

Equality Screening Template



The Council has a statutory duty to screen. 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. 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 first. To find out about the training needed or any other queries on screening, contact the Equality and Diversity Officers (job-share) Stella Gilmartin or Lorraine Dennis on extension 6026/6027 or by email equality@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 and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission's website¹.

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

Section A - provides details about the policy / decision that is being screened

Section B – gives information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts on all equality groups.

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 <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

1. Title of policy / decision to be screened:-

Language Strategy Action Plan October 2018-March 2020

2. Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

Belfast City Council launched its Language Strategy in April 2018, this strategy will run until 2023. This screening focuses on the language Strategy Action Plan and actions which are to be delivered as part of the strategy. This Action Plan covers the 18 month period ending in March 2020.

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

The aim of the Action Plan is to present a range of actions and targets which will implement the Language Strategy which will enable the council to provide a greater range of services through a range of languages other than English.

4. On whom will the policy / decision impact?

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

Staff

YES

The Language Strategy will be implemented throughout the council as a whole and it will be implemented across the council. The action plan will require an awareness from staff about what the language strategy entails and how this may impact on their work on a day to day basis.

Service users

YES

One of the key aims of the Action Plan is to assess the demand for Council services in other languages and beginning to take actions to meet that demand.

Other public sector organizations

YES

Foras na Gaeilge, who co-fund the Irish-language officer post along with Belfast City Council; the Ulster-Scots Agency who oversee the development of Ulster Scots were consulted on the Action Plan.

Voluntary / community groups / trade unions

YES

Trade Unions will be consulted due to the potential impact of the Action plan on staff; British Deaf Association; Royal National Institute for Blind People; MENCAP were for their views.

Others, please specify

YES/NO

5. Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?

Department for Communities

Section B

Information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts for equality and good relations

6. Outline consultation process planned or achieved

There was an extensive and lengthy consultation process around these issues while the Language Strategy was being developed. This included engagement with staff and trades unions within the council followed by a more formal survey of staff capacity and opinions around language issues. Council officers also met with the representatives of the various language communities represented in the Language Strategy to assess their needs and to hear what level and types of service they would like to see from the Council through the Language Strategy. This was followed by a formal consultation exercise held over the usual period in which the public were asked to give their opinions.

Since their appointments the language officers have engaged extensively with the language communities represented in the Strategy and Action Plan and groups representing them asked for their opinions on what support they needed from the council and the Action Plan is laid out in a way which reflects the opinions of these communities.

7. 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.

It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as: monitoring information; complaints; research surveys; consultation exercises from other public authorities.

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> <p>The 2011 Census shows that, for Northern Ireland as a whole, 90% of people aged 3 and over with some ability in Irish were or had been brought up as Catholics and 7.4% as Protestants. 79% of those with some ability in Ulster-Scots were or had been brought up as Protestants and 17% as Catholics.</p> <p>In the context of Northern Ireland it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated.</p>
Political opinion	<p>In the last Council election (May 2014), 29.2% of votes were cast for Sinn Féin, 19% for the DUP, 10% for the SDLP, 11.4% for the Alliance Party, 9% for the UUP and 6.5% for the PUP.</p> <p>In the context of Northern Ireland it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated.</p>
Racial group	<p>There is a higher than average proportion of people from a black and minority ethnic (BME) 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</p>

	<p>the Indian community (0.78%). The 2011 Census shows that 2.85% of the Belfast population were born in EU countries.</p> <p>The most commonly spoken languages in Belfast (excluding English and Irish) are Polish (1.36%), Chinese (0.35%), Tagalog/Filipino (0.28%) and Slovak (0.19%). The Census shows that, for Northern Ireland as a whole, very high proportions of residents whose main language is Tagalog/ Filipino (99%), Irish (98%) or Malayalam (92%) can speak English well or very well. However, the figures are much lower for those who speak mainly Chinese (61%), Lithuanian (62%), Slovak (64%), Polish (66%), Russian (66%), Hungarian (68%), Latvian (71%) or Portuguese (63%).</p> <p>It the context of Northern Ireland it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated.</p>
<p>Age</p>	<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%).</p> <p>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> <p>The 2011 Census shows that, for NI as a whole, over 50% of those residents whose main language is not English are aged between 25-44, compared with 28% of those whose main language is English.</p> <p>It also shows that residents of NI with some ability in Irish have a younger age profile than those with some ability in Ulster-Scots. People aged 12-15 are most likely to have some ability in Irish (20%), while those least likely to have such ability are aged 75 and over (6.2%). In contrast, while people in the 55-74 or 75 and over</p>

	<p>age groups are most likely to have some ability in Ulster-Scots (13% and 12% respectively), those least likely to have such ability are aged 3-11 (2.3%).</p> <p>More than 40% of people over 50 in NI have some level of hearing loss, equating to 261,355, with 43,870 people over the age of 50 in Belfast having some level of hearing loss. The levels of hearing loss jumps to 70% in the over 70 age group, with 25,756 people in Belfast over the age of 70 suffering from some level of hearing loss. It is estimated that there are 1500 children with hearing loss in Northern Ireland.</p>
Marital status	No evidence has been gathered that the Action Plan will have any specific impact on people in terms of marital status.
Sexual orientation	No evidence has been gathered that the Action Plan will have any specific impact on people in terms of sexual orientation.
Men and women generally	No evidence has been gathered that the Action Plan will have any specific impact on people in terms of men and women generally.
Disability	<p>The Royal National Institute for Blind People provide statistics saying that there are 9310 people with sight loss of some kind living in Belfast, with 1159 of these people being registered blind or partially sighted.</p> <p>300,000 people in Northern Ireland have some level of hearing loss. There is an estimated 5000 Sign Language users with 3500 of these use British Sign Language (BSL) with the remaining 1500 using Irish Sign Language (ISL). More than 40% of people over 50 in NI have some level of hearing loss, equating to 261,355, with 43,870 people over the age of 50 in Belfast having some level of hearing loss. The levels of hearing loss jumps to 70% in the over 70 age group, with 25,756 people in Belfast over the age of 70 suffering from some level of hearing loss. It is estimated that there are 1500 children with hearing loss in Northern Ireland.</p>

	<p>There are approximately 42,000 people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland, this figure includes 11,000 children between the ages of 0 and 17. Of this 11,000, 5000 of these are below the age of 7.</p> <p>8% of people in Belfast consider that they have bad or very bad health with 24% of people saying they have a long term health problem or disability.</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 dependent person; this is slightly higher than the NI average of 11.82%.</p>

8. 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?

Section 75 category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	<p>The Language Strategy Action plan was developed and written with the intention of increasing equality of opportunity and access to services to people regardless of religious belief.</p> <p>In the context of Northern Ireland it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated and the action plan will take positive steps to address this, in the context of language.</p>	Minor (positive)

<p>Political opinion</p>	<p>The Language Strategy Action plan was developed and written with the intention of increasing equality of opportunity and access to services to people regardless of political opinion.</p> <p>In the context of Northern Ireland it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated and the action plan will take positive steps to address this, in the context of language.</p>	<p>Minor (positive)</p>
<p>Racial group</p>	<p>The Language Strategy Action plan was developed and written with the intention of increasing equality of opportunity and access to services to people regardless of religious belief.</p> <p>In the context of Northern Ireland it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated and the action plan will take positive steps to address this, in the context of language.</p>	<p>Minor (positive)</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>There are a range of opportunities emanating from the Language Strategy Action Plan which can benefit users of various languages across differing age spans. The Action plan has to potential to positively impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people learning languages at school • Young people at Irish-medium schools • The children of newcomer families who use their heritage language at home 	<p>Minor (positive)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children of deaf adults • The families of people with disabilities • Older people who are experiencing hearing loss • Older people learning another language 	
Marital status		None
Sexual orientation		None
Men and women generally		None
Disability	As one of the strands of the Strategy focuses on languages and communications for people with disabilities, there are opportunities in the Action plan to increase equality of opportunity for people with disabilities through examining what services are provided and how accessible council services are.	Minor (positive)
Dependants	The Action Plan has the potential to raise awareness of the services that people who have a dependent who is deaf or disabled, or the child of a deaf adult, can use and impact them positively. The Action plan will also raise awareness of the barriers and challenges faced by families with dependents in terms of access to services.	Minor (positive)

9. 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	<p>The Action Plan covers the period up to March 2020 and is intended to implement the Language strategy. It has been developed based on wide-ranging consultation with various language groups and evidence gathered by Belfast City Council. One of the key objectives of the Action Plan is to promote equality of opportunity and access to services for people from varying backgrounds, and also to continue to gather evidence and add value as the actions are implemented.</p> <p>The Action Plan also aims to highlight the positive impacts bilingualism and language can have on communities regardless of their background and how languages can be an asset to society.</p>	
Political opinion	<p>The Action Plan covers the period up to March 2020 and is intended to implement the Language strategy. It has been developed based on wide-ranging consultation with various language groups and evidence gathered by Belfast City Council. One of the key objectives of the Action Plan is to promote equality of opportunity and access to services for people from varying backgrounds, and also to continue to gather</p>	

	<p>evidence and add value as the actions are implemented.</p> <p>The Action Plan also aims to highlight the positive impacts bilingualism and language can have on communities regardless of their background and how languages can be an asset to society.</p>	
Racial group	<p>The Action Plan covers the period up to March 2020 and is intended to implement the Language strategy. It has been developed based on wide-ranging consultation with various language groups and evidence gathered by Belfast City Council. One of the key objectives of the Action Plan is to promote equality of opportunity and access to services for people from varying backgrounds, and also to continue to gather evidence and add value as the actions are implemented.</p> <p>The Action Plan also aims to highlight the positive impacts bilingualism and language can have on communities regardless of their background and how languages can be an asset to society.</p>	
Age	<p>The data shows that younger people are more likely to speak Irish and older people are more likely to speak Ulster-Scots. In addition, users of minority languages from EU accession states are more likely to be in the 25-44 age group. These groups will benefit most from the policy but this will not</p>	

	result in a negative impact on people in other age groups.	
Marital status		Although no specific data is available, it is not considered that marital status will have any impact on a person's ability to benefit from the action plan and associated outputs and outcomes.
Sexual orientation		Although no specific data is available, it is not considered that sexual orientation will have any impact on a person's ability to benefit from the action plan and associated outputs and outcomes.
Men and women generally		Although the data shows that there are some slight variations in terms of knowledge of Irish and Ulster-Scots among men

		and women generally, it is not considered that gender will have any impact on a person's ability to benefit from the action plan and associated outputs and outcomes.
Disability	<p>The current policy includes provision for communication with people who use sign language as their main method of communication. The revised policy clarifies that sign language includes both BSL and ISL, as well as those who use Braille and easy read versions of documents.</p> <p>The Action Plan has a positive impact on people with a disability and will not have an adverse impact on people without a disability.</p>	
Dependants	Speakers of indigenous, newcomer, sign and other languages covered in this Strategy and Action Plan who have children and dependents might be better able to avail of services in the language of their choice.	

10. 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	Positive – due to the perceived associations between religion, political opinion and race, the Language Strategy Action plan presents an opportunity to promote good relations by challenging commonly held perceptions.	Minor (positive)
Political opinion	Positive – due to the perceived associations between religion, political opinion and race, the Language Strategy Action plan presents an opportunity to promote good relations by challenging commonly held perceptions.	Minor (positive)
Racial group	Positive – due to the perceived associations between religion, political opinion and race, the Language Strategy Action plan presents an opportunity to promote good relations by challenging commonly held perceptions.	Minor (positive)

11. 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	Due to the strong associations between religion and the indigenous languages spoken in Northern Ireland there is an opportunity through the Language Strategy Action plan to take actions which address	

	this and promote language as an opportunity to increase good relations.	
Political opinion	The Language Strategy Action can help present languages as an asset to promote good relations between people from opposing political viewpoints by showing the shared history of their speaker communities.	
Racial group	The focus on languages spoken by newcomer communities and differing can promote good relations through breaking down isolation and using these languages to communicate and deliver services more effectively.	

Section C

Belfast City Council also has legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order** and Questions 12-13 relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

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

British Sign Language, Irish Sign Language and communications for people with disabilities form two of the key themes of the Language Strategy and associated action plan. The action plan aims to increase the levels of service provision for users of these languages.

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

The Action Plan aims to increase awareness of BSL, ISL and communications for people with disabilities and to help challenge the communicative barriers faced by users of these languages in accessing public services.

14. Multiple Identities

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

Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

The Action Plan covers the period up to March 2020 and is intended to implement the Language strategy. It has been developed based on wide-ranging consultation with various language groups and evidence gathered by Belfast City Council. One of the key objectives of the Action Plan is to promote equality of opportunity and access to services for people from varying backgrounds, and also to continue to gather evidence and add value as the actions are implemented.

The Action Plan also aims to highlight the positive impacts bilingualism and language can have on communities regardless of their background and how languages can be an asset to society.

15. 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.

Equality	Good Relations	Disability Duties
The council will monitor what services are provided across the various languages covered in the strategy including what new services will be developed and offered as a result of the Action Plan.	Complaints and feedback especially qualitative feedback on attitudinal change.	The uptake of services by people using Sign Language and languages for people with disabilities and communicative barriers.

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened Language Strategy Action Plan
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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)*

	* <u>Screened In</u> – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
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	* <u>Screened Out</u> – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
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X	* <u>Screened Out</u> - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached: The Language Strategy Action Plan will actively seek to promote good relations and equality of opportunity. The minor impacts identified are positive.
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Formal Record of Screening Decision (cont.)

Screening assessment completed by (Officer Level) –

Name: Colm McGuigan

Date: 31/01/2019

Department: Legal and Civic Services

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Screening decision approved by –

Name: Lisa McKee

Date: 31/01/2019

Department: Legal and Civic 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 – equality@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*)

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