

Equality & Disability Duties Screening Template

December 2023 version



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living,
working, active landscape
valued by everyone.*

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.

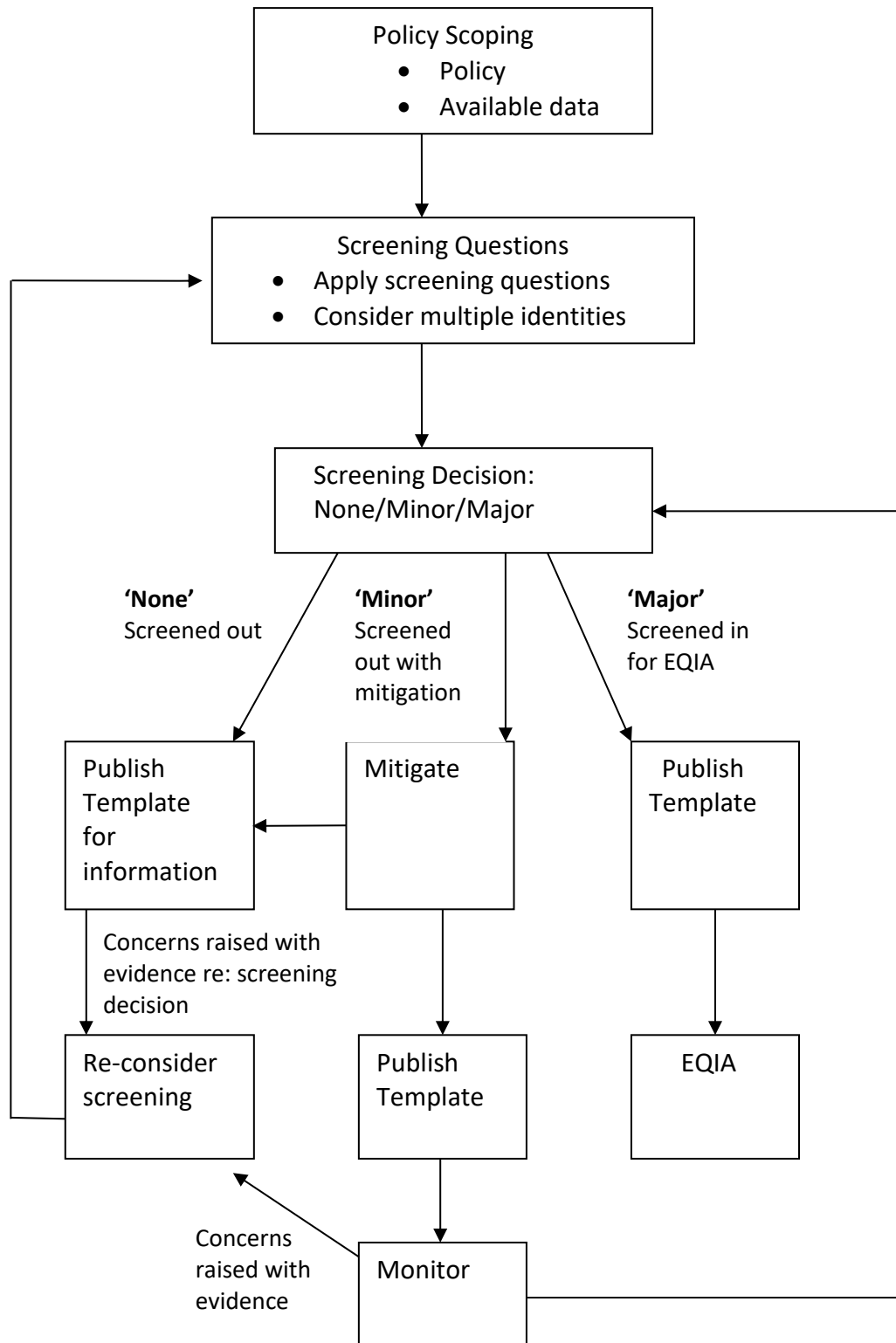
Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality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

Farming with Nature Transition Scheme

Is this an existing, revised or new policy?

Revised

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

The UK's exit from the EU, and the Common Agricultural Policy was the most significant change to agri-food sector policy in over 40 years and provided an opportunity to develop new approaches to agricultural policy and support to better address the needs of Northern Ireland agriculture and the environment.

A new Sustainable Agriculture Programme is being co-designed with the Northern Ireland agricultural industry and other key stakeholders to target farm support to meet the bespoke needs of Northern Ireland.

The overall objective is to transition to a more sustainable farming sector by seeking to implement policies and strategies that benefit our climate and environment, while, supporting our economically and socially significant agri-food sector. The schemes and measures being introduced will provide levers to contribute to statutory obligations under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, with a firm focus on just transition. The Programme is being introduced in a phased manner over the coming months and years.

The vision for the Sustainable Agriculture Programme is defined around four key outcomes:

1. An industry with **improved environmental sustainability** in terms of its impact on, and guardianship of, air and water quality, soil health and biodiversity, while making its fair contribution to achieving net zero carbon targets. This outcome is an integral part of the new Green Growth Strategy and associated Climate Action Plan.
2. An industry with **enhanced productivity** in international terms as a means to sustained profitability, closing the productivity gap which has been opening up with other major suppliers.
3. An industry that displays **stronger resilience** to external shocks (such as market and currency volatility, extreme weather events, etc.) which are ever more frequent and to which the industry has become very exposed.
4. An industry that **operates within an effective functioning supply chain**, with clear transmission of market signals and an overriding focus on high quality food and the end consumer.

In 2018, DAERA undertook an engagement exercise on a draft framework¹ setting out how policies could be developed to deliver these four outcomes. In total, 1,277 responses were received. Twenty-one responses included comments related to equality (although not in terms of Section 75 characteristics); (a) farmers needed to be viewed as equal partners in the food supply chain, (b) fairness was important, (c) horticulture needed to be included and (d) support should be proportionate to the environmental benefit produced. There was some concern raised about the potential for inclusion of a qualification requirement for grants. No additional evidence was received.

Reflecting the responses received during that process, DAERA refined the identified outcomes and vision for the agricultural industry and carried out a public consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals (21 December

2021 - 15 February 2022)¹. Responses received informed the 54 policy decisions announced on 24 March 2022. There was broad agreement for the introduction of a Farming with Nature Package and to focussing on the habitat management actions listed in the consultation documents as an initial mechanism to kick start improved awareness and capacity to manage environmental assets. A number of specific suggestions were received for other quick win management actions. Concerns were raised around the proposed eligibility criteria and the minimum claim size proposals. There was broad support for Test and Learn pilots to be introduced.

The decisions made at the time are summarised below:

- The Department proceeds to develop the Farming with Nature Package through co-design with stakeholders and in line with the principles stated in the consultation document.
- **Eligibility and minimum land area.**
All land managers with 3 hectares (ha) or more of eligible agricultural land who meet the scheme requirements will be eligible to participate in the Farming with Nature Package. This includes land under conacre and common land.
- The following will become conditions of schemes under the Farming with Nature Package:
 - (i) Compliance with the new Farm Sustainability Standards; and
 - (ii) Participation in the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme.
- **Payment Cap.**
In principle, a cap on the level of payment available under the Farming with Nature Package will be applied. Work to progress on the detail of a cap, including the appropriate level, as elements of scheme design, such as agreement length, are developed.
- **Outcome based approach.**
Stakeholder suggestions to support delivery of an outcome-based approach are evaluated and proposals worked up and incorporated into future Test and Learn pilots/schemes as appropriate.
- **Initial Focus on Habitats.**
 - (i) Actions to reverse the trends in nature decline by creating and restoring habitats that are important for species diversity are prioritised and that proposals are worked up for a Test and Learn pilot/scheme.
 - (ii) A shortlist of initial habitat management actions is prioritised and design proposals worked up to incorporate them into Phase One of the scheme a Test and Learn pilot/scheme.

¹ [Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland Consultation.pdf](#)

- (iii) Specific stakeholder suggestions for other quick win management actions will also be considered, and their potential for inclusion as future management actions within a Farming with Nature Package evaluated.

- **Test and Learn Pilots**

- (i) Test and Learn pilots are progressed and that specific stakeholder suggestions on the pilot components are considered and incorporated as appropriate.
- (ii) Partnership delivery models aimed at encouraging collaborative working are considered and, as appropriate, incorporated into a future Test and Learn pilot.

- **Transition from EFS**

The Department will ensure an orderly transition from the Environmental Farming Scheme to Farming with Nature.

In addition, 43 responses relating to equality issues were received (in response to the consultation in December 2021 on all Future Agricultural Policy Proposals, not just the Farming with Nature Package). Key themes raised;

- Four farming focused organisations and 19 individuals were concerned about potential equality issues and discrimination with the proposal to increase the minimum claim size threshold to 10ha (in respect of the Farm Sustainability Payment).
- Six individuals responded that the proposal to increase the minimum claim size threshold to 10ha (in respect of the Farm Sustainability Payment) could result in religious background discrimination.
- Five responses (1 organisation 'other' and 4 individuals) commented on encouraging females into the farming sector with 1 response commenting on succession.
- Three individuals and one farming focused organisation responded on young farmer concerns which included encouraging younger college trained staff into the sector.
- One individual was concerned that the proposals inferred that older farmers needed to be replaced with younger people to facilitate positive change.
- One political party/representative requested a review of DAERA's Equality and Human Rights Screening. (*The equality screening was completed and published on the DAERA website in early 2022 - [Equality and Disability Duties Screening template - Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland December 2021_0.DOCX](#).*)

Other comments/suggestions

- Three individuals responded that hill farmers had not been recognised, and one individual felt that sheep farmers had been left behind in the consultation.
- One individual raised mental health concerns, and one referenced the effects of remoteness on quality of life.
- One environment focused organisation raised potential lack of access to schemes due to disability or lack of education opportunities.
- One 'other' organisation was concerned that policy may not consider workers' pay and conditions, trade union recognition or upskilling.
- One 'other' organisation emphasised importance of improved and enhanced off road access to better connect public with natural environment.

Subsequently, after MLAs returned to Stormont in February 2024, a submission was made to Minister Muir on the direction of the Farming with Nature Package. Minister Muir agreed that he was content to proceed with the proposed direction of policy development as outlined below;

- i. Proposals for a 'Farming with Nature Transition Scheme' are developed
- ii. Proposals for the Farming with Nature Package are developed in a phased approach and in line with the framework outlined, and
- iii. The Environmental Farming Scheme (Wider) is not reopened for applications as an interim measure.

A Test and Learn Pilot has not been progressed.

Farming with Nature Package

The initial focus of the Farming with Nature Package is on reversing the trends in nature decline through retaining, maintaining, restoring and creating habitats that are important for species diversity and improved connectivity between habitat areas. By restoring wildlife rich habitats, corridors and stepping stones in the wider countryside and enabling wildlife populations to grow and travel between them small, isolated extents of high nature value land and other areas of priority habitats are safeguarded also. The environmental assets already present on farms require active management to ensure that they are capable of making the best possible contribution to biodiversity.

Farming with Nature Transition Scheme Aim

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme aims to provide support to farmers to deliver specific environmental benefits including:

- (i) Increasing the extent of habitats on farms through creation of new habitats;
- (ii) Protecting watercourses and contributing to water quality improvements;
- (iii) Providing green infrastructure for nature corridors; and
- (iv) Increasing carbon sequestration on farms and contributing to climate change mitigation.

Actions

Participants will be incentivised to carry out a range of environmental actions as detailed below:

- Planting new hedgerows;
- Creation of riparian buffer strips;
- Farmland tree planting;
- Tree planting on riparian buffer strips;
- Retention of winter stubble;
- Multi-species winter cover crop;
- Supplementary winter bird food;
- Wild bird cover crop;
- Establishment of arable margins;
- Establishment of grassland margins;
- Herbal Leys;
- Restoration of dry-stone walls;
- Hedgerow restoration;
- Creation of ponds;
- Bird and Bat boxes; and
- Bee scrapes

Once actions are established, further incentives will be offered to manage the action to ensure it is maintained at the optimum level to meet the objectives of the scheme. These actions include:

- Management of hedgerows;
- Management of riparian buffer strips;
- Management of farmland tree planting;
- Management of arable margins;
- Management of grassland margins;
- Management of ponds; and
- Management of herbal leys.

Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria will be applied:

- i. Farm businesses who hold a DAERA Farm Business Category 1 or 2 identification number; and
- ii. Farm businesses must have management control of the land on which actions are implemented.

One of the recommendations that came out of the public consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals was to have a minimum land size to be eligible for the Farming with Nature Package. This has not been made a requirement within the Transition Scheme.

The upper value of an application is initially set at £20,000, and will increase incrementally to £40,000 by 2029/30.

All applicants will be required to engage with guidance and training on how to implement the actions and supporting actions prior to selection and implementation.

If the scheme is oversubscribed, it may not be possible to fund all applications. In this case, each application will be prioritised according to the actions being delivered and ranked.

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 Farming with Nature Transition Scheme aims to have a positive impact on the environment across Northern Ireland and, therefore, has the potential to benefit the entire population. It is not targeted at any one Section 75 category. All eligible farm businesses will benefit from this policy regardless of which Section 75 category they are in and therefore all S75 categories will be expected to be able to benefit from the policy equally.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they?

Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'
DAERA Corporate Plan 2025-2027
NI Biodiversity Strategy

Draft Nature Recovery Strategy
 DAERA Future Agricultural Policy Framework Portfolio August 2021
 Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland

Who owns them?

Programme for Government 2024-2027 ‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’ – NI Executive
 DAERA Corporate Plan – DAERA
 NI Biodiversity Strategy – DAERA
 Draft Nature Recovery Strategy – DAERA
 DAERA Future Agricultural Policy Framework Portfolio August 2021 - DAERA
 DAERA is co-designing the Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework on behalf of the NI Executive.

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:

Consideration has been given to

- The 2021 Census of Northern Ireland ([2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#));
- The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2024) ([Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey: 2024](#)); and
- The 2018 Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report ([Equality indicators Report | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)).

The 2021 Census of Northern Ireland found that 43.5% of the population belongs to one of the main Protestant Christian Churches, 45.7% of the population belongs to the Catholic Church and 9.3% do not belong to either religious belief. In rural areas, the make-up is 43% Protestant and other Christian, 45% Catholic, 12% other or non-stated.

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found that overall, 42% of farmers were members of the Catholic community and 51% were members of the Protestant and other Christian community.

This Report also found differences within farm size categories by farmer religion as detailed below:

- 48% of Catholics farm very small farms compared to 46% Protestant and other Christian farmers;
- Catholics were more likely than Protestants to farm on very small farms, with 85% of Catholics farming small farms compared to 68% of Protestants; and
- Only 2% of Catholics have large farms compared to 10% of Protestant farmers.

Differences were also reported in relation to farm type. Catholic farmers were more likely to be engaged in cattle and sheep farming in Less Favoured Areas, with over three quarters (77%) involved in this type of farming compared to 45% of Protestant farmers. More Protestant farmers (25%) were lowland farmers compared to Catholics (12%). A higher proportion of Protestant farmers (16%) were dairy farmers compared to Catholic farmers (5%).

Political Opinion evidence/information:

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2024 found that 30% of the NI population describe themselves as nationalist, 30% as unionist and 40% held neither political opinion/other/don't know. The Survey found that 42% of those surveyed considered themselves Irish, 33% British, 17% equally Irish and British, and 8% other/don't know.

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% of people living here 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%.

Looking in more detail shows marked variation in national identity across Local Government Districts. Key findings are listed below:

- Six areas (Ards and North Down; Mid and East Antrim; Lisburn and Castlereagh; Antrim and Newtownabbey; Causeway Coast and Glens; and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon) have markedly more people identifying as British (solely or in combination) than Irish (solely or in combination);
- Four areas (Derry City and Strabane; Newry, Mourne and Down; Mid Ulster; and Fermanagh and Omagh) have markedly more people identifying as Irish (solely or in combination) than British (solely or in combination); and
- Belfast Local Government District has broadly similar numbers of people identifying as British (solely or in combination) or Irish (solely or in combination).

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 another identity or a combination of more than one identity. However, the national identity profile varied across farm characteristics, with the proportions indicating a British only identity increasing with farm size, from 40% of those in very small farms to 65% of those in large farms, with Irish only decreasing from 29% in very small farms to only 9% on large farms.

High proportions of dairy farmers (62%) and those engaged in mixed farming (63%) stated 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.

In contrast, those stating a British only identity were much more likely to be engaged in farming cattle and sheep in lowland areas, dairy farming, or other types of farming activity, than those stating an Irish only or Northern Irish only identity. Farmers with an Irish only identity were almost twice as likely to farm in Severely Disadvantaged Areas (55%) than farmers with a British only identity (28%). The proportion of those with a Northern Irish identity farming in Severely Disadvantaged Areas was also very high at 48%. On the other hand, the proportion of those describing themselves as British only who farmed in lowland areas (39%) was more than twice that of those with an Irish only identity (15%) and higher than those with a Northern Irish only identity (24%).

These statistics are similar to those of religious belief, in that any schemes which appealed to dairy farms, large farms or lowland cattle and sheep farms would be likely to be skewed in favour of farmers that identify as British only.

Racial Group evidence/information:

The 2021 Census reported that the number of 'All Usual Residents' who stated that they were from a White Ethnic group was 1,837,575 (96.55%) of the total population. In total, 65,604 (3.45%) of All Usual Residents belonged to ethnic minority groups. The ethnic minority groups with the highest prevalence were those belonging to the Mixed Ethnicity (14,382) categorisation, followed by those belonging to the Indian (9,881), Chinese (9,495), and Black African (8,069) ethnicity categorisations. Irish Travellers accounted for 0.14% (2,609) of the 'All Usual Residents' population and Roma 0.08% (1,529).

The most recent Social Survey of Farmers and Farm Families(2001/02) across Northern Ireland ([Farmers and Farm Families in Northern Ireland](#)) outlined that the farming population was overwhelmingly white and that there was no difference in racial group by type or size of farm. This survey was conducted nearly 20 years ago and the racial group statistics in both the 2021 census and 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report reflect the original findings of the 2001/02 survey.

2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report stated the proportion of farmers stating an ethnicity other than white was too small to examine differences by farm characteristics. This would support the view that the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme policy set out in this document is likely to affect largely white beneficiaries, reflecting the makeup of the population.

NI: IN PROFILE Key statistics on Northern Ireland 2022 ([NI: IN PROFILE Key statistics on Northern Ireland](#)) figures indicate there are around 124,000 people living here in 2021 who were born in the rest of the EU (excluding UK and Ireland). A small number of migrant workers are employed within the farming industry.

Age evidence/information:

The age distribution of the farming community varies from that of the general population, with a much higher proportion of older people involved in the farming sector.

The 2021 Census of Northern Ireland states that over the decade since the 2011 Census the population increase was greatest in the older age groups. The number of people aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000, to nearly one third of a million people in Census 2021. This is nearly a 25 per cent increase on 2011 and demonstrates the scale of population change due to ageing. The share of the Northern Ireland population represented by people aged 65 years and over stood at 17.2 per cent in 2021.

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found the average age of farmers in Northern Ireland was 59 years. Only 8% of farmers were aged under 40 years, and more than a third (36%) were aged 65 years or older. There was little variation in the age profile of farmers by farm size, although farmers of very small farms (which account for three-quarters of all farms in Northern Ireland) had a slightly older age profile than those of larger farms. There was also little variation in age across farming activity type. However, farmers engaged in cattle and sheep farming, general cropping and horticulture had the oldest age profiles, while pig and poultry (with 63% and 70% respectively under 59) farmers had the youngest age profiles. Poultry farmers were around twice as likely to be aged under 40 as other farmers. There was virtually no difference in age profile across land type. However, farmers aged under 40 were slightly more likely to farm in Severely Disadvantaged Areas than older farmers.

Marital Status evidence/information:

The 2021 Census of Northern Ireland states that 46% of the population aged 16 and over were married or in a civil partnership in Census 2021. In contrast 577,000 adults (38%) were single (never married/civil partnered).

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found that almost three quarters (73%) of farmers were married, with the

proportion of married farmers increasing with farm size; 84% of farmers of large farms were married, compared to 71% of farmers of very small farms. Twice as many farmers of very small farms (18%) were single compared to farmers of medium sized (9%) or large farms (9%). Across farm activity types, a very high proportion of pig farmers (88%) and poultry farmers (88%) were married. Lowland farmers were slightly more likely to be married (77%) than farmers in Disadvantaged (73%) or Severely Disadvantaged (71%) Areas.

Sexual Orientation evidence/information:

The 2021 Census of Northern Ireland states that 2.1% (31,600) of the population aged 16 and over identified as 'lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+)' and 90.0% (1,363,900) identified as 'straight or heterosexual'. Almost 8% of our population aged 16 and over (119,300) either ticked 'prefer not to say' or chose not to answer the question. Taken together, these are labelled 'No sexual orientation stated' in this report.

There is no data specifically available on the sexual orientation of farmers in the DAERA Equality Indicators Report.

There are also a number of new and emerging inequalities, for which evidence is limited but would include issues such as, inequalities experienced by transgender people. As further evidence becomes available DAERA will consider the relevance for future agricultural policy development.

Men & Women generally evidence/information:

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) held a public consultation ([Topic consultation | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)) on the questions to be included in the 2021 Census in 2015/16. At that time there was limited user need for a question on gender identity - therefore no gender identity question was included in the 2021 Census form.

At 30 June 2019, Northern Ireland's population was estimated to be 1.89 million people. Between mid-2018 and mid-2019, the population of Northern Ireland increased by 12,000 people (0.6 per cent). Just over half of the population (50.7 per cent) were female, with 961,000 females compared to 932,700 males (49.3 per cent).

The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland June 2018 (published Jan 2019) states that 92.5% of Northern Ireland farmers are male and 7.5% female.

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found that 81% of main farmers were male and 9% were female. 98% of large farms were owned by males, and 90% of very small farms (2% and 10% female respectively). A higher proportion of female farmers farmed very small farms than their male counterparts - 87% of women farmers had very small farms and only 2% had large farms, compared to 75% of male farmers with very small farms and 7% had large farms. Farmers engaged in 'Other types' of farming (such as running specialist horse farms) were twice as likely to be women as were farmers engaged in other activity types (20% female compared to the 2nd highest of cattle sheep LFA of 10%).

A higher proportion of female (86%) than male farmers (78%) were engaged in cattle and sheep farming, and a much lower proportion (4% of female compared to 12% of male farmers) were dairy farmers. Female farmers were also more likely to farm in Less Favoured Areas. Forty-four percent of women farmers farmed in Severely Disadvantaged Areas compared to 39% of male farmers. Some of the gender differences in farm characteristics may be partly due to the differing age profiles of male and female farmers. Female farmers had an older age profile than their male counterparts, with 4% of female farmers aged under 40, compared to 8% of male farmers, and 45% of female farmers aged 65 or over, compared to 35% of male farmers.

Disability evidence/information:

The Northern Ireland Census 2021 included a question on limiting long-term health problem or disability. One person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability. The number of people with a limiting long-term health problem or disability increased from the 2011 to 2021 Census. The increase, from 374,600 people in 2011 to 463,000 people in 2021 (an increase of 23.6%), will be driven partly by our ageing population.

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found that almost a third (30%) of farmers stated that they had a long-term illness or disability which limited their daily activities with the incidence of disability inversely related to farm size. The proportion of farmers of very small farms stating that their activities were limited a lot (16%) was twice that of farmers of large farms (8%). Farmers in disadvantaged areas (16%) were slightly more likely than lowland farmers (12%) to state that their activities were limited. The incidence of those reporting that their activities were limited either a little or a lot rises steeply with age.

NI: IN PROFILE Key statistics on Northern Ireland 2021 ([NI: IN PROFILE Key statistics on Northern Ireland](#)) reports that one in five people have a disability or limiting long-term illness. With 12% of people claim Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment.

The Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel ([Report from the Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel | Department for Communities](#)) report, published in March 2021, developed by the Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel appointed by the Department for Communities, makes evidence-based recommendations on the scope of a new Disability Strategy. This report helps us to understand the experience of, and issues faced by disabled people including participation and leadership, economic security and autonomy of persons with disabilities. It provides valuable insights which will be used in the development of policies and strategies.

The NI Disability Strategy has been developed through a process of co design. A consultation process on proposals for the strategy closes in March 2026. The outcomes from this will be incorporated into future agricultural policy proposals to ensure that policy meets, as far as is reasonably possible, the present and future needs of persons with disabilities.

Dependants evidence/information:

According to the 2021 Census 30.7% of households contained dependents (dependent children 0-18).

The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found that two fifths (40%) of all farm households contained children under 18 years old, elderly disabled people, or both. Households of medium sized farms were slightly more likely than smaller or larger farms to contain dependants as were the households of farmers engaged in pig, poultry or mixed farming. Farm households in Disadvantaged Areas (41%) were slightly more likely than those in lowland areas (38%) to contain dependants.

NI: IN PROFILE Key statistics on Northern Ireland 2021 ([NI: IN PROFILE Key statistics on Northern Ireland](#)) reports that one in three households have a dependent child. The NISRA Women in Northern Ireland 2023 report ([Women in Northern Ireland 2023](#)) indicates that over the past 10 years there have been consistently more economically inactive women than men. The most common reason for inactivity among women was family and home

commitments. 79% of women with dependent children were economically active, compared with 94% of men with dependent children.

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

During the pre-engagement stage for the consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland ([Consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)), stakeholder input was sought on needs, experiences and priorities in relation to equality. Forty-three responses were received (in response to all Future Agricultural Policy Proposals, including the Farming with Nature Package). No specific issues were raised in relation to religious belief and the Farming with Nature Package.

The need for further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to religious belief issues will be reviewed as the Farming with Nature Package is further developed, in line with policy decisions and towards implementation.

Political Opinion

A consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland was launched on 21 December 2021 and closed on 15 February 2022. There were 43 responses to equality issues resulting from this consultation. Key themes relevant to this Section 75 characteristic raised were;

- Four farming focused organisations and 19 individuals were concerned about potential equality issues and discrimination with the proposal to increase the minimum claim size threshold to 10ha.

- Six individuals responded that the proposal to increase the minimum claim size threshold to 10ha could result in religious background discrimination.
- One political party/representative requested a review of DAERA's Equality and Human Rights Screening. (The equality screening was completed and published on the DAERA website in early 2022 - [Equality and Disability Duties Screening template - Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland December 2021 0.DOCX](#).)

In response to the 2018 stakeholder engagement on the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework ([Stakeholder responses on the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework: Stakeholder Engagement | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)) from stakeholders representing the wider farming, food and environmental sectors the Department received one comment in relation to political opinion that indicated that future agricultural policy should ensure that it does not disproportionately discriminate against one community over the other (nationalist and unionist).

During the pre-engagement stage for the consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland ([Consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)), stakeholder input was sought on needs, experiences and priorities in relation to equality and no issues were raised in relation to political opinion.

The implications of the proposed policy for the farming sector across Northern Ireland will range from little or no impact to a very significant impact depending on the specific farm size, type and designation.

Farms of differing size, type and land designations and thus differing political opinions will have corresponding variation in needs, experiences and priorities in relation to the policy. Thus, there will be variable impacts on those of different political opinion.

The need for further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to political opinion issues will be reviewed as the Farming with Nature Package is further developed, in line with policy decisions and towards implementation.

Racial Group

2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report stated the proportion of farmers stating an ethnicity other than white was too small to examine differences by farm characteristics.

After taking the needs of this group into consideration it has been determined that nothing in this scheme will disadvantage any racial group over another, that would increase the proportional differences already in existence. The scheme has been designed to be as inclusive as possible with regards to farm type, farm size, and therefore different types of farm workers, and there is no data to suggest that any particular racial group will be disadvantaged by this scheme.

The need for further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to racial group will be reviewed as the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme and Farming with Nature Package are further developed, in line with policy decisions and towards implementation.

Age

The Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework consultation was launched on 21 December 2021 and closed on 15 February 2022 ([Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)).

There were 43 responses to equality issues resulting from this consultation. Key themes relevant to this Section 75 characteristic raised were;

- Three individuals and one farming focused organisation responded on young farmer concerns which included encouraging younger college trained staff into the sector.
- One individual was concerned that the proposals inferred that older farmers needed to be replaced with younger people to facilitate positive change.

The future agricultural policy decisions on 'Knowledge and Innovation' and 'Farming for the Generations' measures provide a direction of travel for policy development that will address the concerns raised.

Those farmers engaged in cattle and sheep farming, general cropping and horticulture with the oldest age profiles will be likely to have different needs, experience and priorities to pig and poultry farmers with much younger age

profiles. Poultry farmers are around twice as likely to be aged under 40 as other farmers. There was virtually no difference in age profile across land type.

Farmers aged under 40 were slightly more likely to farm in Severely Disadvantaged Areas than older farmers and this will also have potential impacts on their needs, wants and experiences of the policy. These younger farmers in SDAs may be more likely to be impacted by spatially targeted measures within the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme.

The need for further evidence relating to potential impacts on the needs, experience and priorities in relation to age will be reviewed as the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme and Farming with Nature Package are further developed, in line with policy decisions and towards implementation.

Marital status

There is variation between different farm sizes, types and designation in the proportion of farmers who are married. Thus, there will be variable impacts for those of differing marital status.

Detailed consideration will be required of potential impacts of the implementation of an agreed Farming with Nature Transition Scheme on the needs, experience and priorities of citizens as a result of their marital status.

After taking the needs of this group into consideration it has been determined that nothing in this scheme will disadvantage anyone who is married or not, that would increase the proportional differences already in existence.

Sexual orientation

2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report does not have data on farmer's sexual orientation. At this stage in the development of the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme, there is no evidence available to suggest that implementation of the Package will have any foreseeable impact on equality of opportunity on stakeholders as a result of their sexual orientation.

After taking the needs of this group into consideration it has been determined that nothing in this scheme will disadvantage any sexual orientation over another, that would increase the proportional differences already in existence.

Men and Women Generally

The Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework consultation was launched on 21 December 2021 and closed on 15 February 2022 ([Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)).

There were 43 responses to equality issues resulting from this consultation. One comment relevant to this Section 75 characteristic was;

- Five responses (1 organisation 'other' and 4 individuals) commented on encouraging females into the farming sector with 1 response commenting on succession.

The implications of the proposed policy for the farming sector across Northern Ireland will range from little or no impact to a very significant impact depending on the specific farm size, type and designation.

Farms of differing size, type and land designations and thus differing proportions of men and women will have corresponding variation in needs, experiences and priorities in relation to the policy. Thus, there will be variable impacts on men and women for example as there are much fewer female dairy farmers than male dairy farmers it is likely that measures more applicable to dairy farms will impact the needs, experience and priorities of males more than females in this demographic. After taking the needs of this characteristic into consideration it has been determined that nothing in this scheme will disadvantage anyone women more so than men that would increase the proportional differences already in existence.

Disability

The Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework consultation was launched on 21 December 2021 and closed on 15 February 2022 ([Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)).

There were 43 responses to equality issues resulting from this consultation. One comment relevant to this Section 75 characteristic was;

- One environment focused organisation raised potential lack of access to schemes due to disability or lack of education opportunities.

In relation to disability the proportion of farmers of very small farms stating that their activities were limited a lot (16%) was twice that of farmers of large farms (8%) with farmers in disadvantaged areas (16%) slightly more likely than lowland farmers (12%) to state that their activities were limited. As those farmers with limited activities will have differing needs, experience and priorities to those farmers whose needs are not limited the implementation of the Package will have corresponding variation in impact.

After taking the needs of this group into consideration it has been determined that nothing in this scheme will disadvantage anyone people with disabilities, that would increase the proportional differences already in existence.

Dependants

With households of medium sized farms, those in Disadvantaged Areas and those engaged in pig, poultry or mixed farming being slightly more likely than smaller or larger farms to contain dependants there will be variation between these demographics in their needs, experience and priorities in relation to the Package.

After taking the needs of this group into consideration it has been determined that nothing in this scheme will disadvantage those with dependents, that would increase the proportional differences already in existence.

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 introduced through this scheme 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 ☒

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/nationalist divide. Using this guideline, the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme should have no differential impact on those of differing political opinion.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme will be open to all eligible farm businesses and is unlikely to have any specific impact on any racial groups.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Age*:

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme will be open to all eligible farm businesses and is unlikely to have any specific impact on age groups.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme is unlikely to impact differently on people with different marital status.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

There is no evidence available to suggest that implementation of the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme will have any foreseeable impact on equality of opportunity on participants as a result of their sexual orientation.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

Although the majority of farmers are men, the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme will be available to all eligible farm businesses regardless of sex, and therefore, it is considered that there will be no impact on equality of opportunity.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Disability*:

No responses to the 2018 Stakeholder Engagement on the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework indicated that the framework would create any inequality in respect of disability.

During the pre-engagement stage of seeking views on the Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland, stakeholder input was sought on needs, experiences and priorities in relation to equality, and no issues were raised in relation to disability.

The 2021 consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland, received 1 response that raised potential lack of access to schemes due to disability.

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme will be open to all eligible farm businesses and access to it will not be affected by disability.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Dependants*:

The 2011 Census showed that 34% of NI households have dependant children (those aged 0-15 and person aged 16-18 who is a full-time student and in a family with parent(s)). The 2018 DAERA Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers Report found that two fifths (40%) of all farm households contained children under 18 years old, elderly disabled people, or both. Households of medium sized farms were slightly more likely than smaller or larger farms to contain

dependants as were the households of farmers engaged in pig, poultry or mixed farming. Farm households in Disadvantaged Areas (41%) were slightly more likely than those in lowland areas (38%) to contain dependants.

Responses received during the stakeholder engagement and consultation on future agricultural policy did not raise any issues in relation to dependents.

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme will be open to all eligible farm businesses and is likely to have as equal an impact on farmers with dependents as those without.

What is the level of impact? ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

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:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Age - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

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 for those affected by the policies implemented by this scheme.

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*:

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme is unlikely to have any impact on good relations between people of different religious belief. DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different religious beliefs and will review any issues identified during the implementation of the policy decisions.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme is unlikely to have any impact on good relations between people of different political beliefs. DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different political beliefs and will review any issues identified during the implementation of the policy decisions.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme is unlikely to have any impact on good relations between people of different racial groups. DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different racial group and will review any issues identified during the implementation of the policy decisions.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

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:**

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme 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 implementation of the policy decisions.

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

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme is unlikely to impact on promoting good relations between people of different political. However, DAERA is proactive in improving good relations between people of different political opinion and will review any opportunities identified during the implementation of the policy decisions.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

The Farming with Nature Transition Scheme 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 implementation 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.

There are no potential impacts on people with multiple identities from the policies implemented by the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme.

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?

No

It is very unlikely that there will be any facility in the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities, but communication channels will be open, and comments will be welcomed should stakeholders feel there is a need to do so.

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

No

It is very unlikely that there will be any facility in the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme to increase the participation by disabled people in public life, but communication channels will be open, and comments will be welcomed should stakeholders feel there is a need to do so.

Part 3. Screening decision (Please delete as appropriate)

1. ~~“Screened in” for equality impact assessment.~~
2. ~~“Screened out” with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.~~
3. “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 Farming with Nature Transition Scheme is open to all types of farmers and land managers in Northern Ireland who meet the following criteria:

- Farm businesses who hold a Farm Business Category 1 or 2 identification number

The above criteria would not exclude any types of farmers from specific section 75 categories. It is therefore unlikely that the scheme will impact the already established demographics of the farming community in NI, which are generally older white males.

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.

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

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	

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

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:

A Section 75 monitoring questionnaire will be included as part of the scheme.

Any future consultation needed as a result of implementing the policy decisions will issue to a range of Section 75 groups. Comments from any and all of the Section 75 groups are welcome, especially if any group considers that it is significantly affected by the decisions.

All relevant farm business information and metrics will be gathered to enable full monitoring of the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme progress. This will include, but not limited to:

- Applicant information – including details of farm business and location.

Good Relations:

Any future consultation needed as a result of implementing the policy decisions will issue to a range Section 75 groups. Comments from any of the Section 75 groups are welcome, especially if any group considers that it is significantly affected by the decisions.

Disability Duties:

Any future consultation needed as a result of implementing the policy decisions will issue to a range Section 75 groups. Comments from any of the Section 75 groups are welcome, especially if any group considers that it is significantly affected by the decisions.

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.

None identified.

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

None identified.

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: Devina Park

Grade: 7

Branch: Farm Nature Policy

Date: 20 May 2026

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Devina Park".

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

Name: Martin McKendry

Grade: 3

Branch: FFRAG

Date: 03/06/2026

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 template must be saved to the container in **HTML format** (not PDF) in order to comply with accessibility requirements. The screening form will be placed on the DAERA website and a link provided to the Department's Section 75 consultees.



Strategic
Management DAERA/

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

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:

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