



Equality Screening Template

Relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre (opening on 12 December 2013)

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 / 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 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

Title of policy / decision to be screened:-

Relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre (opening on 12 December 2013).

Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

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

The £1.82m Visit Belfast Welcome Centre, on Donegall Square North is one of the key capital funding projects within Belfast City Council's £150 million Investment Programme. The new Centre, which opened on 12 December 2013, provides an accessible ground floor location opposite City Hall. It replaces the former Belfast Welcome Centre premises in Donegall Place, which had been operating since 2001.

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

(What is the policy trying to achieve?)

The Centre provides attraction and event details, tickets, brochures, and accommodation information. The introduction of new technology, to enhance the visitor experience, was a key driver for the project. New features of the Centre include:

- Four information 'islands' telling the story of Belfast through people, places, experiences and events.
- Eight "commercial" islands, showcasing the very best features of Belfast and N Ireland Tourism, including the Titanic Quarter, Victoria Square, and the North Coast
- Self-service touch screens which list almost 500 major attractions across N. Ireland
- Free wi-fi, allowing users to access and download information straight to their mobiles or other devices (e.g. visitors can select an attraction and walk out with all the info on your Smart Phone)
- Digital maps to help visitors find out about each part of the city
- Video walls showcasing Belfast and N Ireland, as well as commercial funded interests and attractions.
- Gift shop with 'Made in Belfast' features

- Striking wall graphics, both inside and outside, which reflect the city centre, the north/south/east/west of the city and Northern Ireland. This includes the “Belfast Story” wall graphic, which includes specific images of key places and visitor experiences around the City.

On whom will the policy / decision impact?

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

- Staff
- Service users
- Other public sector organizations
- Voluntary / Community groups / Trade unions – Local Tourism Providers
- Others, please specify

Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?

The centre is run by Visit Belfast (previously known as Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau). Visit Belfast is a public/private membership organisation responsible for the promotion of Belfast as a vibrant city break, leisure, conference, business and cruise destination. It is supported by Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and has key sponsorship agreements with Diageo Northern Ireland and Value Cabs.

Section B

1. Outline consultation process achieved or planned

The Relocation of the Welcome Centre was a project contained within the City's overall investment programme. The Investment Programme was launched in February 2012, and was subject to full public and political consultation, as well as an Equality Impact Assessment

The development of the Welcome Centre, although not the specific design details, was approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of the Council in November 2012. Thereafter a governance structure was put in place to monitor and manage the project. This included a Steering Group – consisting of BCC, NITB and Visit Belfast. The Steering Group reported to a Project Board – consisting of BCC, NITB, Visit Belfast, and CPD.

One of the explicit aims of the new Welcome Centre was to improve accessibility by opening on the ground floor (the previous centre was on the 1st floor). Visitor feedback had illustrated the barrier limited accessibility had caused for many years. The new foyer does have five steps to access the remainder of the building, but a lift for disabled access was installed to the right of the steps to facilitate wheelchair users or those with a buggy.

Following the completion of Stage C design Access NI were commissioned to write a report on accessibility. These led to a number of recommendations, all of which were implemented.

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:

- A. Monitoring information
- B. Complaints
- C. Research /surveys

D. Consultation exercise and other public authorities

The City Council spends significant sums of public money to support tourism, and we need to ensure that this is not only spent effectively, but spent in a way that is representative of all residents of the City:

There are several demographic aspects that we have considered as part of the screening:

- Local Demographics, to ensure that the tapestry of Belfast life is fully reflected.
- An assessment of specific user needs under section 75 categories
- Tourists who travel to Belfast from outside N Ireland.

We have considered Census data (2011), Equality Commissions Publication Equality Law for the Tourism Sector and data from the NI Omnibus Survey.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence / information and engagement
Religious belief	<p>For the tourist visiting the centre how the local demographic is represented provides the first insight into the people of Belfast. To inform this representation different information was used to develop the centre as an inclusive one stop shop:</p> <p>The knowledge and experience of religious, political and racial diversity from the Council's Tourism Team and Visit Belfast developed;</p> <p>The annual tourism monitor from the Tourism, Culture and Arts unit helps us understand the demographics and quantum of the Visitor market;</p> <p>Customer feedback from the previous Welcome Centre</p> <p>Census data 2011.</p>
Political opinion	<p>For the tourist visiting the centre how the local demographic is represented provides the first insight into the people of Belfast. To inform</p>

	<p>this representation different information was used to develop the centre as an inclusive one stop shop:</p> <p>The knowledge and experience of religious, political and racial diversity from the Council's Tourism Team and Visit Belfast developed;</p> <p>The annual tourism monitor from the Tourism, Culture and Arts unit helps us understand the demographics and quantum of the Visitor market;</p> <p>Customer feedback from the previous Welcome Centre</p> <p>Census data 2011.</p>
Racial group	<p>For the tourist visiting the centre how the local demographic is represented provides the first insight into the people of Belfast. To inform this representation different information was used to develop the centre as an inclusive one stop shop:</p> <p>The knowledge and experience of religious, political and racial diversity from the Council's Tourism Team and Visit Belfast developed;</p> <p>The annual tourism monitor from the Tourism, Culture and Arts unit helps us understand the demographics and quantum of the Visitor market;</p> <p>Customer feedback from the previous Welcome Centre</p> <p>Census data 2011.</p>
Age	<p>Whilst the introduction of new technology, to enhance the visitor experience, was a key driver for the project, research shows that for older people the digital technology can become a barrier to participation. Therefore it was essential that new technologies were supported by printed material and customer service.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback from Visit Belfast indicated that the first floor location of the previous Centre was sometimes a barrier, which made visitor services less accessible to a minority of service groups. The new Welcome Centre enjoys a prime location with much improved accessibility and incorporates all the recommendations of a report from Access NI,</p>

	<p>who were commissioned to write a report on accessibility.</p> <p>Design and technology consultants conveyed significant insight into current cultural and technology trends, with a specific disposition to what was relevant to the youth market. These have been incorporated into the day to day business of the Centre.</p> <p>The annual tourism monitor from the Tourism, Culture and Arts unit helps us understand the demographics and quantum of the Visitor market;</p>
Marital status	None
Sexual orientation	The annual tourism monitor from the Tourism, Culture and Arts unit helps us understand the demographics and quantum of the Visitor market;
Men & women generally	None
Disability	<p>Qualitative feedback from Visit Belfast indicated that the first floor location was sometimes a barrier, which made visitor services less accessible to a minority of service groups, such as those with a disability.</p> <p>A written report on the design and layout of the Centre was commissioned from Access NI, and all measures implemented.</p>
Dependants	Qualitative feedback from Visit Belfast indicated that the first floor location of the previous Centre was sometimes a barrier, which made visitor services less accessible to a minority of service groups, including those with young children in pushchairs. The new Welcome Centre enjoys a prime location with much improved accessibility.

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?

Section 75 category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	The many different religions that make up the character of Belfast and N Ireland are central to the new Centre. This includes references to religious festivals, such as Diwali, in the digital wall AV; reference to famous Jewish residents of Belfast and N Ireland; and a graphic reference to the Belfast synagogue.	None
Political opinion	One of the main objectives of the project was to focus on a shared Belfast. Throughout the project very careful consideration was given to the political beliefs and cultural preferences of the two main traditions, to ensure the Centre represented these in a fair and inclusive way.	None
Racial group	Multi-cultural images, foods representing ethnic minority groups and cultural festivals to reflect the racial diversity of Belfast have been included on graphics, digital images and AV. Relevant activity is promoted on a regular basis. Screen text and information leaflets are available in different languages.	None
Age	The technology has been designed to accommodate those, both young and old, who are less familiar. Customer service advisors from Visit Belfast are also on hand to help people operate the navigation. The Centre also includes traditional elements, such	Minor positive

	<p>as leaflets and professional customer service advisors. Large print information is available.</p> <p>Children have been represented via their own Children's Story, telling the story of Belfast through the eyes of our youngest residents.</p>	
Marital status		None
Sexual orientation	There are references to Belfast Pride on the digital wall and AV. Customer service advisors can also provide information on attractions and facilities of greatest interest to LGBT clients.	None
Men and women generally		None
Disability	<p>One of the drivers of the Project was to develop a more accessible ground floor location for the Welcome Centre. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the design phase specifications were designed to accommodate wheelchair users, and those with access difficulties. This includes wider clutter free corridors; provision of a disabled lift; ensuring touch screens, information islands, and wall maps were positioned to accommodate wheelchair users; and provision of a smaller touch screen specifically for wheelchair users. • The above issues were consistent with the written report and recommendations from Access NI • Visit Belfast staff are trained to assist individuals with disability who may require 	Minor positive

	additional support.	
Dependants	Access to the old Centre was a barrier to those looking after young children in prams or buggies. The new ground floor location, with wider corridors and a clutter free layout, has improved accessibility.	Minor positive

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		The many different religions that make up the character of Belfast and N Ireland are central to the new Centre.
Political opinion		One of the main objectives of the project was to focus on a shared Belfast.
Racial group		Racial diversity of Belfast is represented.
Age		A series of measures have been put in place to meet the needs of different age ranges.
Marital status		No impact has been identified.
Sexual orientation		LGBT people are represented in the Centre.
Men and women generally		No impact has been identified

Disability		One of the drivers of the Project was to develop a more accessible ground floor location for the Welcome Centre
Dependants		One of the drivers of the Project was to develop a more accessible ground floor location for the Welcome Centre

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	The many different religions that make up the character of Belfast and N Ireland are central to the new Centre. This includes references to religious festivals, such as Diwali, in the digital wall AV; reference to famous Jewish residents of Belfast and N Ireland; and a graphic reference to the Belfast synagogue.	Minor
Political opinion	One of the main objectives of the project was to focus on a shared Belfast. Throughout the project very careful consideration was given to the political beliefs and cultural preferences of the two main traditions, to ensure the Centre represented these in a fair and inclusive way.	Minor
Racial group	Multi-cultural images, foods representing ethnic minority groups and cultural festivals to reflect the racial diversity of Belfast have been included on graphics, digital images and AV. Relevant activity is promoted on a regular basis.	Minor

	Screen text and information leaflets are available in different languages.	
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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	The Welcome Centre will continue to be representative of the religious diversity of the city.	
Political opinion	The Welcome Centre will continue to be representative of the political diversity of the city.	
Racial group	The Welcome Centre will continue to be representative of the racial diversity of the city.	

7. Multiple Identities

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

Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

None Identified

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

Textual and visual referencing in the digital image and video content for the new centre is inclusive of disabled people attending cultural events, in such a way that illustrates how relevant adaptations promote participation.

- 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

Customer service staff can provide advice on how to best access the attractions across the City, ensuring that disabled visitors can fully participate in the City and enjoy what it has to offer.

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
An annual review of the Welcome Centre, in relation to these three areas will be built into ongoing contract monitoring.	An annual review of the Welcome Centre, in relation to these three areas will be built into ongoing contract monitoring.	An annual review of the Welcome Centre, in relation to these three areas will be built into ongoing contract monitoring.

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened

Relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre (opening on 12 December 2013)

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"/>	* Screened In – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>*Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</p> <p>Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</p> <p>Qualitative feedback from Visit Belfast indicated that the first floor location of the previous Centre was sometimes a barrier, which made visitor services less accessible to a minority of service groups, including those with young children in pushchairs. The new Welcome Centre enjoys a prime location with much improved accessibility.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>* Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:• Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:
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Formal Record of Screening Decision (cont)

Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -

Name: Christopher McCracken

Date: 23 June 2014

Department: Development

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Screening decision approved by -

Name: **John McGrillen**

Date: **23 June 2014**

Department /Job Title: **Director of Development**

Signature:

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk or 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*)

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