



Equality Screening Template

Flying of the Armed Forces Flag

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

The accompanying [Screening Guidance](#) note provides straightforward advice on how to carry out equality screening exercises. Detailed information about the Section 75 equality duties¹ 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.

¹ ECNI 'Section 75 of the NI Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities' April 2010. www.equalityni.org

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

A letter has been received from the Chief of Defence Staff requesting that the Council consider the way in which it might demonstrate its support for the Armed Forces on and around Armed Forces Day (29th June 2013), including the flying of the Armed Forces Flag over the period 24th to 29th June 2013.

Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

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

Policy / decision to be screened

On 23rd April 2010 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that it did not wish to establish a policy position on the Armed Forces Day flag to allow requests to be acted upon without annual reference to the Committee but rather agreed that each request received be dealt with annually on an individual basis. In 2009, 2010 and 2011 the Council agreed to fly the Armed Forces Flag at the City Hall on Armed Forces Day. In 2012 the Council agreed to fly the Armed Forces Flag for a 6 day period during the week leading up to Armed Forces Day.

The recent letter from the Chief of Defence Staff acknowledges that the flying of the Armed Forces flag presents more difficulty in Northern Ireland than in other parts of the United Kingdom and suggests that the Council consider a range of ways of demonstrating support for the Armed Forces. The Council is therefore considering three main options:

1. Accede to the request from the MoD for the Armed Forces Flag to be flown at the City Hall over a 6 day period from 24th to 29th June 2013.
2. Accede to the request but limit the flying of the flag to Armed Forces Day (29th June 2013).
3. Refuse the request.

It has also been suggested that the Council might demonstrate support for the Armed Forces in some other way, by organising an event on Armed Forces Day.

In line with the requirements of the Equality Scheme, the Council wishes to take into account an assessment of the likely impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations of each of the options before making a decision. This screening exercise is therefore designed to assess the likely impact and level of impact of each of the options.

Financial implications

Options 1-3 have minimal financial implications. The organisation of an event would require financial and staff resources; however, as the nature of an event has not yet been explored, it is not possible to estimate the resources required.

Legislative implications

None.

Procurement implications

None.

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

(What is the policy trying to achieve?)

The Government established Armed Forces Day in 2009 to:

- raise public awareness of the contribution made to our country by those who serve and have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces;
- give the nation an opportunity to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community (including currently serving troops, service families, veterans and cadets).

Any action by the Council to demonstrate support for Armed Forces Day would contribute to these objectives.

On whom will the policy / decision impact?

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

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations **MoD**
- voluntary / community groups / trade unions
- others, please specify

Elected Members
Residents of Belfast
Visitors

Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?

The MoD routinely requests all district councils throughout the UK to participate in supporting Armed Forces Day by flying the Armed Forces Flag. In 2013, the City of Nottingham is hosting the national event and, in Northern Ireland, Carrickfergus Borough Council is organising a major event on 22nd June including parades and display by various units of the Armed Forces. The MoD has a scheme in place to provide grant aid and co-operation for the staging of events of this type.

Section B

1. Outline consultation process achieved or planned

There has been no consultation on the options under consideration and none is planned at this time.

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**

Data

As indicated above, the people most likely to be affected by the policy options are staff, elected members, residents and visitors. In terms of data, the 2011 Census provides information about the residents of Belfast under many of the Section 75 equality categories. The Council also monitors staff in relation to community background and gender and has comprehensive information on recent elections. No data on visitors by Section 75 categories is available.

The available data is set out in Appendices 1 and 2 and summarised in the table below.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence / information and engagement
Religious belief	<p>In terms of religion or religion brought up in, the 2011 Census indicates that 48.6% of Belfast City residents are from a Catholic community background and 42.3% from a Protestant community background.</p> <p>With respect to staff, at 1st January 2012, 43.0% identified themselves as coming from a Catholic community background and 53.1% from a Protestant community background.</p>
Political opinion	<p>In the last Council election (May 2011), 29.4% of first preference votes were cast for Sinn Féin, 23.5% for the DUP, 13.8% for the SDLP, 12.7% for the Alliance Party and 8.6% for the UUP.</p> <p>Evidence on public opinion with regard to the flying of the Union flag at the City Hall is available from the recent EQIA on this policy, on which a decision was made on 3rd December 2012. Responses to the public questionnaire on the EQIA included some comments on the Armed Forces flag to the effect that the respondents felt that it should never be flown. Although the questionnaire did not seek personal information on respondents and so it was not possible to distinguish between responses made by people from each of the two main communities, it is assumed that the majority of the respondents expressing opposition to the flying of the Armed Forces flag were from a Nationalist community background. The Armed Forces flag was not included in the EQIA analysis and no specific question was asked in the questionnaire, so respondents who favour the flying of the flag did not have an opportunity to express their opinion.</p>
Racial group	<p>There is a higher than average proportion of people from a black and minority ethnic background in Belfast at 3.64% compared with 1.79% in Northern Ireland. The largest minority ethnic groups in Belfast are the Chinese community (0.79%) and the Indian community (0.78%). The 2011 Census shows that 2.85% of the Belfast population was born in EU countries.</p>

Age	<p>Belfast has a lower percentage of young people (aged under 16 years) than the NI average and almost exactly the same percentage of older people (aged over 65 years) as the NI average. According to the 2011 Census, 18.61% of Belfast residents are under 16 years (compared with 20.95% in NI as a whole) and 14.55% are aged over 65 years (compared with 14.56%). Population projections for the 15 year period ending 2021 indicate that the percentage of young people is likely to fall and the percentage of older people is likely to rise.</p>
Marital status	<p>The 2011 Census shows that a relatively high percentage of Belfast residents are single at 46.60% compared with the NI average of 36.14%. Conversely there are fewer married people at 34.21% compared with the NI average of 47.56 %.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>No specific figures are available for Belfast but the Rainbow Project estimates that, on the basis of national and international research, 1 in 10 people in Northern Ireland would not identify as being heterosexual.</p>
Men & women generally	<p>Belfast has a predominantly female population (51.92% of residents). This is slightly higher than the NI figure of 51.00%.</p> <p>With respect to staff, at 1st January 2012, 60.2% were male and 39.8% female.</p>
Disability	<p>The 2011 Census showed that one in three (34.35%) of Belfast residents has a disability or long term health problem, which is close to the NI average of 31.43%.</p>
Dependants	<p>On Census Day 2011, 28.58% of households in Belfast included dependent children, compared with the NI average of 33.86%. 11.71% of households consisted of a lone parent and a dependent child or children, compared with the NI average of 9.09%. 92.78% of lone parents in Belfast are female.</p> <p>At the time of the Census, 12.05% of people said that they provided unpaid care for a dependant person; this is slightly higher than the NI average of 11.82%.</p>

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?

The recent EQIA on the flying of the Union flag concluded that there was no evidence to show that the presence of the flag on a permanent basis restricted access to the City Hall or its grounds in any way or prevented anyone from accessing the services and events provided there and that there was therefore no adverse impact on equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that the flying of the Armed Forces flag on a small number of days would have any impact on access to the City Hall and therefore on equality of opportunity.

Section 75 category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
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?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Political opinion	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Racial group	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Age	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Marital status	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Sexual orientation	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Men and women generally	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Disability	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard
Dependants	Not applicable	We do not believe there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in this regard

5. To what extent is the policy likely to impact (positively 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	See notes below	Minor
Political opinion	See notes below	Minor
Racial group	None	None

Notes

It is recognised that attitudes towards the Armed Forces differ within the two main communities in Belfast. Decisions in previous years to fly the Armed Forces flag have been far from unanimous with Sinn Féin and SDLP Councillors voting against the proposal. It can therefore be assumed that many people from a Nationalist/ Catholic community background would be opposed to the Council expressing support for the Armed Forces by any method. Similarly, it can be assumed that many people from a Unionist/Protestant community background would be supportive of such action.

The Council's approach to good relations and the promotion of a shared society does not preclude providing support and/or financial aid to events aimed at one particular group within the Section 75 equality categories. The Council ensures, as far as reasonably possible, that there is a balance over the course of the year between events which are of relevance to one or other of the main communities.

There is also a precedent for flying a flag relating to one specific organisation on a day which is not a designated day for the flying of the Union flag; the Red Ensign is flown on National Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September each year.

The main issue in terms of the impact of any of the proposed options on good relations in Belfast is the extent to which the flying of the Armed Forces flag, or a decision not to fly it, would have an adverse impact on relations between the two main communities. It can be assumed that any action would cause some offence to people from a Nationalist/Catholic background and a decision to take no action would cause offence to people from a Unionist/Protestant background.

The screening process requires that the potential level of adverse impact (major or minor) should be evaluated in line with defined criteria, namely that a proposed policy may have a **major** impact on good relations if:

- a) it is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) the potential impacts are unknown;
- c) 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;
- e) the policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) the policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

It is considered unlikely that the flying of the Armed Forces flag would be of strategic importance or be significant in terms of expenditure. It is also unlikely that a one-off decision in relation to a single day in 2013 would be challenged by way of judicial review. Depending on the decision, the impact on one community or the other may be adverse but only to a minor extent.

Clearly the level of offence to one community would be greater if the Armed Forces flag were to be flown for six days rather than one day but it is considered that neither option would result in a major impact on good relations.

In view of the sensitivity around the flying of flags at the City Hall, it may be beneficial for the Council to consider alternative ways to demonstrate support for the Armed Forces in future years. A family friendly event held in an appropriate location may have the potential to cause less offence to the Nationalist/Catholic community in that it would not be as visible as a flag in a central location and would not be seen as contributing to the flag debate.

Such an event may also be seen as a desirable alternative to the Unionist/Protestant community, although it may be necessary to gather further evidence of public opinion in this regard.

It should be noted that, during the EQIA of the policy on the flying of the Union flag, the Equality Commission suggested that the Council should ensure that there is a policy framework in which to consider, in a consistent manner, the flying of other flags. They advised that such considerations would include the duration and extent of displays of flags which may be more closely associated with one community background in Northern Ireland, or indeed associated with neither of the two main community backgrounds.

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	As indicated above, it may be beneficial for the Council to consider alternative ways to demonstrate support for the Armed Forces in future years.	
Political opinion	As indicated above, it may be beneficial for the Council to consider alternative ways to demonstrate support for the Armed Forces in future years.	
Racial group		It is considered that this decision will have no impact on people by reason of their racial group and therefore has no potential to better promote good relations in this respect.

7. Multiple Identities

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities.

Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

The decision is unlikely to have a specific impact on people with multiple identities.

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

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

This decision will have no impact on those with or without disabilities and therefore provides no specific opportunities to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

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

This decision will have no impact on those with or without disabilities and therefore provides no specific opportunities to increase participation by disabled people in public life.

Monitoring Arrangements

Section 75 places a requirement on 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.

Equality	Good Relations	Disability Duties
Not applicable	Complaints and feedback	Not applicable

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened Flying of the Armed Forces Flag
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I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

X	equality of opportunity and good relations
X	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"/>	<p>*<u>Screened In</u> – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>*<u>Screened Out</u> – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</p> <p>Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>* <u>Screened Out</u> - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</i> <p>It is assumed that the flying of the Armed Forces flag at the City Hall would cause some offence to people from a Nationalist/Catholic background and a decision not to fly the flag would cause offence to people from a Unionist/Protestant background. However, it is considered that, by reference to the criteria established by the Equality Commission, the flying of the flag would not have a major impact on good relations in Belfast. It is therefore considered that it is not necessary to conduct a full EQIA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:</i> <p>It is suggested that the level of offence to the Nationalist/Catholic community would be greater if the Armed Forces flag were to be flown for six days rather than one day. It is also suggested that it may be beneficial for the Council to consider alternative ways to demonstrate support for the Armed Forces in future years, such as holding a family friendly event in an appropriate location.</p>

Formal Record of Screening Decision (cont)

Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -

Name: Denise Wheatley

[Redacted]

Date: 22nd May 2013

Department/ Job Title: Consultant

Screening decision approved by -

Name:

Stephen McCrory

Date: 24th June 2013

Department / Job Title: Chief Executive's Department

Democratic Services Manager

Signature:

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – gilmartins@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
Equality & Diversity Officer
Belfast City Council

City Hall

Belfast

BT1 5GS

Telephone: 028 90270511

gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk

DATA ON THE POPULATION OF BELFAST CITY

TOTAL RESIDENTS: 280,962

Religious belief (religion or religion brought up in)

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Catholic	136,497	48.58	817,385	45.14
Protestant & other Christian (including Christian related)	118,856	42.30	875,717	48.36
Other religion	4,825	1.72	16,592	0.92
None	20,784	7.40	101,169	5.59

Political opinion

The results of the May 2011 Council elections were:

Party	% First preference votes cast	Seats	Change
Sinn Féin	29.4	16	+2
DUP	23.5	15	+2
SDLP	13.8	8	=
Alliance	12.7	6	+2
UUP	8.6	3	-6
PUP	2.8	2	=
Other	9.2	1	=

Ethnic group

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
White	270,743	96.36	1,778,449	98.21
Chinese	2,226	0.79	6,303	0.35
Irish Traveller	202	0.07	1,301	0.07
Indian	2,203	0.78	6,198	0.34
Pakistani	222	0.08	1,091	0.06
Bangladeshi	202	0.07	540	0.03

Other Asian	1,932	0.69	4,998	0.28
Black Caribbean	90	0.03	372	0.02
Black African	1,017	0.36	2,345	0.13
Black Other	148	0.05	899	0.05
Mixed	1,401	0.50	6,014	0.33
Other	576	0.21	2,353	0.13

Country of birth

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Northern Ireland	245,839	87.50	1,608,853	88.84
Great Britain	11,267	4.01	82,724	4.56
Republic of Ireland	5,422	1.93	37,833	2.09
Other EU prior to 2004 expansion	2,001	0.71	9,703	0.54
Other EU after 2004 expansion	6,014	2.14	35,704	1.97
Other	10,419	3.71	36,046	1.99

Note: Eight countries joined the European Union in May 2004: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Age

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Under 16	52,283	18.61	379,323	20.95
16-39	106,259	37.82	593,832	32.79
40-64	81,529	29.02	573,988	31.70
65-84	35,268	12.55	232,324	12.83
85+	5,623	2.00	31,396	1.73

Marital and civil partnership status

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Single	106,568	46.60	517,393	36.14
Married	78,242	34.21	680,831	47.56
In a civil partnership	327	0.14	1,243	0.09
Separated	12,228	5.35	56,911	3.98
Divorced /civil partnership dissolved	14,153	6.19	78,074	5.45
Widowed/ surviving partner of civil partnership	17,161	7.50	97,088	6.78

Gender

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Male	135,077	48.08	887,323	49.00
Female	145,885	51.92	923,540	51.00

Disability

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Disability / long term health problem	96,497	34.35	569,078	31.43
No disability / long term health problem	184,465	65.65	1,241,785	68.57

Dependents

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	%	No.	%
Households with dependent children	34,464	28.58	238,094	33.86
People providing unpaid care	33,865	12.05	213,980	11.82

Sexual Orientation

In its final regulatory impact assessment for the Civil Partnership Act 2004, the Department of Trade and Industry offered an estimate for the LGB population of the UK of between 5 and 7%. The Rainbow Project estimates that, on the basis of national and international research, 1 in 10 people in Northern Ireland would not identify as being heterosexual.

Research from 2002 into transsexualism² suggests that between 0.5% and 2% of the population have strong feelings of being transgender; and between 0.1% and 0.5% actually take steps to transition from one gender to another.

No specific figures are available for Belfast.

² L. Conway (2002), How Frequently Does Transsexualism Occur?

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL EMPLOYEES
(by community background and gender)

Standard Occupational Classification Major Groups	No. of Protestant Male employees			No. of Roman Catholic Male employees			No. of Male employees whose community cannot be determined		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
1 Managers and senior officials	88	0	88	98	0	98	6	0	6
2 Professional occupations	60	0	60	55	0	55	7	0	7
3 Associate professional & technical occupations	83	29	112	60	13	73	6	2	8
4 Administrative and secretarial occupations	45	3	48	31	3	34	8	0	8
5 Skilled trades occupations	95	8	103	50	8	58	4	0	4
6 Personal service occupations	104	32	136	74	29	103	8	1	9
7 Sales and customer service occupations	1	3	4	1	4	5	0	0	0
8 Process, plant and machine operatives	161	6	167	83	6	89	7	0	7
9 Elementary occupations	234	14	248	159	9	168	15	4	19
TOTALS	871	95	966	611	72	683	61	7	68

Standard Occupational Classification Major Groups	No. of Protestant Female employees			No. of Roman Catholic Female employees			No. of Female employees whose community cannot be determined		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
1 Managers and senior officials	99	0	99	103	0	103	10	0	10
2 Professional occupations	46	0	46	56	0	56	0	0	0
3 Associate professional & technical occupations	57	17	74	70	27	97	6	3	9
4 Administrative and secretarial occupations	144	10	154	129	13	142	5	2	7
5 Skilled trades occupations	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
6 Personal service occupations	35	51	86	31	53	84	6	2	8
7 Sales and customer service occupations	6	1	7	4	10	14	2	1	3
8 Process, plant and machine operatives	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
9 Elementary occupations	79	1	80	44	2	46	5	0	5
TOTALS	469	80	549	438	105	543	35	8	43

Source: Fair Employment Monitoring Return, January 2012

