



## Equality Screening Template

Review of the advertising requirements for Entertainments Licensing Applications

## Belfast City Council -Equality Screening Template

The Council has a statutory duty to screen all policies. Please note a policy can be written or unwritten, formal or informal. This includes our strategies, plans, policies, legislative developments; and new ways of working such as – the introduction, change or end of an existing service, grant funding arrangement or facility. Please note a policy can be written or unwritten, formal or informal.

This screening template is designed to help departments consider the likely equality impacts of their proposed decisions on different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors.

Before carrying out an equality screening exercise it is important that you have received the necessary training. To find out about the training contact – [gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk)

The accompanying [Screening Guidance](#) note provides straightforward advice on how to carry out equality screening exercises. Detailed information about the Section 75 equality duties<sup>1</sup> and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission's website.

The screening template has 4 sections to complete. These are:

**Section A** - asks you to provide details about the policy / decision that is being screened.

**Section B** - has 4 key questions that require you to outline the likely impacts on equality groups, and all supporting evidence.

**Section C** - has 4 key questions in relation to obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order

**Section D** - is the formal record of the screening decision.

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<sup>1</sup> ECNI 'Section 75 of the NI Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities' April 2010. [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

## Section A

### Details about the policy / decision to be screened

**Title of policy / decision to be screened:-**

Review of the advertising requirements for Entertainments Licensing applications.

**Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-**

*(Explain - Is this a new, revised or existing policy? Are there financial / legislative / procurement implications?)*

This is a revision of an existing unwritten policy the authority for which is derived from the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985. While the 1985 Order requires newspaper adverts to be placed by applicants, the Council should exercise its discretion to decide on the number and type of newspaper. The current policy requires applicants for Entertainments Licences to advertise in two newspapers. The revised policy will reduce the requirement so that applicants will be under an obligation to advertise in only one newspaper. The wording of the current template shall also be revised for the purposes of reducing the word count, given that longer adverts are more expensive. There are no legislative or procurement implications. There are positive financial implications for applicants for Entertainments Licences, although newspapers may incur reduced profits.

**Aims and objectives of the policy / decision to be screened:-**

*(What is the policy trying to achieve?)*

Persons may make application to Belfast City Council for the grant, renewal, transfer and/ or variation of an Entertainments Licence as prescribed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985. Entertainments Licences are advertised in newspapers for the purpose of informing relevant parties, including residents that the application is pending, so that they may make representations to the Council if they wish.

**On whom will the policy / decision impact?**

*Consider the internal and external impacts (both actual or potential)*



Staff: no impact



Service users

For some applicants will result in a reduced cost of advertising associated with Entertainment Licensing application process, and for some in areas transferring under LGR may minimize any resulting rise in advertising costs.



Other public sector organizations: no impact



Voluntary / Community groups / Trade Unions:

Same as for service users where they are applicants (community groups/voluntary) although Churches are exempt from advertising requirement.



Others, please specify:

Local newspaper /media industry

Reduced income for newspapers.

**Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?**

No.

## Section B

### 1. Outline consultation process achieved or planned

#### Consultation process – achieved

Belfast City Council frequently receives complaints from licensees on the basis that current advertising requirements are financially burdensome. As a result of these concerns, research has been conducted for the purpose of ascertaining the average cost of public advertisements in Belfast and in other local council areas. In light of the fact that three Council areas are transferring to Belfast, it would be prudent to review the current position.

There are a number of forums currently in place to allow for discussion and debate on Licensing matters and for which the proposed policy change was a matter of some interest. The proposals were presented to the forums listed below and an opportunity provided for attendees to present their views.

- The Licensing Forum
- The Customer Forum
- Safer Belfast Forum
- Licensed Premises Group

It was apparent that there was widespread support for the change in the policy. These groups shall be kept up-to-date and further opportunity will be provided to discuss the operation of the new policy, should Members opt in favour of it.

The following are also in place to inform interested parties of pending Entertainments Licensing applications:

- Council complaints facility, e.g. in respect of noise nuisance, which persons may avail of either before the application has been made or after or at any other time;
- Any members of the public may seek advice on any licence application and Council Officers will provide this information, which is in the public domain already.

- Entertainments Licences must be publicly displayed so that members of the public may enter premise and check terms, conditions, restrictions and expiry dates.
- In addition to the above, applicants shall still be required to advertise in at least one newspaper.

A Working Group was set up by Minister Durkan to review the Entertainment licensing legislation. The requirement to advertise was a matter under consideration by that Group. To assist with the Working Group, a survey was undertaken to examine the advertising requirements in the other Councils in Northern Ireland and to seek their views.

The findings of the research indicated that the majority of objections received by Councils were not as a result of newspaper adverts. Objections are generally received as a corollary of a complaint being made about a premise.

Most of the responses reflect the fact that newspaper adverts do not achieve their objective. Some Councils expressed concerns regarding the additional financial burden weighing on the applicant. The feedback from the survey corroborates our experience in Belfast which is that the adverts are either rarely viewed by those who may have an interest in an application, or that they simply do not act as the trigger for objections, given that objections generally result from ongoing issues.

The responses indicate that the majority of objections are received subsequent either to enquiries or complaints and not newspaper adverts.

The amended wording of the draft template complies with the legislation and is wholly generic in nature. It will be presented to Committee for approval.

## **2. Available evidence**

*What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Set out all evidence below to help inform your screening assessment. Please note: It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as:*

- *Monitoring information*
- *Complaints*
- *Research /surveys*
- *Consultation exercise and other public authorities*

Evidence was collected from a number of sources for the purpose of investigating the costs and effectiveness of newspaper adverts and the reasonableness of such costs being incurred by applicants, given the requirements imposed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985.

Licensees frequently express discontent regarding the cost of advertising notices which place a regular financial burden on them.

Our research has indicated that newspaper notices concerning Entertainments Licensing applications are an ineffective method of communicating with members of the public. None of the evidence suggests that objections are regularly or routinely received as a result of such methods. The majority of objections received are as a result either of enquiries or complaints.

The Belfast Telegraph is the most expensive with an average advertisement cost of £362.00. The average cost for an advertisement placed in the Irish News and the Daily Mirror is £265.00 and £130.00 respectively. The average cost for a public advertisement with the Belfast Media Group is £176.00 for each of its three newspapers; the Andersonstown News, North Belfast News and South Belfast News.

The average cost for placing two advertisements in newspapers for premises located within the city centre is £476.40 and £419.15 for those located outside the city centre.

The cheapest method of advertising was only available to premises outside the city centre. Johnson Press PLC, which publishes the Newsletter and Belfast News, offers a deal whereby the placing of one advertisement secures a second advertisement free of charge, for a total cost of £195.80.

Details of these costs are summarised in the table below together with the calculation of the average cost.

<b>Premises Inside The City Centre</b>		<b>Premises Outside The City Centre</b>	
<b>Ia.</b> Belfast Telegraph	£362.00	<b>Oa.</b> Belfast News	£195.80
<b>Ib.</b> Irish News	£265.00	<b>Ob.</b> Andersonstown News	£176.00
<b>Ic.</b> Daily Mirror	£130.00	<b>Oc.</b> North Belfast News	£176.00
<b>Id.</b> News Letter	£195.80	<b>Od.</b> South Belfast News	£176.00
<b>Average:</b> £476.40		<b>Average:</b> £419.15	
<b>Calculation:</b> (Ia+Ib+Ic+Id/2)		<b>Calculation:</b> (Ia+Ib+Ic+Id/4) + (Oa+Ob+Oc+Od/4)	

In addition to the above research, we have also examined the process undertaken by other Councils both in Northern Ireland and in England and Wales. Since Castlereagh, Lisburn and North Down are transferring to Belfast next year as a result of Local Government Reform, their practices are of particular interest to us.

Castlereagh Borough Council, as is the case with a number of other councils, requires applicants to place an advert in only one newspaper. The advert itself can be placed in any newspaper including a local or community telegraph type newspaper where these are circulated in the locality of the premises.

Prospective licensees in the area of Castlereagh will therefore be subjected to an additional burden after LGR as a result of our advertising requirements. In Lisburn, whilst there is a requirement for licensees to advertise in two newspapers, the cost is substantially less than in Belfast.

In England and Wales, Regulation 25 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises Licences and Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005 differs from the legislation in Northern Ireland because it demands that applications must be advertised in two ways, firstly, by displaying a notice at the premises and secondly, by publishing a notice in a local newspaper. If there are no local newspapers it can be advertised in a local newsletter, circular or similar document, circulating in the vicinity of the premises. The review of Entertainment Licensing legislation, currently being undertaken by the Department of the Environment, way is looking to reform the legislation so that Northern Ireland’s system will be similar to that in England and Wales, and to include a similar advertising procedure. Proposed legislative changes, subject to ministerial approval, will be subject to formal consultation later in the year.

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of evidence / information and engagement</b>
Religious belief	N/A
Political opinion	N/A – while we are aware of the fact that political background may correlate with choice of newspaper, we do not prescribe the newspaper in which an advertisement may be placed. Belfast City Council sets out a number of suitable papers and from this pool applicants may make their own selection.
Racial group	N/A
Age	N/A
Marital status	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A
Men & women generally	N/A

Disability	N/A – information will be provided in different formats, as per usual Council procedure to suit all persons.
Dependants	N/A

**3. What is the likely impact (indicate if the policy impact is positive or negative) on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact?**

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Likely impact?</b>	<b>Level of impact? Minor/Major/None</b>
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None
Age	None	None
Marital status	None	None
Sexual orientation	None	None
Men and women generally	None	None
Disability	None	None
Dependants	None	None

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

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>If Yes, provide details</b>	<b>If No, provide reasons</b>
Religious belief		No, matter is too generic
Political opinion		As above
Racial group		As above
Age		As above
Marital status		As above
Sexual orientation		As above
Men and women generally		As above
Disability		As above
Dependants		As above

**5. To what extent is the policy likely to impact (positive or negatively) on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? What is the level of impact?**

Good relations category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None

**6. 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, matter is too generic
Political opinion		As above
Racial group		As above

**7. Multiple identities**

**Provide details of the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities**

*Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.*

None.

**Section C**

Belfast City Council also has legislative obligations to meet under the [Disability Discrimination Order](#) and Questions 5 -6 relate to these two areas.

## Consideration of Disability Duties

8. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for the Council to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

*Explain your assessment in full*

No.

9. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life?

*Explain your assessment in full*

No.

## Monitoring Arrangements

Section 75 places a requirement the Council to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity.

Outline what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.

<b>Equality</b>	<b>Good Relations</b>	<b>Disability Duties</b>
Complaints will be considered.	Complaints will be considered.	Complaints will be considered.
Unusual trends will be considered.	Unusual trends will be considered.	Unusual trends will be considered.

Should the Committee approve the suggested revisions, it is intended that the Council shall continuously monitor the operation of the new policy by taking the following steps:

- Consulting with Licensees for the purpose of obtaining feedback.

- Recording any unusual trends which may indicate that the new system is less effective at achieving the intended purpose, which is to draw the attention of interested parties to applications.
- Complaints will be analysed if they appear to unveil problems concerning the new policy.

The Council appreciates that by removing the requirement to advertise in two newspapers, there is a need to consider other methods of communication. We are considering liaising with licensees to discuss alternatives, including the placing of advertisements online. Since the licensing legislation is currently undergoing review, the provisions on advertisements shall be considered further and in detail. In the meantime and subject to the approval of Legal Services, we shall continue to investigate the possibility of placing adverts online.

## Section D

### Formal Record of Screening Decision

#### Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened

Review of the advertising requirements for Entertainments Licensing applications.

I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Equality of opportunity and good relations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is –

***\*place an X in the appropriate box below***

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>*<u>Screened In</u></b> – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>*<u>Screened Out</u></b> – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached: None of the protected categories under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are likely to be impacted by the revised policy.
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>* <u>Screened Out -</u> Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</li><li>• Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:</li></ul>
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## **Formal Record of Screening Decision** (cont)

### **Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -**

Name: Stephen Hewitt

Date:

Department: Health & Environmental Services

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

### **Screening decision approved by -**

Name: Trevor Martin

Date:

Department : Health & Environmental Services

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – [gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk) . The screening form will be placed on the BCC website and a link provided to the Council's Section 75 consultees.

For more information about equality screening contact –

**Stella Gilmartin / Lorraine Dennis**

**Equality & Diversity Officer (job-share)**

**Belfast City Council**

**City Hall**

**Belfast**

**BT1 5GS**

**Telephone: 028 90270511**

**[Gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk)**