**Equality Screening Form**

**INTRODUCTION**

The information contained in this Equality Screening Form has been extracted from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland’s Guide for Public Authorities (2010). Additional information about the 5 parts of the form and a flowchart to demonstrate the process of completion is detailed in [**Appendix 1**](#Appendix1) of the form.

This template document and further guidance can be found by clicking the following link - [www.equalityni.org/S75duties](https://www.equalityni.org/S75duties)

**PART 1- POLICY SCOPING**

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

**Information about the policy**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Policy** | Adoption Policy | | | | | |
| **Is it existing, revised or a new policy?** | Existing |  | New |  | Revised |  |
| **If revised, please outline main updates:** | Revised in line with new legislation – changes to eligibility criteria, acknowledgement of surrogacy arrangements, changes to notification to employer | | | | | |
| **What is it trying to achieve?**  **(Intended aims/outcomes)** | Outlining entitlements and eligibility criteria in order to receive adoption leave and/or pay | | | | | |
| **Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.** | Those with child dependants as the policy is specifically designed to provide entitlement to leave of absence from work when an employee adopts a child or has a parental order to become the parent of a child born through surrogacy. Therefore, those availing will have become employees with child dependants, if they were not already in that category. | | | | | |
| **Who initiated or wrote the policy?** | HR Services Manager | | | | | |
| **Who owns and who implements the policy?** | Human Resources | | | | | |

**Implementation Factors**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes |  | No |  |

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

If yes, are they: (Select all applicable)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Financial |
|  | Legislative |
|  | Other – please specify: |  |

**Main stakeholders affected**

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Staff |
|  | Service Users |
|  | Other Public Sector Organisations |
|  | Voluntary/ Community/ Trade Unions |
|  | Other – please specify: |  |

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

|  |
| --- |
| * Maternity Policy * Paternity/ Partners Leave Policy * Time off for Dependants Policy * Flexible Working Policy * Parental Leave Policy * Shared Parental Leave Policy * Career Break Policy |

**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. The following document should help you source data - [Section 75 - Evidence Signposting Guide](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/S75DataSignpostingGuide.pdf)

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 category** | **Details of evidence/information** |
| Religious belief | **Internal data of those who have taken Adoption Leave/Pay** shows that the 10 employees were recorded with the 2 main religious beliefs for NI:  Protestant – 8  Roman Catholic – 2 |
| Political opinion | No evidence available to indicate correlation between this category and the Adoption Policy. |
| Racial group | No evidence available to indicate correlation between this category and the Adoption Policy. |
| Age | **NI Statistics taken from Coram BAAF website for 2018**: <https://corambaaf.org.uk/fostering-adoption/looked-after-children-adoption-fostering-statistics/statistics-northern-ireland> showing that adopters in NI were aged between early 20’s to late 50’s, but 52% of adopters were in their 40’s at time of adoption. (This is how figures are provided by the website – no specific data)  **Legislation** dictates that you must be at least 21 years old to adopt a child. There is no upper age limit.  **Internal data of those who have taken Adoption Leave/Pay** shows 10 employees availed of this with age ranges:  20-34 = 1  35-44 = 3  45-54 = 3  55+ = 3 |
| Marital status | **NI Statistics taken from Coram BAAF website for 2018:** <https://corambaaf.org.uk/fostering-adoption/looked-after-children-adoption-fostering-statistics/statistics-northern-ireland> showed that during year ending 31 March 2018:   * 85% of adopters were married couples.   **Fair Employment monitoring data from current Translink employees** shows marital status as follows (this is an optional question and is subject to change through employment period without need to update HR):  Married/Civil Partnered – 557 (13%)  Cohabit – 142 (3.3%)  Single – 788 (18.5%)  Other/Unknown - 2755 (65%) |
| Sexual orientation | The **official statistics on Adoption agencies data in England**: **1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014** (latest available) shows that there is a predominantly higher number of persons with a sexual orientation towards someone of a different sex adopting a child, than those identifying as LGB (Respectively 9700: 600)  With 1.2% (55) of the employees providing a sexual orientation status of preferring the same sex or both this is reflective of the **NI national statistics from the Dept of Communities** showing that 1.2% household population identifies as LGB. |
| Men and women generally | **Internal data of those who have taken Adoption Leave/Pay** show that 1 woman and 9 men have availed of the policy.  **Internal data on Translink employees** shows that:  Male – 3640  Female - 603  **Legislation** determines that only 1 adoptive parent can avail of the Adoption Leave/pay. The other parent (if applicable) may be able to avail of other entitlements such Paternity Leave/Pay or Shared Parental Leave.  **Independent News Article April 2019** – Received data from a survey conducted by TUC that only 1% of fathers avail of the SPL policy right to take time off with their young children. Reasons cited are most commonly the amount of pay at this time. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/shared-parental-leave-take-up-government-changes-a8855311.html> |
| Disability | No evidence available to indicate correlation between this category and the Adoption Policy. |
| Dependants | **NI Statistics taken from Coram BAAF website for 2018:** <https://corambaaf.org.uk/fostering-adoption/looked-after-children-adoption-fostering-statistics/statistics-northern-ireland> showed that during year ending 31 March 2018: 10% had previously adopted a child or children and 23% had dependent birth children in the household.  **NI Census 2011** – details that 33.86% of the NI populations households have dependent children. |

**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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 category** | **Details of needs/experiences/priorities** |
| Religious belief | Whilst the data shows that more employees from the religious belief of protestant availed off the policy within the last 3 years, than those of Roman catholic, there is nothing within the policy to restrict it to someone of any particular religious belief. |
| Political opinion | There is no identified content that would affect an individual’s political opinion to avail of adhere to the Adoption Policy. |
| Racial group | There is no identified content that would affect an individual’s Racial Group to avail of adhere to the Adoption Policy. |
| Age | The data shows that it would be expected that the Adoption policy would be utilised more by younger employees (21-44). However, as with legislation there is no criterion with an upper age limit and therefore the policy is available to anyone above the age of 21 years. |
| Marital status | The data shows that the Adoption policy is more likely to be utilised by those employees with a marital status of married.  However, legislation does permit single parent adopters and there is no content identified in the criterion of the policy to impact that. |
| Sexual orientation | The data demonstrates that there is a much larger number of couples in a heterosexual relationship adopting compared to those identifying as LGB, which also tallies with the marital status data showing that the majority of those who adopt are married couples. This indicates that the policy is more likely to affect those with a sexual orientation towards a different sex, but the policy has no criterion which affect sexual orientation of anyone who wishes to apply it and terminology is kept gender neutral to ensure inclusion of all adoptive parents. |
| Men and women generally | As the data shows there is a much higher number of men who have used the policy thus far and given there are 6 times as many men than women employees at Translink currently, then this might demonstrate the policy might be utilised more by men than women. However, the % M/F breakdown in Translink is consistent with the % breakdown in M/F who have availed of the policy.  If compared to Maternity policy and even shared parental leave, shows that women are still the majority gender to avail of these policies which permit time off with children. Therefore, the internal information is outside what is believed to be typical.  The policy does not have any limitations or restrictions on either gender from availing from the policy, as long as only one parent is confirmed as receiving Adoption pay/leave in accordance with legislative eligibility. |
| Disability | There is no identified content that would affect an individual’s disability to avail of or adhere to the Adoption Policy. |
| Dependants | As rights of the policy only apply to those who are adding a child to their family through adoption or surrogacy, it is specifically designed by legislation to assist the needs of those with child dependants.  The data regarding adoptions in 2018 does show that approximately 23% would already have dependent children in the household, however this does not place any limit on them being able to apply to or adhere to the adoption policy, except in circumstances of adopting a stepchild, but this exception is in accordance with the governments criteria for entitlement to adoption pay and/or leave. |

**PART 2 - SCREENING QUESTIONS**

**Introduction**

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of the Guide: [Guide for Public Authorities April 2010](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf)

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

**Impact: Major / Minor / None**

If the public authority’s conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

**In favour of ‘MAJOR’ impact**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance; |
| **B** | Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them; |
| **C** | Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged; |
| **D** | Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities; |
| **E** | The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review; |
| **F** | The policy is significant in terms of expenditure. |

If the public authority’s conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

* Measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
* The introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of ‘MINOR’ impact**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible; |
| **B** | The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures; |
| **C** | Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people; |
| **D** | By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations. |

If the public authority’s conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

**In favour of ‘NONE’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations. |
| **B** | The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories. |

**Screening Questions 1 - 4**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screening Question 1** | | |
| 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 | | |
| Section 75 category | Details of policy impact | Level of impact? Minor/Major/None |
| Religious belief | |  | | --- | | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s religious belief in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | | None |
| Political opinion | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s political opinion in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | None |
| Racial group | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s racial group in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | None |
| Age | Whilst the policy is expected to impact on younger employees this is only technical in nature and is not expected to have any impact on good relations or equality of opportunity. | None |
| Marital status | Whilst the policy would typically be expected to impact those with a marital status of ‘married’, there is no relevance in the policy to affect good relations or equality of opportunity. | None |
| Sexual orientation | Whilst the policy is expected to impact on more employees with a sexual orientation towards a different sex, this is only technical in nature and is not expected to have any impact on good relations or equality of opportunity. | None |
| Men and women generally | The data shows that the policy has had an impact on more men than women employed by Translink, however the M/F split is consistent with the split of who has availed of the policy and there are no limits or restrictions in the criterion to any particular gender. | None |
| Disability | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s disability in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | None |
| Dependants | Whilst the policy is not applicable to those without [child] dependants (or about to have a child dependant), it is in accordance with legislation and any impact on those not in this category is expected to be negligible. | Minor |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screening Question** **2** | | |
| Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? | | |
| Section 75 category | If **Yes**, provide details | If **No**, provide reasons |
| Religious belief |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Political opinion |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Racial group |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Age |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Marital status |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Sexual orientation |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Men and women generally |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Disability |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Dependants |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screening Question** **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 | | |
| Good relations category | Details of policy impact | Level of impact Minor/Major/None |
| Religious belief | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s religious belief in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | None |
| Political opinion | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s political opinion in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | None |
| Racial group | There is no identified content that would affect a person’s racial group in order to adhere to or apply the Adoption Policy. | None |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screening Question 4** | | |
| Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? | | |
| Good relations category | If **Yes**, provide details | If **No**, provide reasons |
| Religious belief |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Political opinion |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |
| Racial group |  | No, as the policy has no impact on this category. |

**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).

|  |
| --- |
| No impact identified for anyone that falls into multiple categories. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| N/A |

**PART 3 - SCREENING DECISION**

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

|  |
| --- |
| No impact assessment required as little to no impact on any category was identified in relation to the Adoption Policy. |

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**.

|  |
| --- |
| No mitigation has been identified as required and an alternative policy is not required. The current policy is acceptable. |

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 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 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 |

**Timetabling and Prioritising**

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been **‘screened in’** for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority Criterion** | **Rating (1-3)** |
| Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations | Choose an item. |
| Social need | Choose an item. |
| Effect on people’s daily lives | Choose an item. |
| Relevance to a public authority’s functions | Choose an item. |

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority’s Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details:

|  |
| --- |
| **N/A** |

**PART 4 - MONITORING**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission’s Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The 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.

|  |
| --- |
| Whilst the policy has seen some revision this is only to ensure it is in accordance with up to date legislation and government statutory entitlements as a minimum. Any monitoring would be in line with standard 3 yearly review and/or further changes in legislation or government entitlement – whichever is sooner. |

**PART 5 - APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Policy Title:** | **Adoption Policy** | **Version No:** |  |
| **Print Name** | **Signature** | **Position/Job Title** | **Date** |
| **Screened By:** | | | |
| Kerri Adams | A close-up of a signature  Description automatically generated | HR Compliance & Governance officer | 26th June 2023 |
| **Approved by:** | | | |
| Paula Ludlow |  | HR Services Manager | 26th June 2023 |

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.

**APPENDIX 1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Part** | **Part Title** | **Description** |
| **1** | [**Policy Scoping**](#Part1) | 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 |
| **2** | [**Screening Questions**](#Part2) | 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. |
| **3** | [**Screening Decision**](#Part3) | 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 tointroducemeasures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations. |
| **4** | [**Monitoring**](#Part4) | Provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring. |
| **5** | [**Approval and Authorisation**](#Part5) | Verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy. |

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