

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.

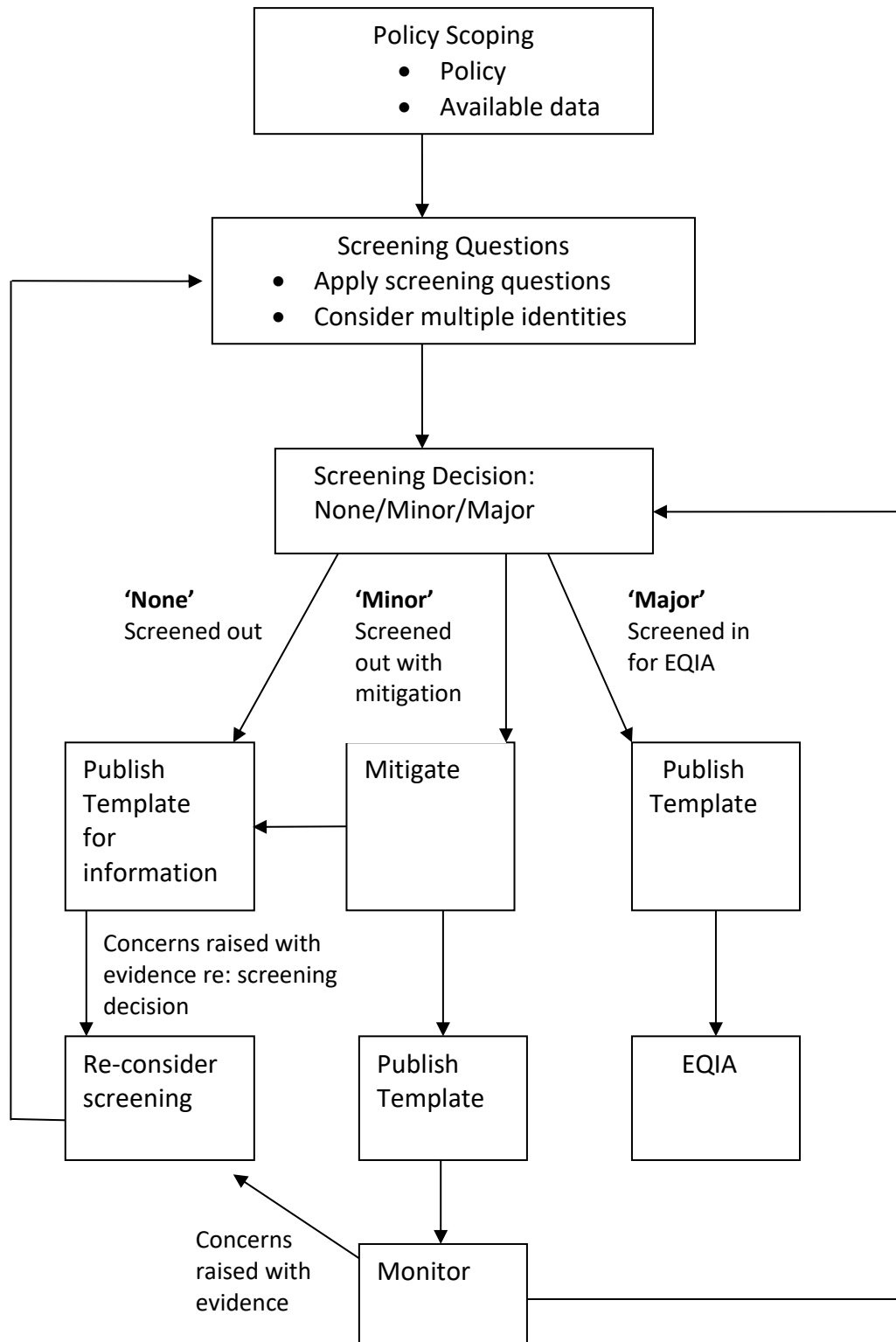
Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality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

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) proposal on the consolidation of Veterinary Service Inspectors and Plant Health Inspectors at NI Ports into a Single Portal Inspectorate Unit (SPIU)

Is this an existing, revised or new policy?

Review of current working structures but a new proposal

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

Objective

To establish a combined Plant Health and Veterinary Service Single Portal Inspectorate Unit that contributes to meeting our statutory obligations under the Official Controls (EU) Regulation 2017/625 (OCR) and Windsor Framework SPS (EU) Regulation 2023/1231; and delivers the sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff to effectively deliver all DAERA official controls at NI SPS Inspection Facilities at the ports of Belfast, Larne, Warrenpoint and Foyle.

Background

DAERA has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Official Controls (EU) Regulation 2017/625 (OCR) and Windsor Framework SPS (EU) Regulation 2023/1231, in relation to checks and controls on relevant products and goods moving into Northern Ireland via NI SPS Inspection Facilities, ensuring plant and animal health through inspections at portal facilities. The Windsor Framework SPS Regulation (EU) 2023/1231 of 14 June 2023 stipulates; ‘...***the structural and human resources of the SPS Inspection Facilities in Northern Ireland shall have the capacity and the capability adapted to the type and volume of the retail goods presented for the official controls required by this Regulation. They shall also have the capacity and capability adapted to the type and volume of animals and goods not falling within the scope of this Regulation presented for the official controls required by Regulation (EU) 2017/625.***’

PART 1 of SPS Regulation (EU) 2023/1231 sets out the requirement that a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff in accordance with Article 64(3),

point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 shall be in place by 1 October 2023 – a milestone that has not been met. At the time of initial conception of an SPIU, DAERA faced critical recruitment challenges within the Agricultural Inspector Group, specifically at Group 1 level, which is essential for conducting inspections at various portal locations.

A paper presented to the Northern Ireland Windsor Framework Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) Programme Board on 15th October 2024, recommended that an options analysis be taken forward to explore aligning Veterinary Service and Plant Health portal inspectorate staff within DAERA into a single operational unit to enhance regulatory compliance and operational efficiency. The position at the time of conception reflected:

High Recruitment Failure Rates: Recent recruitment data showed high candidate rejection rates at the sift and interview stages due to eligibility requirements and qualifications.

Understaffing: Recruitment pauses, competitive job market conditions, and qualification mismatches had left an estimated 40+ Group 1 vacancies.

Structural Fragmentation: Current separation between the Veterinary Service Animal Health Group and Plant Health Division creates management complexities and inefficiencies, complicating response times and operational resilience.

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.

It is not perceived that any of the Section 75 categories will benefit.

Who initiated or wrote the proposal?

Veterinary Service Senior Management and Plant Health Inspectorate Senior Management

Who owns and who implements the proposal?

Veterinary Service Senior Management and Plant Health Inspectorate Senior Management

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:

Financial- Robust Options Analysis has identified a potential £1.137m saving for DAERA if SPIU proposals proceed.

Legislative- DAERA are legally required to comply with Official Control Regulations (OCR) and Windsor Framework (WF) regulations concerning inspection of SPS goods and are required under the legislation to ensure that the inspectorate is appropriately staffed and resourced.

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

The policy directly impacts a very specific subset of staff- substantive NICS staff members currently working across Veterinary Service (VS) and Plant Health (PH) inspectorates who are earmarked for inclusion in SPIU.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

None

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](#).

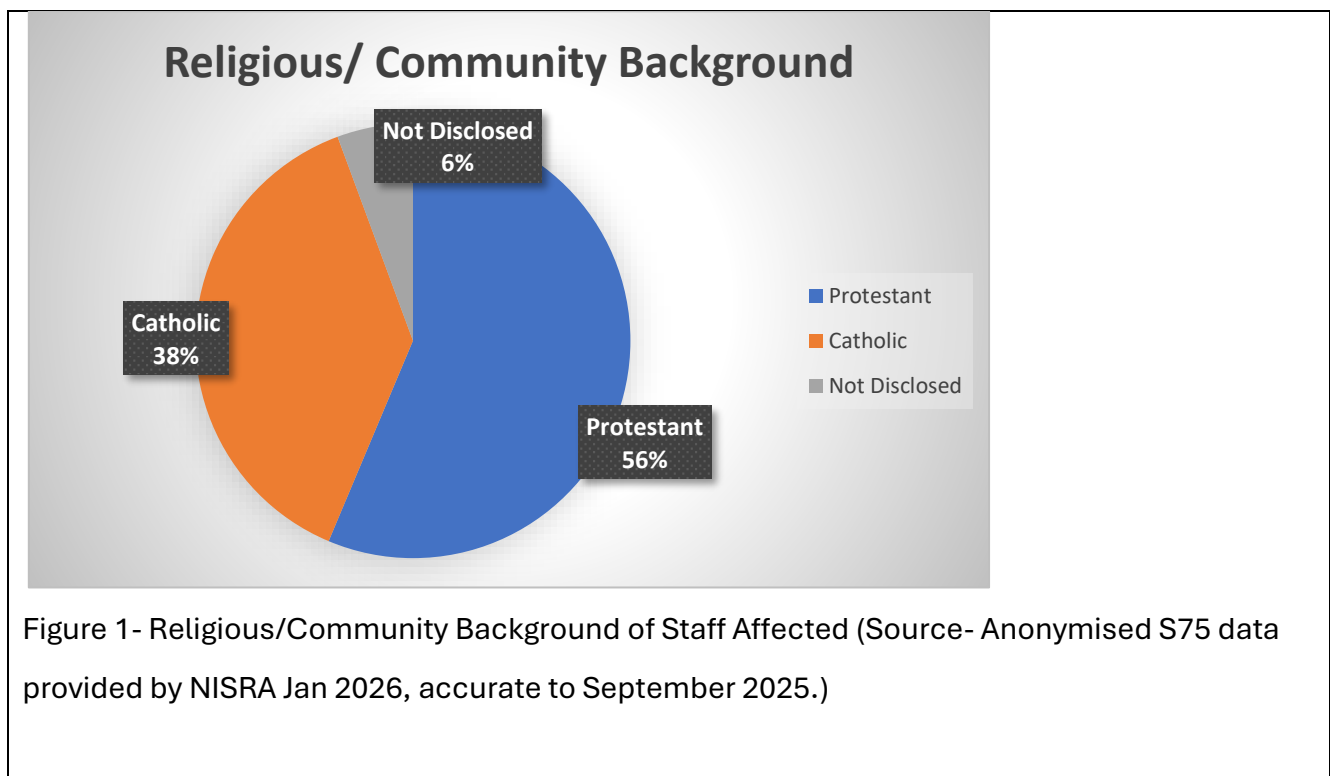
What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

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

- In December 2025 a request was made to NISRA to provide anonymised data pertaining to the S75 characteristics of substantive NICS staff directly affected by the proposal of an SPIU. This data is published quarterly and the is accurate up to 1st September 2025. The available data was received in January 2026 and has been considered as part of the screening.

- In November 2025 a section 75-themed questionnaire was issued by the business area to affected staff to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The anonymised results of this questionnaire have been reviewed as part of this screening.
- Staff Engagement sessions- throughout September 2025, multiple face-to-face engagement sessions took place between Veterinary Service and Plant Health management and staff affected by the proposal. All verbal and written feedback received as part of this process was consolidated into a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document which has also been considered as part of this screening.

Religious belief evidence/information:



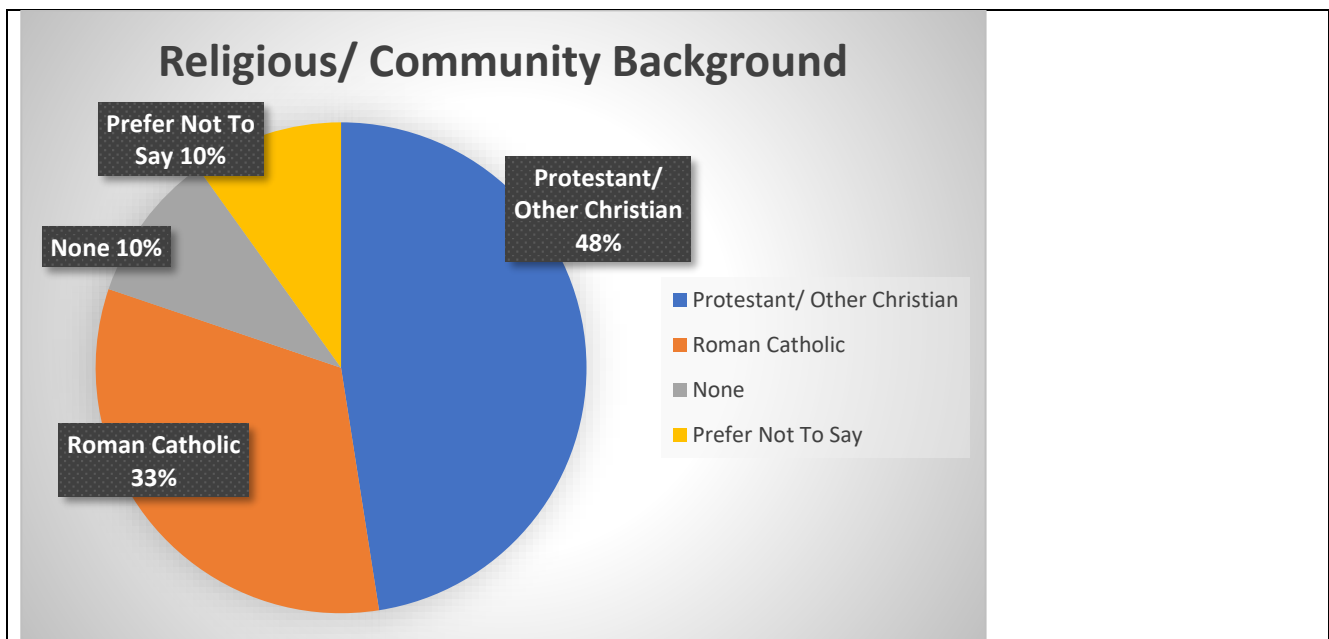


Figure 2- Religious Background of staff affected (Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

From review of both sources, the NISRA data (Figure 1) and the s75 themed questionnaire issued to staff (Figure 2) the largest cohorts affected were those from a Protestant and/or Roman Catholic background. Within the questionnaire and during the engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their religious or community background. Furthermore, no concerns were identified by Senior Veterinary Service and Plant Health Management when conducting the survey.

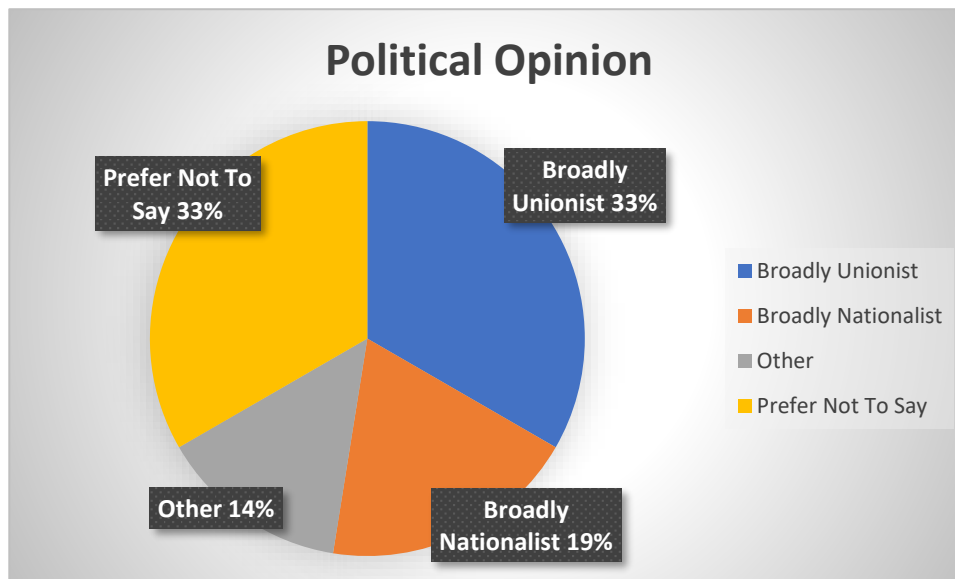
Political Opinion evidence/information:

Figure 3- Political Opinion evidence/Information of staff affected (Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

Of the respondents to the anonymised s75-themed questionnaire issued to affected staff in October 2025, the largest identifiable single grouping by Political opinion affected was 'Broadly Unionist' (33%) followed by 'Broadly Nationalist' (19%). Within the questionnaire and during the engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their Political Opinion. Furthermore, no concerns were identified by Senior Veterinary Service and Plant Health Management when conducting the survey.

NISRA does not collect information pertaining to the political opinion of NICS staff.

Racial Group evidence/information:



Figure 4- Ethnic Group of Staff Affected (Source- Anonymised S75 data provided by NISRA Jan 2026, accurate to September 2025.)

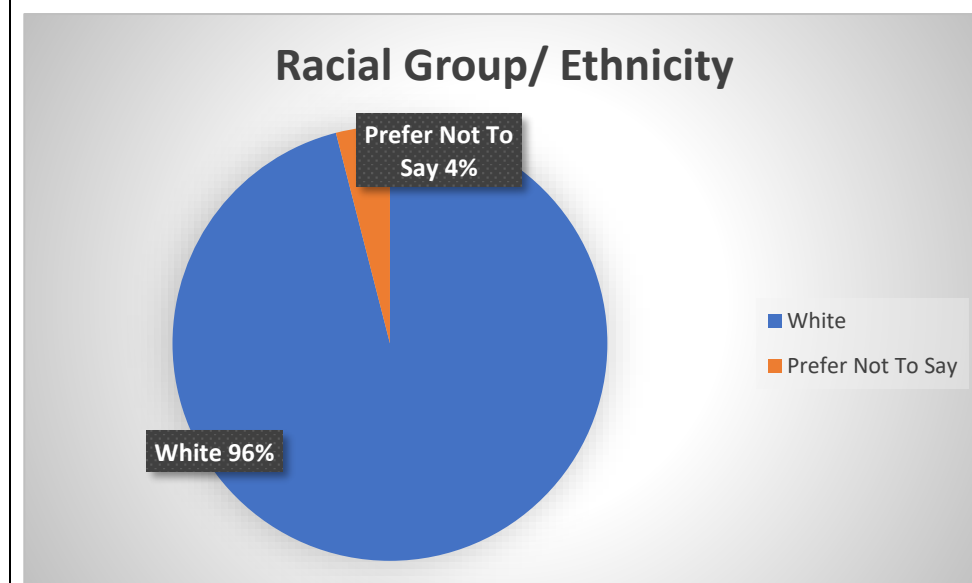


Figure 5- Racial Group evidence/Information of staff affected (Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

From review of both sources, the NISRA data (Figure 4) and s-75 themed questionnaire issued to staff (Figure 5), the largest identifiable single grouping by Racial Grouping affected was 'White'. Within the questionnaire and during

the engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their Racial Group or Ethnicity. Furthermore, no concerns were identified by Senior Veterinary Service and Plant Health Management when conducting the survey.

Age evidence/information:

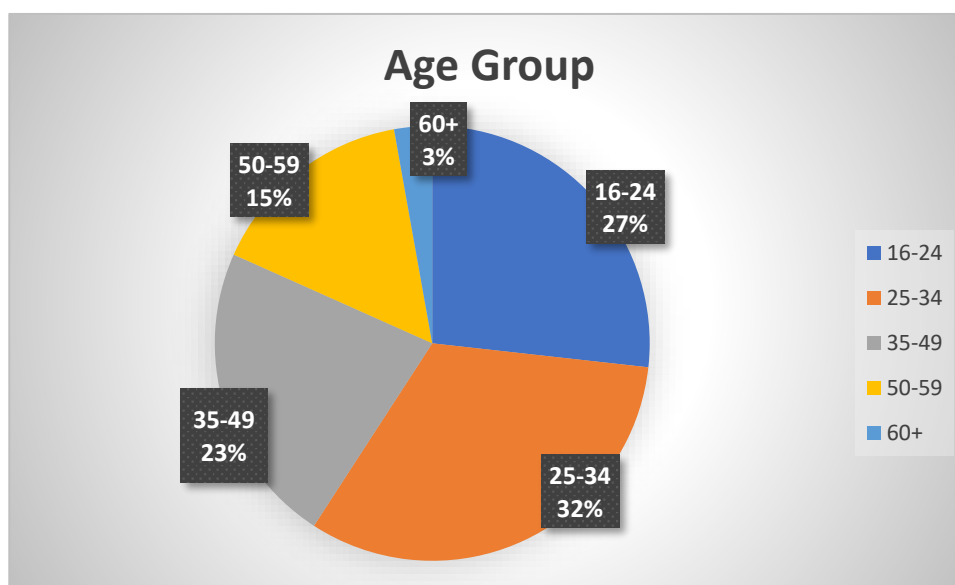


Figure 6- Age of Staff Affected (Source- Anonymised S75 data provided by NISRA Jan 2026, accurate to September 2025.)

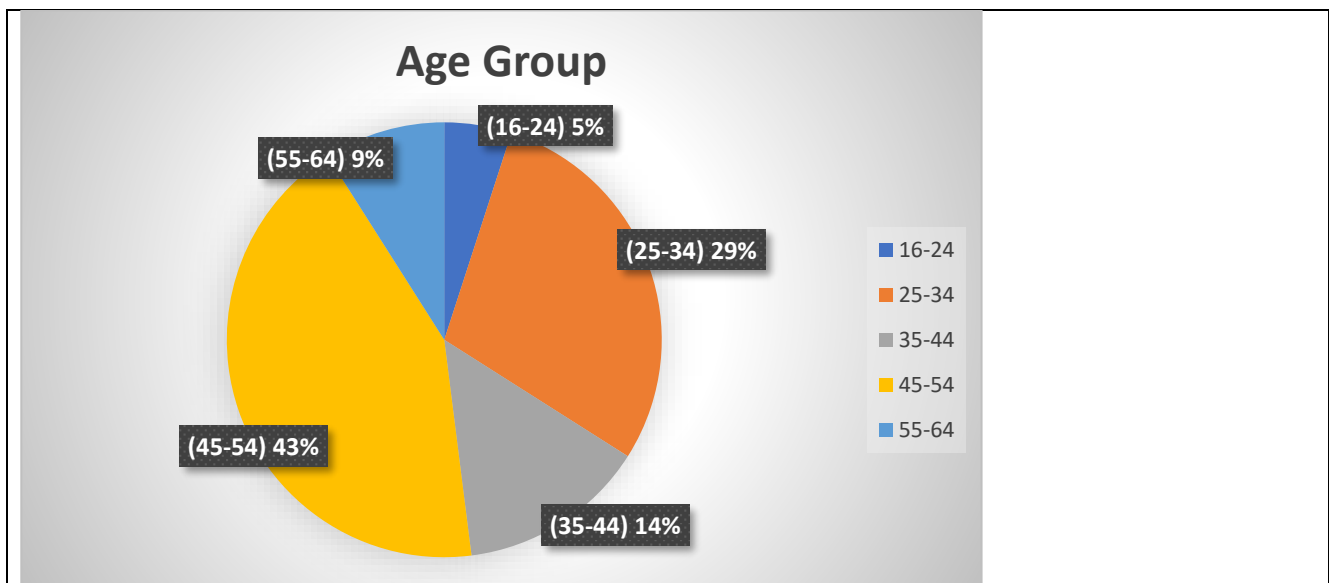


Figure 7 (Age group of staff affected)

(Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

Review of both data sources, NISRA data (Figure 6) and s-75 themed questionnaire issued to staff (Figure 7) indicated that there is no clear majority of any particular age group being affected by the proposal. To note different age brackets were used across both sources. The data provided by NISRA (Figure 6) indicates that, among the staff affected by the proposal, the age group 25-34 are marginally most affected, compared to the s-75 questionnaire, which indicates those most affected falls within the age bracket 45-54.

Responses to the Section 75 questionnaire from affected staff identified some concerns about difficulty with retraining in different work areas due to their age. This impact could be mitigated by providing extra training where needed. Additionally, as part of the SPIU governance process, all job descriptions for Administrative Officers and Inspector Roles have been reviewed by the NICS HR Job Evaluation Team and deemed appropriate to remain at the same grade that transferring officers are already at. This suggests that new tasks will fall within the existing competency and skillset of staff.

Marital Status evidence/information:

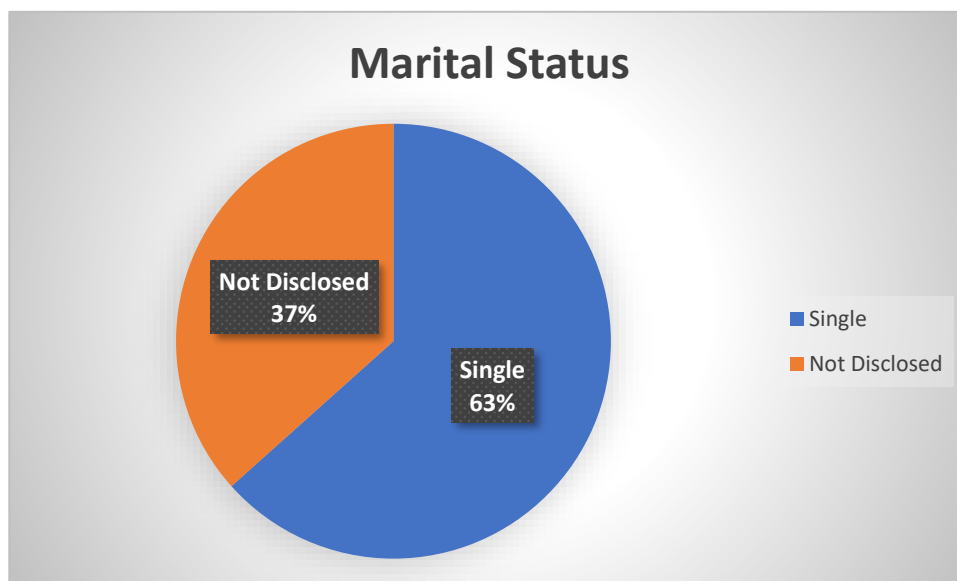


Figure 8- Marital Status of Staff Affected (Source- Anonymised S75 data provided by NISRA Jan 2026, accurate to September 2025.)

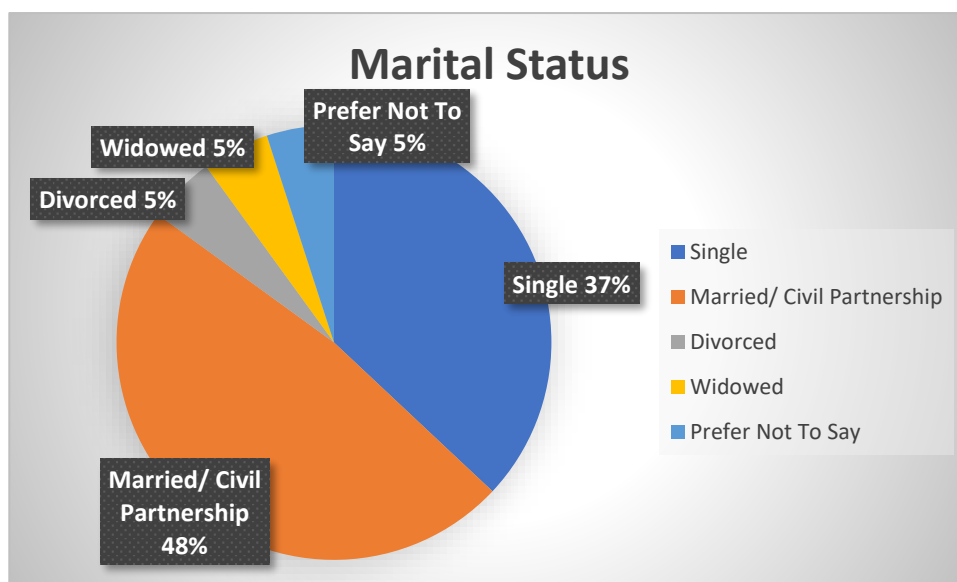


Figure 9 (Marital Status of staff affected)
(Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

The data provided by NISRA (Figure 8) indicates that, among the staff affected by the proposal, the marital status of the majority is 'Single' (63%). The remainder (37%) that was not disclosable due to NISRA rules is a combination of marital statuses which include 'Married', 'Separated', 'Civil Partnership' and 'Widowed'. Of the respondents to the anonymised s75-themed questionnaire issued to affected staff in October 2025, the largest identifiable single grouping by Marital Status affected was 'Married/Civil Partnership' (48%). Within the questionnaire and during the engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their Marital Status. Furthermore, no concerns were identified by Senior Veterinary Service and Plant Health Management when conducting the survey.

Sexual Orientation evidence/information:

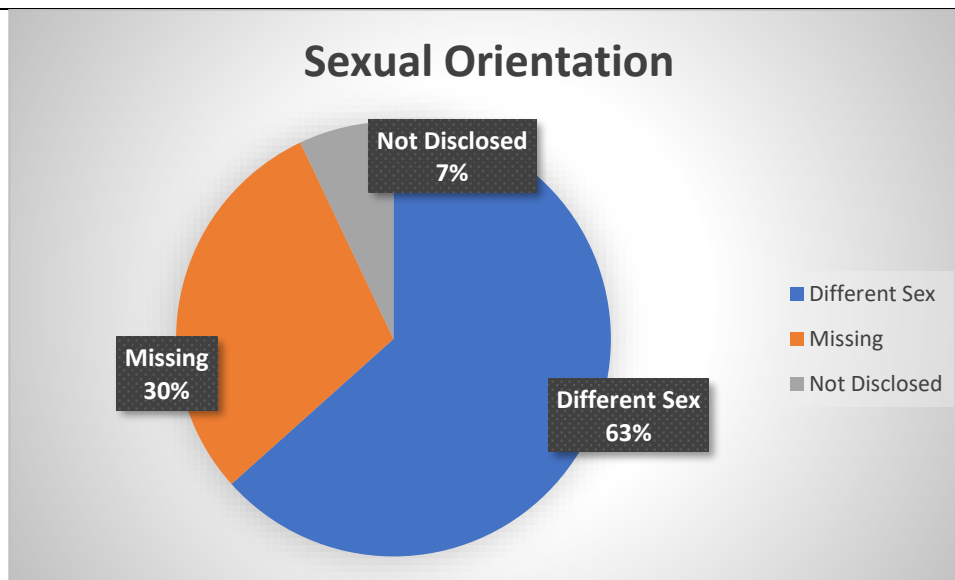


Figure 10- Sexual Orientation of Staff Affected (Source- Anonymised S75 data provided by NISRA Jan 2026, accurate to September 2025.)

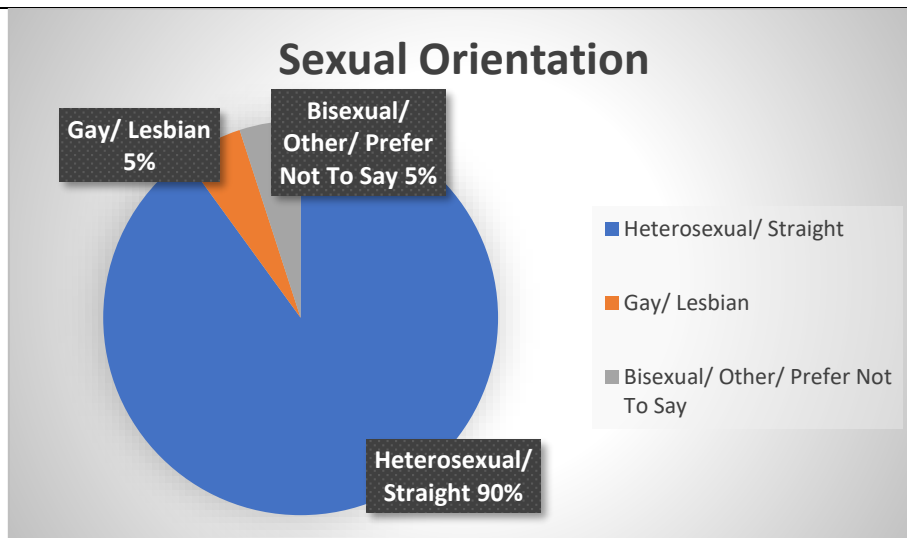


Figure 11 (Sexual Orientation of staff affected)

(Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

From review of both sources, the NISRA data (Figure 10) and the s75 themed questionnaire issued to staff (Figure 11), the largest identifiable single grouping by Sexual Orientation is 'Heterosexual/ Straight' Within the questionnaire and during the engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their Sexual Orientation. Furthermore, no concerns were identified by Senior Veterinary Service and Plant Health Management when conducting the survey.

Men & Women generally evidence/information:

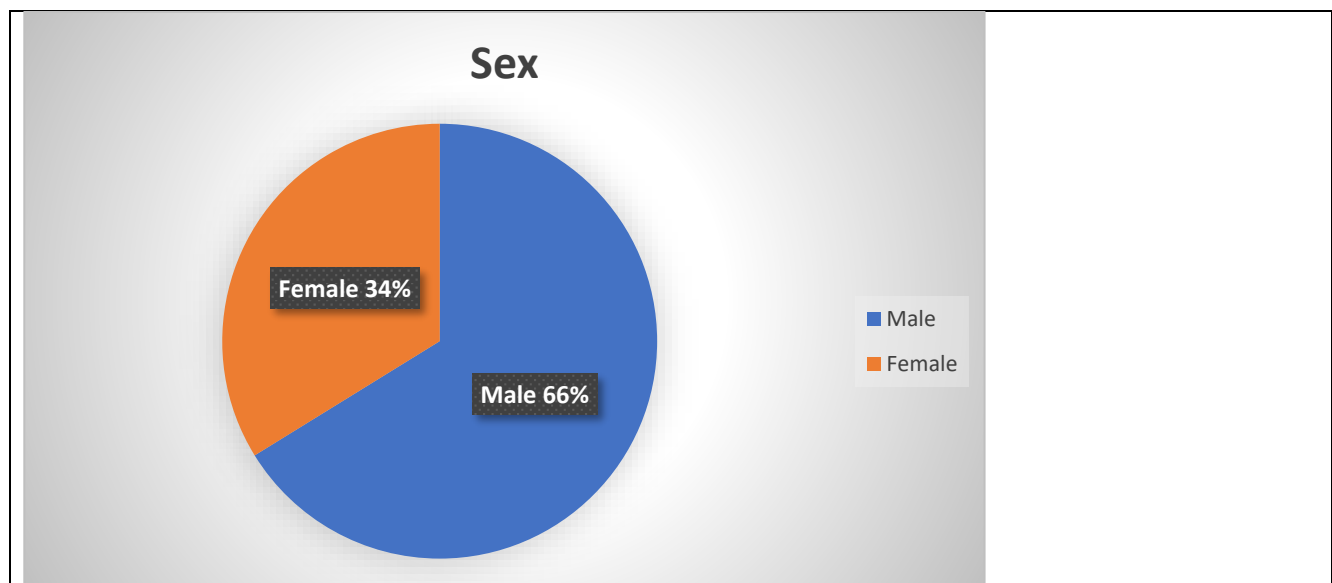


Figure 12- Gender of Staff Affected (Source- Anonymised S75 data provided by NISRA Jan 2026, accurate to September 2025.)

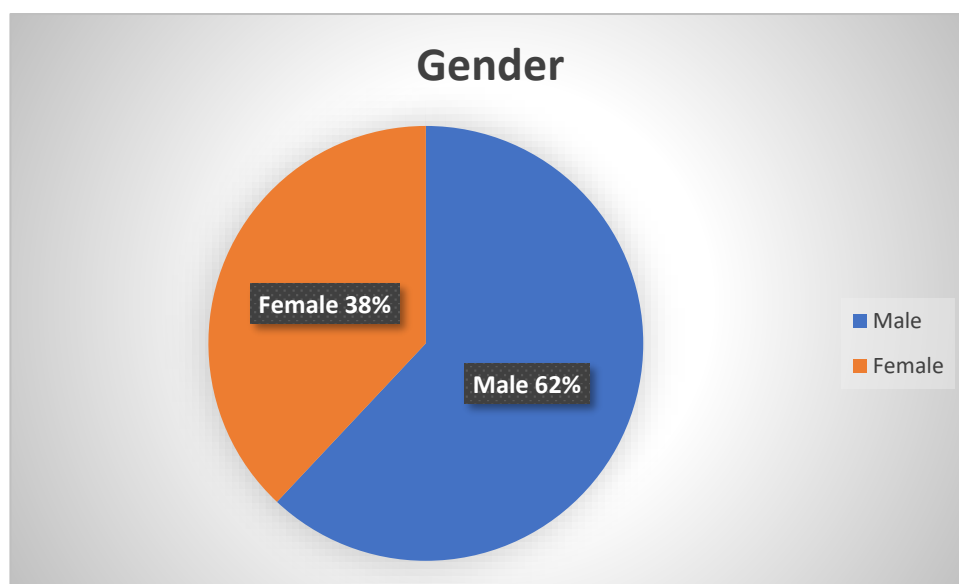


Figure 13 (Gender of staff affected) (Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

From review of both sources, the NISRA data (Figure 12) and the s75 themed questionnaire issued to staff (Figure 13) the largest identifiable single grouping by Gender is 'Male'. Within the questionnaire and during the

engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their Gender. Furthermore, no concerns were identified by Senior Veterinary Service and Plant Health Management when conducting the survey.

Disability evidence/information:

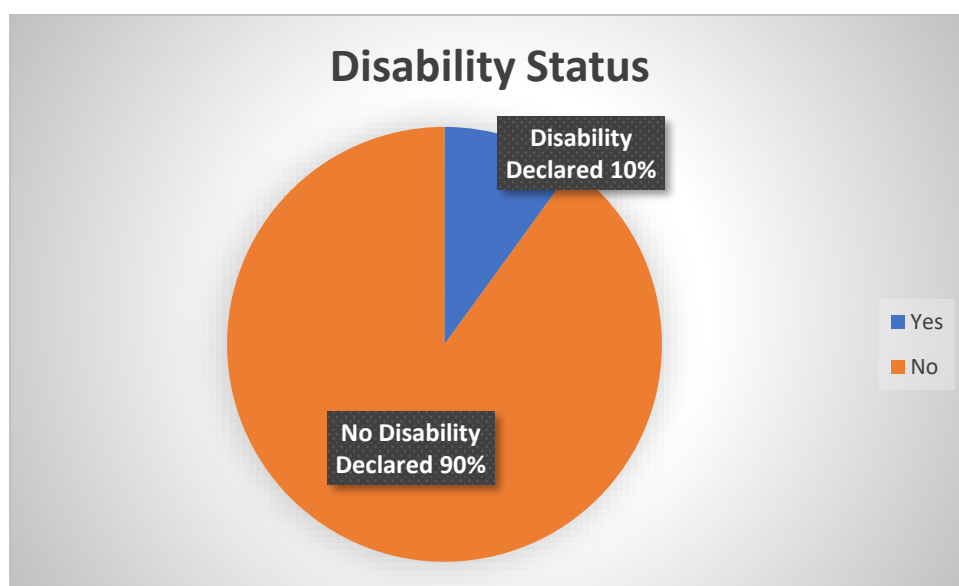


Figure 14 (Disability Status of staff affected) (Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

Of the respondents to the anonymised s75-themed questionnaire issued to affected staff in October 2025, 10% declared a disability. It is perceived that this proposal will have minimal impact on individuals with a declared disability. Staff (whether with a declared or non-declared disability) are already performing checks. If requested by a member of staff, reasonable adjustments can be considered in line with business-as-usual procedures under the appropriate NICS policies and procedures. Within the questionnaire and during the engagement sessions, no concerns were expressed that the

proposal would have a negative impact on the respondent due to their Disability Status.

NISRA did not disclose data pertaining to the declared disability status of affected staff.

Dependants evidence/information:

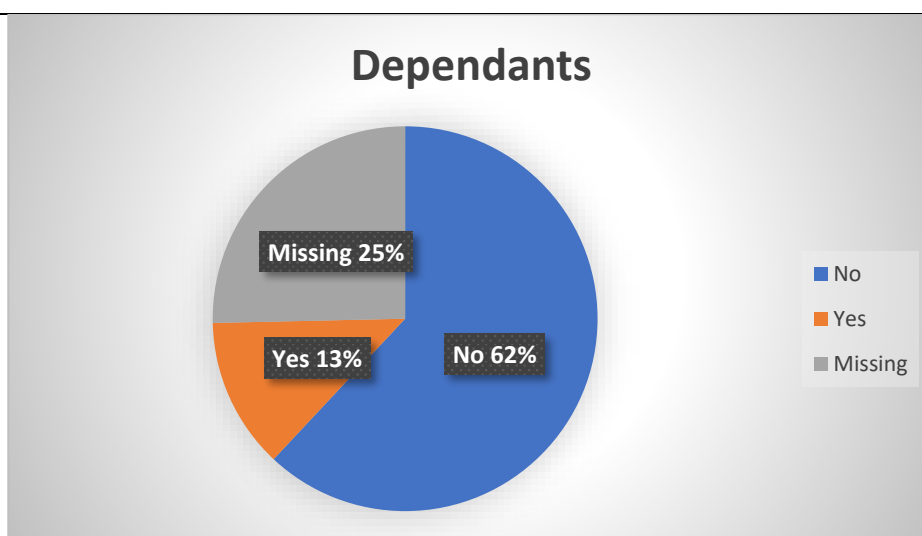


Figure 15- Dependants Status of Staff Affected (Source- Anonymised S75 data provided by NISRA Jan 2026, accurate to September 2025.)

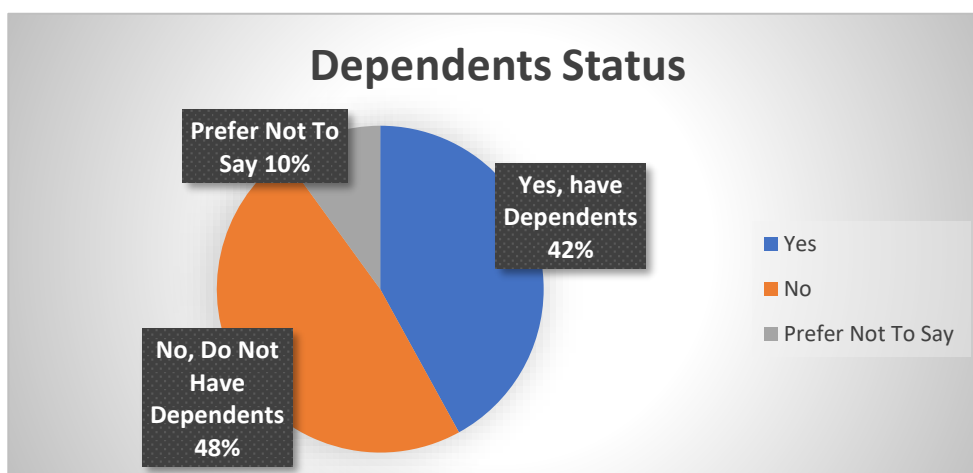


Figure 16 (Dependants Status of staff affected) (Source- S75 themed anonymised questionnaire responses- October 2025)

From review of both sources, the NISRA data (Figure 15) and the s75-themed questionnaire issued to affected staff (Figure 16) the largest cohorts affected were those who declared that they do not have dependents. There is some qualitative evidence that those with Dependents have different needs, experiences, and priorities in relation to the proposal. Responses to the Section 75 questionnaire raised some concerns about retraining in different work areas and the impact on family life. It should be noted that staff will not be required to relocate headquarters. Additionally, all job descriptions for Administrative Officers and Inspector Roles have been reviewed by the NICSHR Job Evaluation Team and deemed appropriate to remain at the same grade that transferring officers are already at. This suggests that new tasks will fall within the existing competency and skillset of staff. Proposed change should be manageable with appropriate guidance, training and ongoing support.

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:

The proposal applies to all Portal VSAHG inspectors and Plant Health Inspectors earmarked for inclusion in SPIU irrespective of their religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, whether they are a man or a woman, whether they have a disability or not and whether they have dependents or not.

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 Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒
(select as appropriate)

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

The Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

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

The Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Age*:

Responses to the Section 75 questionnaire from affected staff identified some concerns about difficulty with retraining in different work areas due to their age. This impact could be mitigated by providing extra training where needed. Additionally, as part of the SPIU governance process, all job descriptions for Administrative Officers and Inspector Roles have been reviewed by the NICSHR Job Evaluation Team and deemed appropriate to remain at the same grade that transferring officers are already at. This suggests that new tasks will fall within the existing competency and skillset of staff.

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

(select as appropriate)

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

The Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

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

The Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

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

The Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Disability*:

The Policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Dependants*:

Responses to the Section 75 questionnaire from affected staff raised some concerns about retraining in different work areas and the impact on family life. It should be noted that staff will not be required to relocate headquarters or work additional hours. Job descriptions for Administrative Officers and Inspector roles have been reviewed by the NICSHR Job Evaluation Team and adjudged to remain at the same grade that transferring officers are already at. Changes to staff responsibility should be manageable with appropriate guidance, training and ongoing support.

What is the level of impact? Minor ☒ 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:

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different religious belief.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different political opinion.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different racial grouping.

Age - If Yes, provide details:

There is an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the s75 category of 'Age'. Concerns expressed by staff that the introduction of the policy could negatively impact them due to their age have been acknowledged and mitigations have been detailed in this document. This includes provision of training and additional support as required and the fact that the grading of the job descriptions remains unchanged, meaning the required role does not require skillsets over and above what staff are currently delivering.

If No, provide reasons:

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different marital status.

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different sexual orientation.

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different sex.

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different declared disability status.

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

There is an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the s75 category of 'Dependants'. Concerns expressed by staff that the introduction of the policy could negatively impact family life have been acknowledged and mitigations have been detailed in this document. This includes provision of training and additional support as required and the fact that the grading of the job descriptions remains unchanged, meaning the required role does not require skillsets over and above what staff are currently delivering. In addition staff will not be required to work additional hours or change headquarters being their work/life balance remains unchanged.

If No, provide reasons:

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*:

No impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

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

(select as appropriate)

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

None

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

(select as appropriate)

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

None

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 SPIU proposal is neutral as regards people of different religious beliefs and consequently there is no opportunity to better promote good relations.

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

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If No, provide reasons:

The SPIU proposal is neutral as regards people of different political opinions and consequently there is no opportunity to better promote good relations.

***Racial Group* - If Yes, provide details:**

(insert text here)

If No, provide reasons:

The SPIU proposal is neutral as regards people of different political opinions and consequently there is no opportunity to better promote good relations.

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.

The relative numbers of staff in the cohort affected within DAERA is small, and it is not possible to determine the numbers of staff who may have multiple identities. Where potential impacts have been suggested or identified with respect to individual S-75 groups, mitigation has been outlined in this document to minimise the potential impact of this policy on this cadre of staff inclusive of those that may fall between 2 or more groupings.

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?**

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different declared disability status.

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

This proposal is neutral as regards people of different declared disability status.

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.

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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.

The decision is to screen the proposal out from requiring an EQIA. It is not anticipated by the data obtained and considered that there would be a major impact on any Section 75 Group. Staff are already performing checks. The proposal is organisational in nature and does not constitute a significant change in ongoing procedures. Where feedback from affected staff identified concerns around Age and Dependent status, proportionate mitigations have been identified within this document. These measures are considered to be reasonable and adequate to mitigate any perceived issues with the introduction of the policy.
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If the decision is to **subject the policy to an equality impact assessment**, please provide details of the reasons.

(insert text here)

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.

It is not anticipated by the data obtained and considered that there would be a major impact on any Section 75 groups. This is an operational change. Where feedback from affected staff identified concerns around Age and Dependent status, proportionate mitigations have been identified within this document. These measures are considered to be reasonable and adequate to mitigate any perceived issues with the introduction of the policy. NICS policies on inclusion, diversity and dignity at work will apply as a matter of course and the proposal will be incrementally reviewed to ensure that any additional training needs are met and support is made available where required.

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 (select as appropriate)

If yes, please provide details.

(insert text here)

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:

The impact of this policy will be monitored by a 6-month post-launch satisfaction survey which will canvass affected staff on the merger's impact (if any) in terms of Equality. Like the initial S75 questionnaire, it will seek to collect both quantitative data in terms of the S75 characteristics of affected staff at a moment in time and qualitative data in terms of their opinion on how the now-implemented policy has affected equality or if there are opportunities to better promote same. All data will be collected and stored appropriately. In addition, the NICS-wide annual staff survey will allow staff the opportunity to voice any concerns which will provide further opportunity for the impact of the policy to be monitored.

Good Relations:

The impact of this policy will be monitored by a 6-month post-launch satisfaction survey which will canvass affected staff on the merger's impact (if any) in terms of Good Relations. Similar to the initial S75 questionnaire, it will seek to collect both quantitative data in terms of the S75 characteristics of affected staff at a moment in time and qualitative data in terms of their opinion on how the now-implemented policy has affected Good Relations or if there are opportunities to better promote same. All data will be collected and stored appropriately. In addition, the NICS-wide

annual staff survey will allow staff the opportunity to voice any concerns which will provide further opportunity for the impact of the policy to be monitored Responses from the survey will be examined to review replies in respect of staff cohesion, trust in management to identify potential areas where good relations may have been impacted. Team building exercises will also be implemented to ensure team cohesion.

Disability Duties:

All reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with OHS recommendations and implemented as necessary should they arise.	
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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 -

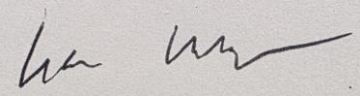
- I have explained any technical issues in plain English (easily understood by a 12 year old)
- I have used the most relevant, current & up to date data available
- I have added evidence and explained my assessments in full
- I have provided a brief note to justify my decision to 'Screen In' or 'Screen 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: Liam Weir **Grade:** Deputy Principal

Branch: Veterinary Service, DAERA **Date:** 29/10/2025

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature.



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

Name: Brian Dooher **Grade:** Gd3

Branch: VSAHG, DAERA **Date:** 20/04/2026

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.
- 6.

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.
- 3.

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

Email: equality@daera-ni.gov.uk



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

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