

Equality & Disability Duties Screening Template

December 2023 version



Screening flowchart and template (taken from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - A Guide for public authorities April 2010 (Appendix 1)).

Introduction

Part 1. Policy scoping – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues. This section also includes two questions related to the Disability Duties.

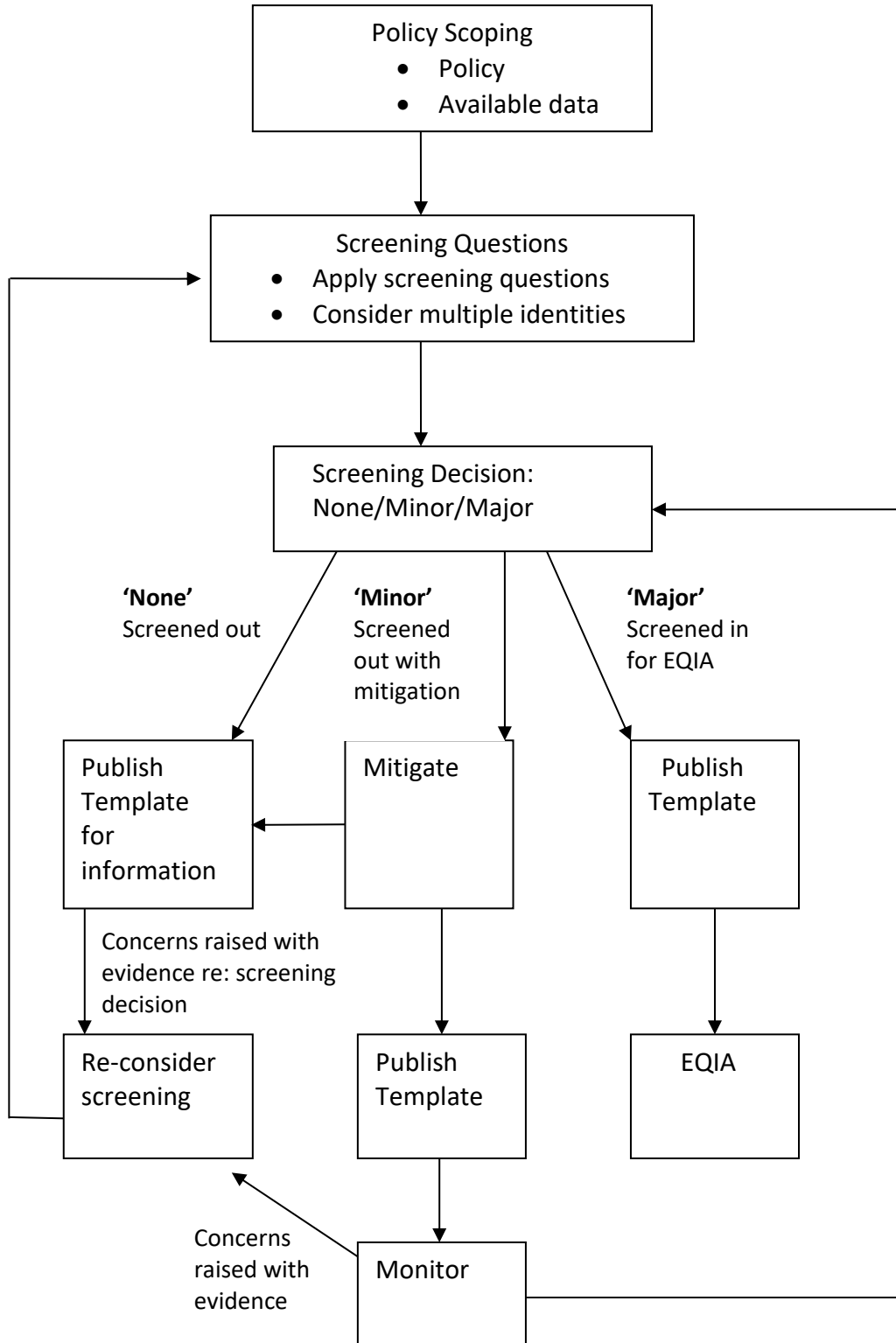
Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Part 4. Monitoring – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

Part 5. Consideration of Human Rights – please note this is not a Human Rights Screening form but rather a prompt that impacts on Human Rights should be considered.

Part 6. Approval and authorisation – verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

A screening flowchart is provided below.



Part 1. Policy scoping

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).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy

The Nutrients Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland).

Is this an existing, revised or new policy?

Revised. The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) (the Directive) was retained into domestic legislation when the UK left the EU. The overall aim of this directive is to improve water quality by protecting water against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. In particular, it promotes better management of manures, chemical fertilisers and other nitrogen-containing material spread to land. As pollution from phosphorus is one of the main causes of water quality problems in freshwaters across Northern Ireland, the Nutrients Action Programme (NAP) also contains measures to control phosphorus.

The Directive is currently implemented in Northern Ireland through the Nutrients Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 (as amended). The NAP Regulations were first introduced across Northern Ireland in 2007.

The current review is of the 2019 Regulations, and the proposal is to revise and strengthen the existing NAP measures through updated Regulations.

Whilst the overarching policy remains the same, the measures to achieve this have been revised and therefore this has been defined as a revised policy.

Brief Decision of the Policy / decision being screened and

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

There is a commitment under the regulations to review the action programme on a four yearly basis. This review has now been carried out by DAERA and AFBI. As a result of the review, it is intended to repeal the existing regulations and replace them with the Nutrients Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 to implement a revised and updated action programme.

The recommendations from the review identified the need for further action. The Department will carry forward the existing measures under the 2019 NAP Regulations. In addition, there will be further measures which are intended to strengthen the management of agricultural nutrients.

Through the Nutrients Action Programme Stakeholder Task and Finish Group process, a refined set of proposals were developed and recommended for consultation, prior to implementation through revised Nutrients Action Programme Regulations.

The proposals will give effect to the Northern Ireland's new Nutrients Action Programme which aims to reduce nutrient pollution from agricultural sources thereby helping to protect waters from adverse impact arising from agricultural activity.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? Yes No (select as appropriate)

If so, explain how.

The overall policy and aims of the Nutrients Action Programme are to protect water from sources of agricultural pollution, this is a legal obligation for the Department.

The proposals support a targeted and proportionate response to address the impact of excess nutrients. This is through a mix of voluntary and targeted measures to reduce nutrient losses to the environment (especially water). The proposals will help farms to adopt more sustainable nutrient practices over time. These measures will help to establish a baseline for sustained progress, ensuring positive outcomes over time on farm and contributing to improving water quality.

In doing so this will mitigate against agricultural nutrient losses to water, contributing to improved water quality. Our water environment is essential for everyday life and supports a wide range of benefits including clean drinking water; agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and food production; wildlife and biodiversity; and recreation, tourism and local economies.

Protecting and improving water quality is not only a statutory requirement but is also in the public interest. It helps safeguard a shared natural resource that everyone depends on, now and in the future, and supports long-term environmental, social and economic well-being. Improved water quality will benefit everyone in Northern Ireland including those within Section 75 categories.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Nitrates Directive was agreed by the EU Commission in 1991. The Directive was implemented into domestic regulations by the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), following regular reviews of the action programme, the last revision was in 2019.

As part of EU Exit, this policy was kept in UK Law and is now part of our domestic Regulations. DAERA is the appropriate authority specified in Part 6 Chapter 8 to the Environment (Legislative Functions from Directives) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

This policy is not covered by the Windsor Framework because it does not relate to the EU Laws that continue to apply in Northern Ireland.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

DAERA, Environmental Farming Branch leads on the policy and legislation of the Nutrients Action Programme. The inspection and enforcement of the regulations is carried out by NIEA, Water Management Unit.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? Yes No (select as appropriate)

If yes, are they (please select as appropriate)

Financial

Legislative

other, please specify:

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? (please select as appropriate)

Staff

Service users

Other public sector organisations

Voluntary/community/trade unions

Other, please specify

These Regulations will primarily affect the Agricultural industry as well as the rural community.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they?

Water Framework Regulations; Habitat Regulations; Ammonia Strategy.

Who owns them?

DAERA

Available 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](#).

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

Please ensure all data used is the most current and up to date available. You should verify this by contacting the Departmental Statisticians.

Religious belief evidence/information:

The 2021 census of Northern Ireland found that the population of Northern Ireland is 45.70% of Roman Catholic belief and 43.48% of Protestant and other Christian belief, with 10.82% sharing neither belief.

According to statistics from the Farmer Equality Indicators Report 2018, published by the Administrative Data Research Centre NI, 51% of farmers are of Protestant belief and 42% are of Roman Catholic belief, with 6% sharing neither belief.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based. The proposals have been developed through engagement from across the farming, agri-food and environmental sector, they are based on scientific and environmental evidence and have been developed so that they will be workable at farm level. The policy will apply across Northern Ireland, irrespective of religious belief.

Political Opinion evidence/information:

Information on political opinion was not collected in the Population Census 2021, however it did include a question on national identity. The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report suggested that national identity is a reasonable proxy indicator for the Unionist / Nationalist statistics. In the 2021 Census, 42.8 % identified solely or along with other national identities as British, 33.3% identified solely or along with other national identities as Irish. 31.5 % identified solely or along with other national identities as Northern Irish. It also stated that the most numerous person-based national identities were British only – 31.9%, Irish only – 29.1% and Northern Irish only – 19.8%.

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report indicated that 44% of farmers reported their identity as British only, 26% as Irish only and 23% as Northern Irish only, with 8% stating other identity or a combination of more than one identity.

The national identity profile varied across farm characteristics. A high proportion of dairy farmers (62% and those engaged in mixed farming (63%) state a British only identity, while only 13% of dairy farmers and 11% of those involved in mixed farming stated that they held an Irish identity.

More than three quarters of those describing their identity as Irish only (77%) and two-thirds of those with a Northern Irish only identity (68%) were engaged in cattle and sheep farming in less Favoured Areas, compared to less than half (48%) of farmers of British only identity.

The implications of the proposals in the revised Nutrients Action Programme and the impact on the farming sector will vary depending on the farm size, type and location of the farm including designation.

Farms of differing size, type and land classification and therefore, differing political opinions will have corresponding variation in needs, experience and priorities in relation to the proposals. This will result in variable impacts on those of different political opinion.

The impact on farms and the different measures have been considered in the development of the proposals and engagement with stakeholders has taken place so that the proposals are workable at a farm level.

Racial Group evidence/information:

In the 2021 Census, 96.6% of the population were of white ethnicity, and 3.4% of the population belonged to an ethnic group other than white.

The proportion of farmers stating an ethnicity other than white was too small to examine differences by farm characteristics in the Equality Indicators report.

The 2001 'Farmers and Families in Northern Ireland' survey data indicates that the farming population is overwhelming white and there is no difference in racial group by size or farm type. Due to historic land ownership patterns in Northern Ireland, land is passed down through generations, so this racial group information is not surprising.

It is our view that the proposals in the revised Nutrients Action Programme will not disadvantage any racial group over another, that would increase the proportional differences already in existence.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based. The proposals have been developed through engagement from across the farming, agri-food and environmental sectors, the proposals have been based on scientific and environmental evidence and developed so that they will be workable at farm level. The policy will apply across Northern Ireland, irrespective of an individual's racial group.

Age evidence/information:

According to statistics from the 2018 Farmer Equality Indicators Report, published by the Administrative Data Research Centre NI, only 8% of farmers in NI are under the age of 40, with 43% aged between 40 and 59 and 49% aged 60 and over. According to these same statistics, over a third (36%) of farmers in Northern Ireland are aged over 65.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based.

This policy is to be implemented across Northern Ireland, where all ages will be involved in its implementation on the ground and will include education and knowledge transfer activities.

The proposals will help farms to adopt more sustainable nutrient practices over time. These measures will help to establish a baseline for sustained progress, ensuring positive outcomes on farm and contributing to improving water quality. It is important that all ages across the generations are included in the implementation of the proposals across the farming sector. Especially due to historic land ownership patterns in Northern Ireland, where land is passed down through generations.

When it comes to implementation of the final revised Nutrients Action Programme, further consideration will be required of potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities of those of different age groups. Given that

overall 36% of farmers are 65 and above, records required to be completed via online systems have the potential to be a slight disadvantage to those farmers, as it may mean that they have to pay someone else to complete them. The Department has included in the consultation plans to develop an app to support implementation and ease of access to the online system and a phone line alternative if required.

There could be a financial burden on some farms impacted by this proposal (eg through the introduction of LESSE), and therefore it could be seen to impact older generations more. Due to historic land ownership patterns in Northern Ireland, land is passed down through generations. It is therefore envisaged that the costs incurred in such an investment would be spread out in terms of investment and return and financial support will also often be available through DAERA led schemes.

The Department has engaged with key stakeholders, to develop the proposals included in the consultation to ensure that the proposals are evidence-based and workable at farm level. This includes consideration of the impact on farms and how the measures can be mitigated to reduce impact so that they are workable at farm level. The policy will apply across Northern Ireland, and given the implementation plans, it is not envisaged that the policy will have an adverse impact due to age and will be workable at farm level.

DAERA are committed to inclusive engagement and consideration will be given on how best to engage with older people and organisations in order to support the implementation of the final agreed action programme.

Marital Status evidence/information:

According to statistics from the 2018 Farmer Equality Indicators Report, published by the Administrative Data Research Centre NI, nearly three quarters (73%) of farmers in NI are married. The number of married NI farmers was particularly high among those involved in pig farming and horticulture (both 88%).

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based. The proposals have been developed through engagement from across the farming, agri-food and environmental sector, and have been based on evidence, to be workable at farm level. The policy will apply across Northern Ireland, regardless of one's marital status.

Sexual Orientation evidence/information:

According to the 2021 census, 90.04% of the Northern Irish population identifies as heterosexual, with 2.09% identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual orientation and 7.87% preferring not to say.

There has not been a specific survey on sexual orientation on farmers in Northern Ireland, therefore no formal statistic is available. The 2001 'Farmers and Families in Northern Ireland' survey indicated that it wasn't possible to obtain this information.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern

Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based. The proposals have been developed through engagement from across the farming, agri-food and environmental sector, and have been based on evidence, to be workable at farm level. The policy will apply across Northern Ireland, regardless of one's sexual orientation.

Men & Women generally evidence/information:

Despite the Northern Irish population, according to the 2021 census, consisting of a fairly even split of 50.81% women and 49.19% men, the population of farmers in Northern Ireland consists predominantly of men at 91% according to statistics published by the Administrative Data Research Centre NI in their 2018 Farmer Equality Indicators Report.

Since 2020, in the Agricultural Census completed for Northern Ireland spouses were included under the farmers, partners and directors category.

In the 2023 Northern Ireland Integrated Farm Survey, there continues to be a strong representation of males who have day to day decision making responsibility on the farm. The 2023 survey found that 93% were male compared to 6% female.

The impact of the proposed revised Nutrients Action Programme on the farming sector across Northern Ireland will vary according to farm size, type and designation. As men and women are represented differently across farm types, they may experience the proposals differently in terms of their needs, experiences and priorities.

For example, because there is fewer female than male dairy farmers, measures aimed at dairy farming are likely to have a greater impact on men than women within that sector. There could also be a financial burden on some farms impacted by this proposal (e.g. through the introduction of LESSE), and therefore it could be seen to impact male farmers more. However, it is envisaged that the costs incurred in such an investment would primarily be incurred by the farm business, rather than solely the male farmer and support will also often be available through DAERA led schemes.

DAERA also considers that the proposals are evidence-based and have been developed with consideration of their workability at farm level. As the policy is land-based and informed by environmental factors, nothing within the proposals is expected to disadvantage women more than men or increase existing proportional differences.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based. The proposals have been developed through engagement from across the farming, agri-food and environmental sector, and have been based on evidence, to be workable at farm level. The policy will apply across Northern Ireland, with no adverse impact because of gender.

Disability evidence/information:

According to statistics from the 2018 Farmer Equality Indicators Report, published by the Administrative Data Research Centre NI, 30% of farmers in Northern Ireland are disabled or suffer from a long-term illness which inhibits their day-to-day activities.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based.

The revised proposals have been developed through engagement from across the farming, agri-food and environmental sector. Each of the measures have been developed based on scientific and environmental evidence and to ensure they are workable at farm level. Therefore, it is not envisaged that implementing the revised proposals will have an adverse impact on those who has a disability.

The proposals will mitigate against agricultural losses to water, contributing to improved water quality. Our water environment is essential for everyday life and supports a wide range of benefits including clean drinking water; agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and food production; wildlife and biodiversity; and recreation, tourism and local economies. This would be a positive benefit for people with both physical disabilities and mental health issues, older people and people with children.

Dependants evidence/information:

According to statistics from the 2018 Farmers Equality Indicators Report, published by the Administrative Data Research Centre NI, 40% of all farm households contained children under 18, elderly disabled people or both.

The proposed revisions to the Nutrients Action Programme are designed to safeguard and protect water from agricultural activities throughout Northern Ireland. These targeted measures are informed by both environmental conditions and farming activities, and as such the policy is land based rather than individual-based.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

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

Religious belief

No specific issues have been identified in relation to religious belief and the revised proposals for the Nutrients action programme, see available evidence. As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to religious belief issues. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Political Opinion

No specific issues have been identified in relation to political opinion and the revised proposals for the Nutrients action programme, see available evidence. As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to political opinion. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Racial Group

None, see available evidence. As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to racial group. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Age

After taking into account the potential needs of those impacted by this policy in this group, mitigating actions outlined in the consultation will be put in place to support the implementation, education and training for example through online systems or alternative formats. The Department is committed to considering ways to support and communicate with those identified to implement the programme. Also see additional evidence for more information.

As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and

priorities in relation to age. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Marital status

No specific issues have been identified in relation to marital status and the revised proposals for the Nutrients action programme, see available evidence. As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to marital status. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Sexual orientation

No specific issues have been identified in relation to sexual orientation and the revised proposals for the Nutrients action programme, see available evidence. As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to sexual orientation. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Men and Women Generally

No specific issues have been identified in relation to gender, following mitigations, from the revised proposals for the Nutrients action programme, beyond any proportional differences which already exist, see available evidence.

As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to gender issues. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Disability

No specific issues have been identified in relation to disability and the revised proposals for the Nutrients Action Programme, see available evidence.

As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to disability issues. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Dependants

No specific issues have been identified in relation to those with dependents and the revised proposals for the Nutrients action programme, see available evidence.

As part of the public consultation the Department will take into account any further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to those with dependents. This will be reviewed as part of the policy development and finalisation of the measure and towards implementation.

Introduction

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 1-4.

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 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

- 1) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- 2) 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.

Screening questions

- 1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, 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.

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

The policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme are considered to have no differential impact on the Religious Belief Category. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

Equality Commission monitoring guidelines for public authorities suggest that community background / religion is a reasonable proxy indicator for the unionist / national divide. Using this guideline, the proposed revised Nutrients Action Programme should have no differential impact on those differing political opinion.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

The policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme are considered to have no differential impact on any racial groups. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Age*:

The policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme are considered to have no adverse impact on any age categories. The Department is committed to supporting the needs of those that may be impacted and given that the overall policy applies to everyone, no impact on equality of opportunity is expected.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

The policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme are considered to have no differential impact on people with different marital statuses. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

There is no evidence to suggest that implementation of the policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme will have any foreseeable impact as a result of their sexual orientation. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected.

What is the level of impact Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

Although the majority of farmers are men, the policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme are considered to have no differential impact based on sex. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Disability*:

The policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme will be applied to equally to all, the policies apply to land application of fertilisers, storage and are based on agricultural activities. The revised proposals expand on activities which are already in existence within the industry. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Dependants*:

The policies being proposed in the revised Nutrients Action Programme are considered to have no differential impact whether or not an individual has caring responsibility. No impact on equality of opportunity is expected

What is the level of impact? Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

Yes No (select as appropriate)

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

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

(insert text here)

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Age - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

DAERA actively seeks opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. It is unlikely that there will be any facility to better promote equality of opportunity by those affected by the proposals within the Nutrients Action Programme.

3. To what extent is the policy 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*:

None, the proposed regulations are continued policy implementing the Nitrates Directive in Northern Ireland. The policy is technical in nature, concerning management of manures and chemical fertilisers to protect the water environment. This is independent of any religious belief.

DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different religious beliefs and will review any issues identified during the consultation of the revised Nutrients Action Programme of the policy decisions.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

None, the proposed regulations are continued policy implementing the Nitrates Directive in Northern Ireland. The policy is technical in nature, concerning management of manures and chemical fertilisers to protect the water environment. This is independent of any political opinion.

DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different political opinions and will review any issues identified during the consultation of the revised Nutrients Action Programme of the policy decisions.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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

None, the proposed regulations are continued policy implementing the Nitrates Directive in Northern Ireland. The policy is technical in nature, concerning management of manures and chemical fertilisers to protect the water environment. This is independent of any racial group.

DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different racial groups and will review any issues identified during the consultation of the revised Nutrients Action Programme of the policy decisions.

What is the level of impact? Minor Major None

(select as appropriate)

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* - If Yes, provide details:**

If No, provide reasons:

The proposals on the revised Nutrients Action Programme is a review of an existing policy which is technical in nature as it concerns management of manures and chemical fertilisers to protect the water environment. It is unlikely to impact on promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs. However, DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different religious belief and will review any opportunities identified during the consultation of the revised Nutrients Action Programme of the policy decisions.

***Political Opinion* - If Yes, provide details:**

If No, provide reasons:

The proposals on the revised Nutrients Action Programme is a review of an existing policy which is technical in nature as it concerns management of manures and chemical fertilisers to protect the water

environment. It is unlikely to impact on promoting good relations between people of different political opinions. However, DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different political opinions and will review any opportunities identified during the consultation of the revised Nutrients Action Programme of the policy decisions.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The proposals on the revised Nutrients Action Programme is a review of an existing policy which is technical in nature as it concerns management of manures and chemical fertilisers to protect the water environment. It is unlikely to impact on promoting good relations between people of different racial groups. However, DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different racial groups and will review any opportunities identified during the consultation of the revised Nutrients Action Programme of the policy decisions.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

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? If so, please detail below.

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

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

None

DAERA also has legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order**. Questions 5 - 6 relate to these.

Consideration of Disability Duties

- 5. Does this proposed policy or decision provide an opportunity for DAERA to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?**

The proposed measures within the revised Nutrients Action Programme is a continuation of existing policy, and is being revised, which is technical in nature and applies across Northern Ireland and protect the water environment. This policy does not impact adversely on people with disabilities and there are no opportunities to promote positive attitudes as a result.

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

The proposed measures within the revised Nutrients Action Programme is a continuation of existing policy which is technical in nature and applies across Northern Ireland and protect the water environment. This policy does not impact adversely on people with disabilities and there are no opportunities to increase the participation of people with disabilities in public life as a result.

Part 3. Screening decision (Please delete as appropriate)

1. “Screened out” without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The proposed measures within the revised Nutrients Action Programme is a continuation of existing policy which is technical in nature and applies across Northern Ireland. The aim of the regulations is to manage manures and chemical fertilisers to protect and improve the water environment across all of Northern Ireland. The proposed measures have been developed through engagement with a range of stakeholders across the sectors, they are based on scientific and environment evidence and to be workable at farm level. The overall impacts and benefits of the Regulations will accrue to Northern Ireland as a whole and there is no evidence to suggest that there will be differential or adverse impacts on any of the relevant groups, organisations or individuals.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

No mitigation or alternative policy is necessary. Mitigation relating to the implementation of the policy has been considered and these have been outlined in the consultation. The proposals have been developed to ensure that they can be workable at farm level. The overall impacts and benefits of the Regulations will accrue to Northern Ireland as a whole and therefore will have no adverse effect on any of the relevant groups, organisations or individuals.

If the decision is to **subject the policy to an equality impact assessment**, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: [A Practical Guide to Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Mitigation

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? Yes No (select as appropriate)

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

N/A

Timetabling and prioritising

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	
Total score	N/A.

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? Yes No (select as appropriate)

If yes, please provide details.

N/A.

Part 4. Monitoring

Section 75 places a requirement on DAERA 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. Please note the following excerpt from The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in relation to monitoring:

A system must be established to monitor the impact of the policy in order to find out its effect on relevant groups. The results of ongoing monitoring must be reviewed on an annual basis. The public authority is required to publish the results of this monitoring. And they must be included in the public authorities' annual review on progress to the Equality Commission. The Equality Scheme must specify how and where such monitoring information will be published. It is therefore essential that monitoring is carried out in a systematic manner and that the results are widely and openly published.

If the monitoring and analysis of results over a two year period show that the policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the public authority must ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups.

Further advice on monitoring can be found at: [ECNI Monitoring Guidance for Public Authorities](#)

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

Equality:

Equality screening data is collected annually as part of the agricultural Census. This information is published on the Department's website. The Department also collects Section 75 monitoring data annually from the Single Application Form for farm support payments.

Good Relations:

See comments under Equality. The proposed regulations and revised action programme apply across the farming industry and the policy does not adversely impact on any of the identified groups.

Disability Duties:

See comments under Equality. The proposed regulations and revised action programme apply across the farming industry, and the policy does not adversely impact on people with disabilities. The Department will also ensure that all documentation and guidance relevant to the revised action programme are widely available and will be published on the Department's website.

Part 5. Consideration of Human Rights

7. The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 brings the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law and it applies in N Ireland. Indicate below by deleting Yes/No as appropriate, any potential adverse impacts that the policy or decision may have in relation to human rights issues.

See Annex A for brief synopsis on each of the Human Rights Articles & Protocols.

Right to Life	Article 2	No
Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment	Article 3	No
Prohibition of slavery and forced labour	Article 4	No
Right to liberty and security	Article 5	No
Right to a fair and public trial	Article 6	No
Right to no punishment without law	Article 7	No
Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence	Article 8	No
Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	Article 9	No
Right to freedom of expression	Article 10	No
Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association	Article 11	No

Right to marry and to found a family	Article 12	No
The prohibition of discrimination	Article 14	No
Protection of property and enjoyment of possessions	Protocol 1 Article 1	No
Right to education	Protocol 1 Article 2	No
Right to free and secret elections	Protocol 1 Article 3	No

8. Please explain any adverse impacts on human rights that you have identified.

The proposed Regulations are a continuation of existing policy which is technical in nature to implement the nitrates directive in Northern Ireland and protect the water environment. Although this originates from the EU, the Nitrates Directive was retained in UK Domestic Law, when the UK left the EU. No adverse impacts on human rights have been identified.

9. Please indicate any ways which you consider the policy positively promotes human rights.

The proposed Regulations are a continuation of existing policy which is technical in nature to implement the nitrates directive in Northern Ireland and protect the water environment. Although this originates from the EU, the Nitrates Directive was retained in UK Domestic Law, when the UK left the EU. The policy does not create any opportunity to promote human rights.

Part 6 - Approval and authorisation

Before signing off this screening template please confirm that you have completed all the actions listed below.

I can confirm that all the actions listed below have been completed -

- I have explained any technical issues in plain English (easily understood by a 12 year old)
- I have used the most relevant, current & up to date data available
- I have added evidence and explained my assessments in full
- I have provided a brief note to justify my decision to 'Screen In' or 'Screen Out'
- A copy of this screening template and the final decision has been sent to the Equality Unit for their consideration before it has been forwarded for sign-off

Screening assessment completed by (Staff Officer level or above) -

Name: Leanne McGrath

Grade: DP

Branch: Environmental Farming Branch Date: 23/06/2026

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature.



Screening decision approved by (must be Grade 3/Deputy Secretary or above) -

Name: Julie Thompson

Grade: 3

Branch: Environment Marine and Fisheries Group Date: 24/06/2026

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature.



Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

Please save the final signed version of the completed screening form in the CM container (AE2-19-11940) below as soon as possible after completion and forward the CM link to Equality Branch at equality@daera-ni.gov.uk. The screening form will be placed on the DAERA website and a link provided to the Department's Section 75 consultees.

For more information about equality screening, contact:

DAERA Equality Unit

Capacity, Capability, Equality & Diversity Branch

Jubilee House

111 Ballykelly Road

LIMAVADY

BT49 9HP

Email: equality@daera-ni.gov.uk

Tel: 028 7744 2027



Department of

**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

Annex A

Synopsis of Human Rights Act Articles & Protocols

ARTICLE 2

Right to life

1. Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law.
2. Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this Article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:
 - a. In defense of any person from unlawful violence;
 - b. In order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;
 - c. In action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.

ARTICLE 3

Prohibition of torture

No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

ARTICLE 4

Prohibition of slavery and forced labour

1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

3. For the purpose of this Article the term “forced or compulsory labour” shall not include:
 - a. Any work required to be done in the ordinary course of detention imposed according to the provisions of Article 5 of this Convention or during conditional release from such detention;
 - b. Any service of a military character or, in case of conscientious objectors in countries where they are recognised, service exacted instead of compulsory military service;
 - c. Any service exacted in case of an emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community;
 - d. Any work or service which forms part of normal civic obligations.

ARTICLE 5

Right to liberty and security

1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his liberty save in the following cases and in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law:
 - a. The lawful detention of a person after conviction by a competent court;
 - b. The lawful arrest or detention of a person for non-compliance with the lawful order of a court or in order to secure the fulfilment of any obligation prescribed by law;
 - c. the lawful arrest or detention of a person effected for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority on reasonable suspicion of having committed an offence or when it is reasonably considered necessary to prevent his committing an offence or fleeing after having done so;

- d. the detention of a minor by lawful order for the purpose of educational supervision or his lawful detention for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority;
 - e. The lawful detention of persons for the prevention of the spreading of infectious diseases, of persons of unsound mind, alcoholics or drug addicts or vagrants;
 - f. The lawful arrest or detention of a person to prevent his effecting an unauthorised entry into the country or of a person against whom action is being taken with a view to deportation or extradition.
2. Everyone who is arrested shall be informed promptly, in a language which he understands, of the reasons for his arrest and of any charge against him.
3. Everyone arrested or detained in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(c) of this Article shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorised by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial. Release may be conditioned by guarantees to appear for trial.
4. Everyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings by which the lawfulness of his detention shall be decided speedily by a court and his release ordered if the detention is not lawful.
5. Everyone who has been the victim of arrest or detention in contravention of the provisions of this Article shall have an enforceable right to compensation.

ARTICLE 6

Right to a fair trial

1. In the determination of his civil rights and obligations or of any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Judgment shall be pronounced publicly but the press and public may be excluded from all or part of the trial in the interest of morals, public order or national security in a democratic society, where the interests of juveniles or the protection of the private life of the parties so require, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice.
2. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.
3. Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:
 - a. To be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him;
 - b. To have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defense;
 - c. To defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing or, if he has not sufficient means to pay for legal assistance, to be given it free when the interests of justice so require;
 - d. To examine or have examined witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on his behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against him;
 - e. To have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

ARTICLE 7

No punishment without law

1. No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the criminal offence was committed.
2. This Article shall not prejudice the trial and punishment of any person for any act or omission which, at the time when it was committed, was criminal according to the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations.

ARTICLE 8

Right to respect for private and family life

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

ARTICLE 9

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

ARTICLE 10

Freedom of expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

ARTICLE 11

Freedom of assembly and association

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This Article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the State.

ARTICLE 12

Right to marry

Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family, according to the national laws governing the exercise of this right.

ARTICLE 14

Prohibition of discrimination

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

Protocol 1

ARTICLE 1

Protection of property

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

Protocol 1

ARTICLE 2

Right to education

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

Protocol 1

ARTICLE 3

Right to free elections

The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature.

For further information:

Equality Unit,
Equality & Diversity Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Ballykelly
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Tel: 028 7744 2027

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An Roinn

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Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**