84</td><td>287,100</td><td>15.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>85+</td><td>39,400</td><td>2.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>All ages</td><td>1,903,200</td><td>100%</td></tr> </table> <p>RQIA staff data as of September 2025:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="331 857 847 1256"> <tr><td>16-24</td><td>0.56%</td></tr> <tr><td>25-29</td><td>4.44%</td></tr> <tr><td>30-34</td><td>6.11%</td></tr> <tr><td>35-39</td><td>10.56%</td></tr> <tr><td>40-44</td><td>11.11%</td></tr> <tr><td>45-49</td><td>8.89%</td></tr> <tr><td>50-54</td><td>18.89%</td></tr> <tr><td>55-59</td><td>16.11%</td></tr> <tr><td>60-64</td><td>16.67%</td></tr> <tr><td>>=65</td><td>6.67%</td></tr> </table>	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%	16-24	0.56%	25-29	4.44%	30-34	6.11%	35-39	10.56%	40-44	11.11%	45-49	8.89%	50-54	18.89%	55-59	16.11%	60-64	16.67%	>=65	6.67%
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Community Background	<p>General population Census 2021 Current Religion:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="331 1368 1066 1675"> <tr><td>'no religion'</td><td>17.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>'religion not stated'</td><td>1.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Catholic</td><td>42.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Presbyterian Church in Ireland</td><td>16.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Church of Ireland</td><td>11.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>Methodist</td><td>2.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other Christian denominations</td><td>6.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other non-Christian Religions</td><td>1.3%</td></tr> </table>	'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%																												
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Census Results 2021 - Religious Denomination



RQIA staff data as of December 2024:

Perceived Protestant	0.56%
Protestant	30.00%
Perceived Roman Catholic	1.11%
Roman Catholic	35.56%
Neither	2.78%
Perceived Neither	0.00%
Not assigned	30.00%

Political Opinion

**General population
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%

RQIA staff data as of September 2025:

Broadly Nationalist	4.44%
Other	2.78%
Broadly Unionist	2.22%
Not assigned	81.67%
Do not wish to answer	8.89%

Marital Status

General population

Census 2021:

- 38.1% single (never married/civil partnered)
- 45.6% married
- 0.2% in a civil partnership
- 3.8% separated
- 6.0% divorced
- 6.4% widowed

RQIA staff data as of September 2025:

Divorced	2.78%
Mar/CP	32.78%
Other	0.00%
Separated	0.00%
Single	7.22%
Unknown	56.67%
Widow/R	0.00%
Not assigned	0.56%

Dependent Status

**General population
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.)

Census 2021 recorded that one person in eight of the population aged 5 or more (or 222,200 people) provided unpaid care to a relative or friend who had a health condition or illness.

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%

RQIA staff data as of September 2025:

Yes	13.89%
Not assigned	80.00%
No	6.11%

Disability

**General population
 Census 2021**

Table 5: Limiting long-term health problem or disability (Census 2021)

Limiting long-term health problem or disability	Population	Percentage
Not Limited	1,440,200	75.7%
Limited	463,000	24.3%
Limited a little	245,100	12.9%
Limited a lot	218,000	11.5%
Total	1,903,200	100.0%

The breakdown of the various long-term conditions as outlined in the 2021 Census is:

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

Source: NISRA, Census 2021, Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical bulletin Health, disability and unpaid care 15 December 2022

RQIA staff data as of September 2025:

No	34.44%
Not assigned	63.89%
Yes	1.67%

Ethnicity

General population

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%

RQIA staff data as of September 2025:

Not assigned	80.00%
White	20.00%
Other	0.00%
Black African	0.00%
Indian	0.00%
Chinese	0.00%

We recognise that within the category of 'White' a range of nationalities are represented. This is important in the context of specific needs (see section 2.4 below).

Sexual Orientation	Northern Ireland population		
	Table 1: Sexual orientation (Census 2021)		
	Sexual orientation	Population	Percent
	Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+)	31,600	2.1%
	Gay or Lesbian	17,700	1.2%
	Bisexual	11,300	0.7%
	Other sexual orientation	2,600	0.2%
	Straight or heterosexual	1,363,900	90.0%
	No sexual orientation stated	119,300	7.9%
	Prefer not to say	69,300	4.6%
No answer stated	50,000	3.3%	
Population aged 16 and over	1,514,700	100.0%	
Source: NISRA, Census 2021, Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical bulletin Sexual orientation 21 March 2023			
RQIA staff data as of September 2025:			
Do not wish to answer	0.56%		
Not assigned	80.56%		
Opposite sex	16.67%		
Both Sexes	0.00%		
same sex	2.22%		

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 Experiences
Gender	It is recognised that the RQIA staff profile does not reflect the broader general population regarding gender as three quarters of our staff are female. We have no information regarding gender identity within RQIA.
Age	Within the general population 67% are over 40 years of age. Within RQIA 78% of staff are over 40 years of age.
Religion	The majority of RQIA staff have no recorded their religion. We will encourage staff disclosure through awareness and assurance of confidentiality to improve data quality.
Political Opinion	The majority of RQIA staff have not recorded a political opinion. We will encourage staff disclosure through awareness and assurance of confidentiality to improve data quality.
Marital Status	The majority of RQIA staff have not recorded a marital status. We will encourage staff disclosure through awareness and assurance of confidentiality to improve data quality.
Dependent Status	It is possible that staff members may have a loved one for whom they provide(d) care who is now in a hospital or care facility.
Disability	RQIA is committed to ensuring that all individuals, including those with disabilities, can access information relevant to this policy. Where required, information will be provided in accessible and alternative formats such as large print, Braille, Easy Read, or digital formats compatible with assistive technologies, upon request. This approach supports equality of access and inclusion throughout the development, approval, implementation, and review of policies.
Ethnicity	It is recognised that the RQIA staff profile does not reflect the broader general population regarding ethnicity.
Sexual Orientation	It is recognised that the RQIA staff profile does not reflect the broader general population regarding 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>
RQIA's Accessible Formats Policy outlines how those developing information should consider alternative formats, and how information and publications can be	Consideration will be given to converting this policy into a variety of formats to include; easy read; audio; brail, accessible PDF and a variety of languages.

<p>requested in alternative formats.</p> <p>RQIA will consider provision of alternative formats on request to meet the needs of people with a disability who may need information in an accessible format</p> <p>RQIA will also consider the need to provide some support to those wishing to avail of this policies, and/or signpost them to an advocacy services such as the Patient Client Council, who could assist them through the complaint process.</p> <p>RQIA is also able to avail of the regional (HSCNI) interpreting contract.</p>	
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2.5 Good Relations

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

<i>Group</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
Religion	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Political Opinion	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Ethnicity	Not Applicable	Consideration will be given to converting this policy into a variety of formats to include; easy read; audio; brail, accessible PDF and a variety of languages.

(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:

Opportunities to promote equality have been considered and incorporated where relevant. Therefore, a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is not required.

(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
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(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	Interfered with?	What is the	Does this raise legal
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Number	Yes/No	interference and who does it impact upon?	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.

Human rights are promoted by having a transparent and accessible policies in place.

(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
<p>To monitor the effect of this policy on equality of opportunity and good relations, RQIA will collect data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for accessible or alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, Easy Read, audio, or digital formats). • Feedback from service users and staff regarding the accessibility and clarity of policy information. • Complaints or concerns raised relating to barriers in accessing policy information. • Periodic review outcomes assessing whether accessible communication commitments have been met. 	<p>To monitor the effect of this policy on equality of opportunity, good relations, disability duties, and human rights, RQIA will collect data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for accessible or alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, Easy Read, audio, or digital formats). • Feedback from service users and staff regarding the accessibility and clarity of policy information. 	<p>Not applicable</p>

Approved Lead Officer: Paula Weir

Position: Complaints and Representations Manager

Date: 27 January 2026

Policy/Decision Screened by: Paula Weir

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, 2nd Floor, James House, 2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast, BT7 2JA;
Email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net