

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY SCREENING

FOR

TEMPORARY VARIATION POLICY

GUIDANCE

- Please note that this document should always be referred to as an [Equality Screening](#) not an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (which is a more detailed document requiring a consultation period of at least three months).
- Please use easy to understand language and short sentences. Try to aim for a comprehension level for a P7 pupil.
- Hyperlinks may be added (as can annexes) but avoid tables.
- The screening must explain which Section 75 categories are likely to benefit from (or be impacted by) the policy and how/why this is likely.
- The [screening](#) should show data/statistics specific to the "policy" being screened.
- Monitoring (follow-up action) is an important part of the screening.

School Admissions Team
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Revised August 2026

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Further advice can be found in [ECNI - Screening for Public Authorities, Effective Section 75 Equality Assessments: Screening and Equality Assessments \(ECNI. 2017\)](#) and [Section 75: Using Evidence in Policy Making - a signposting guide](#)

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PART ONE BACKGROUND

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

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

1.1 Title of ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~

Temporary Variation (TV) Policy

1.2 Type of ~~policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~.

Review

1.3 Click here to enter description of the policy including:

Where a school is oversubscribed, it may apply to admit additional named children. Temporary Variation (TV) Policy determines whether additional places will be approved.

1.4 What factors could contribute to, or detract from the intended aim/outcome of the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~?

Legislative

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 allows the Department, at any time, to make changes to schools' admissions and/or enrolment numbers. The key legislative provisions are Articles 11 (3) and 12 (3).

1.5 Main stakeholders affected

Pupils (Actual or Potential)
Parents
Boards of Governors
Schools
Managing Authorities

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1.6 Who is responsible for?

(a) Devising the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~

The Department of Education is responsible

(b) Implementing it

The Department of Education will be responsible for implementing any changes agreed.

(c) Explain the relationship?

N/A

1.7 Other policies or objectives with a bearing on this ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~

- Area Planning
- Changing School Numbers
- Accounting for Children with a statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the Supernumerary Status

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EVIDENCE

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

1.8 What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~ in respect of each of the categories?

Religious Belief

Census data routinely collects details of the religious background of pupils.

Political Opinion

N/A

Racial Group

In 2025/26, there were 20,971 newcomer pupils accounting for 6% of the school population in Northern Ireland.

[Annual enrolments at grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland, 2025/26](#)

Age

Information drawn from the 2025/26 School Census indicates that there were 164,713 pupils in primary schools (years 1-7) and 126,872 pupils in post-primary school (years 8-12) and a further 29,894 in Sixth Form.

[School enrolment - school level data 2025/26 | Department of Education](#)

Marital Status

N/A

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Sexual Orientation

N/A

Men And Women Generally

Information drawn from the 2025/26 School Census indicates that there is a fairly even distribution of males and females within primary school population: 89,074 male pupils accounting for 50.96% and 85,704 female pupils account for 49.04%. Information was not available for post-primary schools.

[School enrolment - school level data 2025/26 | Department of Education](#)

Disability

Data gathered as part of the annual school census in 2025/26 shows that 34,222 accounting for 20.0% of pupils in primary schools (years 1-7) and 26,626 accounting for 17.0% of pupils in post-primary school were recorded as having special educational needs (SEN) and that 12,572 or 7.2% of pupils in primary schools and 11,347 or 9.1% of pupils in post-primary school had a statement of SEN.

[Annual enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2025/26](#)

Dependents

The Department does not hold data on the numbers of young people who are responsible for dependents.

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NEEDS, EXPERIENCES AND PRIORITIES

- 1.9 Taking into account the evidence gathered at 1.8 what are the needs, experiences and priorities of each category in relation to this particular ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~ decision?

Specify details of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious Belief

A child's religious belief is not relevant to TV Policy. Schools from all sectors apply by way of TV for additional places for named children regardless of location or demographic make-up. The sectors that are recognised are denominational; non-denominational; Integrated and Irish-medium.

Political Opinion

N/A

Racial Group

Newcomer pupils have contributed to increased school enrolments which is relevant to this project as this may increase the need for TV approvals in certain areas.

Age

The TV Policy applies to both primary and post-primary schools and therefore considers pupils of compulsory school age.

Marital Status

N/A

Sexual Orientation

N/A

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Men And Women Generally

The TV Policy, as based on school enrolments, applies equally to all pupils.

Disability

Pupils with a statement of SEN are currently treated as supernumerary in school admissions.

Dependents

N/A

PART TWO – SCREENING QUESTIONS

LIKELY IMPACT

2.1 What is the likely impact of this ~~policy~~/policy review/~~revised~~
~~policy/pilot/project~~ on equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75
equality categories?

Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions which are given on pages 9-11 of this Guide.

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

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

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

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

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;*
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;*
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;*
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst*

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affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;

- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;*
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.*

In favour of 'minor' impact

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

In favour of none

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

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

The review of the TV Policy is not anticipated to have any negative impact on pupils from different religious backgrounds. As a result of additional places being created in some schools, this may have a positive impact by ultimately increasing the chances of some pupils gaining access to attend their school/ sector of choice, where those schools/sectors have been oversubscribed in an area.

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Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

If a TV is approved for an oversubscribed school, it will allow the pupil to access a school/sector of their preference.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

The policy applies equally to children of primary and post-primary school age.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

By creating additional places in some schools, this could enable pupils to access their school of preference where those schools/sectors have been oversubscribed in an area.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

Pupils with SEN are currently treated as supernumerary.

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Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependents**:

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

There are no apparent impacts.

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OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

2.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people of different religious belief within it.

Political Opinion - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people of different political opinion within it.

Racial Group - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people of different racial group within it.

Age - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people of different age within it.

Marital Status - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people of different marital status within it.

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Sexual Orientation - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people of different sexual orientation within it.

Men and Women generally - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for men and women generally within it.

Disability – No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities within it.

Dependents - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote equality of opportunity for dependents within it.

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LIKELY IMPACT ON GOOD RELATIONS

2.3 To what extent is the ~~policy~~/policy review/~~revised policy~~/pilot/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Please provide details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion:**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group:**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None (circle as appropriate)

2.4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - No:

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote good relations within it.

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Political Opinion - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote good relations within it.

Racial Group - No

The TV Policy determines, on application from an oversubscribed school, whether additional places are approved for named children. There are no opportunities to promote good relations within it.

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MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

2.5 Please provide details of data on the impact of the ~~policy~~/policy review/~~revised policy~~/pilot/project on people with multiple identities and specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

It is not envisaged that the review will impact on young people with multiple identities.

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PART THREE SCREENING DECISION

3.1 Please select as appropriate and provide details and reasons:

a) The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment.

or

~~b) The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment but with mitigation or the introduction of an alternative policy.~~

or

~~c) The decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment.~~

Reasons

a) As detailed above there are no equality impacts anticipated as a result of the review of TV Policy, therefore a full equality impact assessment is not considered necessary.

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MITIGATION

3.2 If option b was chosen.

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, **give the reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

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TIMETABLING AND PRIORITISING

3.3 If option c was chosen.

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

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

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

Priority criterion

Rating (1-3)

- Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations
- Social need
- Effect on people's daily lives
- Relevance to a public authority's functions

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

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

If yes, please provide details.

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PART FOUR MONITORING

Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the ~~policy~~/policy review/~~revised policy~~/pilot/project on any of Section 75 equality categories:

Where a TV is granted, it is for one academic year. If a school's numbers grow year on year through additional places sought and granted through TVs but no Development Proposal has been approved by the Minister to allow for the permanent expansion of a school the Department may consider cessation of TV approvals or a reduction in the school's permanent admissions number in order to bring the schools actual numbers back in line with its approved numbers. The Department may also consider temporarily extending a school's approved admissions/ enrolment numbers through the Changing School Numbers policy.

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

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

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PART FIVE
DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

- 5.1 Will the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~ in any way discourage persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fail to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities?

No

- 5.2 Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities or encourage participation in public life by making changes to the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~ or introducing additional measures?

No

- 5.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~ with reference to the disability duties.

N/A

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PART SIX

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

- 6.1 Does the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project review/revised policy/pilot/project~~ affect anyone's Human Rights?

Particularly consider:

- [The Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)

No

- 6.2 If you have identified a negative impact; what Human Right is impacted, what is the nature of the impact and who is affected and how?

N/A

At this stage you should determine whether to seek legal advice and to refer the issue to the Equality Unit to consider:

- whether there is a law which allows you to interfere with or restrict rights;
- whether this interference or restriction is necessary and proportionate; and
- what action would be required to reduce the level of interference restriction).

- 9.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the ~~policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project~~.

N/A

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PART SEVEN

RURAL NEEDS

The undertaking of a [Rural Needs Impact Assessment \(RNIA\)](#) is an integral part of the development, adoption, implementation or review of a policy, strategy or plan or the design or delivery of a public service.

Will a separate RNIA be completed? Yes

Completed RNIA's are published on the Department's Internet site and shown under [Rural Needs Impact Assessments](#).

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PART EIGHT

APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

FOR COMPLETION BY POLICY TEAM

Screened by: Joyce Nickell Grade Deputy Principal Date 31/7/26

Approved by: Craig Boyd Grade 7 Date 31/7/26

Notes:

The screening form must be approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

The screening form must also be cleared at Grade 3 level.

The TRIM version of the completed Screening Form must be sent to the Equality Team (DE.Equality@education-ni.gov.uk) for quality assurance

FOR COMPLETION BY EQUALITY TEAM

Screening Decision

Quality Assured by: G. Smyth Date 04/08/26
Team Informed: Date 04/08/26

RECORDING AND PUBLISHING BY POLICY TEAM

You must store this completed screening form on Content Manager and finalise it. Use the record naming convention "Completed Screening form of....."

Content Manager Ref No: ED1/26/152638

Placed on Internet by policy team Date xxxxxx

As soon as possible, following quality assurance, you must publish a copy of the screening form in Microsoft Word (or other Open Document Format) on the Department's website: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications> with a link on the "Policy Screening" page: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/de-equality-screenings>

Commented [CB1]: Actions to be undertaken

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