

**Equality Screening Template**

**Recruitment Code V16**

**Part 1. Policy scoping**

This section asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

**Information about the policy**

Name of the policy

The Recruitment Code of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland (Commissioners’ Recruitment Code) Version 16

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

This is an existing policy undergoing revision.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland have a statutory duty to maintain the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition (known as the ‘Merit Principle’) in relation to selection for appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). Commissioners also have a statutory duty to prescribe and publish a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the Merit Principle. The aims of the Commissioners’ Recruitment Code are to:

* set out and explain the role of Commissioners;
* set out the Commissioners’ recruitment principles, expectations and the requirements of the Code;
* outline the circumstances when the Merit Principle shall not apply; and
* explain the Commissioners’ approval role in relation to appointments to the Senior Civil Service (SCS).

The proposed revisions to the Recruitment Code V16 provide greater clarity on

Ministerial Involvement and on Exceptions to Merit. We have also made some

changes to align the Recruitment Code with our Auditing for Improvement.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.

This policy has the potential to benefit all Section 75 categories as it sets out Commissioners’ requirements in relation to upholding the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition (known as the ‘Merit Principle’) in relation to selection for appointment to the NICS. The revisions update the Code and provide clarity.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are responsible for prescribing and publishing the Recruitment Code. NICS Departments and Agencies must adhere to the requirements of the Commissioners’ Recruitment Code when making appointments to the NICS.

**Implementation factors**

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

No

If yes, are they, financial, legislative or other?

Please specify \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Main stakeholders affected**

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? Consider staff, service users, other public sector organisations, voluntary/community/trade unions and other stakeholders.

Staff, the NICS, potential candidates, candidates and appointees to the NICS via open recruitment competition, candidates selected within a government scheme or initiative or those appointed to the NICS by exception to the Merit.

##### [Other policies with a bearing on this policy](#Onefour)

What are they?

The NICS Recruitment Policy and Procedures Manual and the NICS Secondment Policy.

Who owns them?

The NICS.

**Available evidence**

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

NICS vacancies are open to those who satisfy its nationality requirements. The population data for those whom this policy may affect is therefore broad and may extend beyond Northern Ireland.

**Religious belief**

The 2021 Northern Ireland Census results demonstrate that 42.3% of residents identify as being of a Catholic religious belief, 16.6% Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 11.55% Church of Ireland, 2.35% Methodist, 6.85% other Christian. 17.3% were of no religion and 1.6% did not state a religion.

The Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024 shows that 50.1% of the NICS workforce were from a Catholic background compared to that of the economically active population with 54.1% of the workforce from a Catholic background. Excluded from these figures are staff whose background could not be determined which accounted for 4.7% of the NICS workforce.

**Political opinion**

The 2023 Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey found that 30% of respondents identified themselves as Unionist, 28% as Nationalist and 37% as Neither.

**Racial group**

According to the 2021 Northern Ireland Census, 96.55% of respondents described themselves as White, 0.76% as Mixed, 0.52% as Indian, 0.5% as Chinese, 0.42% as Black African, 0.28% as Other Asian, 0.23% as Filipino.

The Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024 shows that the proportion of staff who were from minority ethnic groups was 0.6%, lower that the economically active population figure of 3.0%.

**Age**

The 2021 Northern Ireland Census identifies 22.86% of the population as under 18, 33.98% aged between 18 and 45, 25% aged between 45-64 and 17.46% aged over 65.

The Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024 shows that 13.4% of NICS staff are aged 16-34 and the proportion of staff aged 55 and over is 28.8%. The NICS has an older age profile than that of the economically active (37.4% aged 16-34 and 17.2% aged 55+).

**Marital Status**

The 2021 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 45.77% of the population were married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership, 38.07% of the population were single, and 16.16% were separated, divorced or widowed.

**Sexual Orientation**

The 2023 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey found that 93% of the population identify as heterosexual, 4% as bisexual and 3% as gay or lesbian.

**Men and Women Generally**

According to the 2021 Northern Ireland Census results, 50.81% of the population are female and 49.19% are male.

The Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024 shows that females made up 50.2% of the NICS workforce in 2024, down from 50.5% in 2014 and similar to last year's figure (50.1%). It also closely matches the economically active population (49.5%). Within the most senior grades, female representation has increased since 2014 (34.9%) to 43.8% in 2024. However, it reports that males outnumber females at the most senior grades while the opposite tends to be true in the majority of junior grades.

**Disability**

The 2021 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 75.67% of the population consider their day-to-day activities are not limited by a long-term health problem or disability, compared to 24.33% who responded that it was limited a little or a lot.

The Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024 shows that the proportion of staff who declared a disability was 6.1%, lower than the figure of 10.2% for the economically active population.

**Dependants**

The 2021 Census in Northern Ireland reported that 69.33% of households have no dependent children, and 30.67% of households had one or more dependent children. 87.58% of the population provided no unpaid care, and 12.42% of the population provided unpaid care.

**Needs, experiences and priorities**

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

**Religious belief**

No needs identified.

**Political opinion**

No needs identified.

**Racial group**

No needs identified.

**Age**

No needs identified.

**Marital Status**

No needs identified.

**Sexual orientation**

No needs identified.

**Men and women generally**

No needs identified.

**Disability**

No needs identified.

**Dependants**

No needs identified.

**Part 2:** **Screening questions**

This section asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the nine Section 75 categories?

**Religious belief**

None – no differential impact

**Political opinion**

None – no differential impact

**Racial group**

None – no differential impact

**Age**

None – no differential impact

**Marital status**

None – no differential impact

**Sexual orientation**

None – no differential impact

**Men and women generally**

None – no differential impact

**Disability**

None – no differential impact

**Dependants**

None – no differential impact

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

All categories

Equality and inclusion is the backbone of Commissioners’ Recruitment Code. Whilst the current revisions do not specifically targeting any particular Section 75 category, revisions to the Recruitment Code are made which ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity within a merit-based recruitment process and defined exceptions to merit.

**3** To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

**Religious belief**

None – the policy does not impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs.

**Political opinion**

None – the policy does not impact on good relations between people of different political opinion.

**Racial group**

None – the policy does not impact on good relations between people of different racial group.

**4** Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

**Religious belief**

Yes – the policy relates to recruitment and selection to the NICS and should indirectly help promote good relations by ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

**Political opinion**

Yes – the policy relates to recruitment and selection to the NICS and should indirectly help promote good relations by ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

**Racial group**

Yes – the policy relates to recruitment and selection to the NICS and should indirectly help promote good relations by ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

**Additional considerations**

**Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(*For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

There will be no negative impact on any people with multiple identities.

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Not applicable.

 **Part 3. Screening decision**

This section guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

An equality impact assessment is not required as the policy is not likely to have an adverse impact on any of the section 75 categories.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

As no adverse impact on any Section 75 categories has been identified there is no need for mitigations or the introduction of an alternative policy.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

All public authorities’ equality schemes must state the authority’s arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Equality Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Equality Commission publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

**Mitigation**

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations? If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/A

**Part 4. Monitoring**

This section provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring. Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Equality Commission’s Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Equality Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance). Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

 N/A

**Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

This section verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

**Screened by**:

Name: Heather Caulfield

Title: Deputy Principal

Date: 20 March 2025

Signature: 

**Approved by:**

Name: Amanda Martin

Title: Secretary

Date: 21 March 2025

Signature: 

**Endorsed by**:

Name: Deirdre Toner

Title: Chairperson, Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland

Date: 28 March 2025

Signature: 

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority’s website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

**Annex 1**

**Screening flowchart *(taken from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for public authorities April 2010 (Appendix 1)).***

Policy Scoping

* + Policy
	+ Available data

Screening Questions

* Apply screening questions
* Consider multiple identities

Screening Decision None/Minor/Major

Mitigate

 Publish Template

Re-consider screening

Publish Template

for information

Publish Template

 EQIA

Monitor

**‘None’**

Screened out

**‘Major’**

Screened in for EQIA

**‘Minor’**

Screened out with mitigation

Concerns raised with evidence

Concerns raised with evidence re: screening decision