



Section 75 Screening Form

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

The decision to disregard War Pensions as income eligibility to the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revision to the existing Affordable Warmth Scheme.

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

To review if there are equality impacts in the result of War Pension Scheme, Armed Forces Compensation Scheme which are both commonly referred to as War Pensions and the supplementary allowances are excluded from the calculation of income for eligibility to the Affordable Warmth Scheme

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

Yes

If Yes, explain how.

The policy will continue to direct help to those considered to be most vulnerable in society who are in the lower income bracket and therefore more likely to be in fuel poverty. Certain people within the Section75 categories are more likely to be considered as being vulnerable; in this case, people with disabilities and/or health conditions may also experience barriers of economic participation, social isolation, and poverty due to the additional costs

associated with disability and ill-health. This could also affect people of an certain age, mostly 65+.

A War Pension is financial compensation for injury, illness, disability or death that was caused by or made worse by service in the Armed Forces. There are different categories of these payments and supplementary allowances.

These payments are not the same as a normal army pension (which is based on rank and length of service). War Pensions are administered separately from the occupational pension for all serving personnel in the Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) administer the Armed Forces occupational pension for all serving personnel while War Pensions are administered through an arm of the MoD called Veterans UK.

Those in receipt of War Pensions were being treated differently from other disabled people whose disability related benefits were already excluded from the Affordable Warmth Scheme income threshold. The proposed change aligns the Affordable Warmth Scheme with other benefits and payments, including Discretionary Support Grants, Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Home Improvement Grants.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Department for Communities

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Department for Communities own the policy, it is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

If yes, are they

financial

The Housing Executive are reliant on the Department providing a budget for the grants.

legislative

Potential changes may require an amendment to primary/subordinate legislation.

other, please specify _____

Main stakeholders affected

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

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations – DoH and NIHE
- voluntary/community/trade unions
- other, please specify - Installers who carry out works installing energy efficiency measures in homes within the private sector that have received an Affordable Warmth Scheme grant

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Yes

What are they and who owns them?

The Department for Communities separately offers private sector grants for Disabled Facilities, Repairs, Renovation, Home Repairs Assistance and Replacement Grants.

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.

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

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	<p>The Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2016 provides information on the religious make-up of households in Northern Ireland. There was little variation between the two main religious groups described in the report as being in fuel poverty.</p> <p>The Budget 2025-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information on the religious make-up of households in Northern Ireland. People from other religions, mixed religions or no religions are the most likely to live in non-decent homes, and Catholic households the least likely.</p>
Political opinion	<p>There is no specific data on political opinion, data on religious belief is taken as a reasonable proxy on political opinion.</p> <p>The Budget 2025-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information on the political opinion of households in Northern Ireland and concluded that there is insufficient data or existing evidence to draw any conclusions about the relationship between housing and other priority Capital requirements and people with different political opinions.</p>
Racial group	<p>Data from the 2021 NI Census shows that 0.2% of white people living in private households do not have central heating compared with 0.7% of people from other ethnic backgrounds. This would indicate that those people from other ethnic backgrounds could be experiencing higher rates of fuel poverty. The Census also shows that overcrowding is more prevalent in ethnic households (12.6%) than with predominantly white households (4.1%) where there would be a need for 2 or more further rooms to accommodate the residents.</p>
Age	<p>The rate of fuel poverty and age of household reference person is outlined in the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2016 providing information on households living in fuel poverty including those with children. It also confirms the trend that households</p>

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
	<p>headed by older people were much more likely to be living in fuel poverty.</p> <p>The NI Family Resources Survey provides information on household characteristics across Northern Ireland including information on pensioners' income.</p> <p>The Budget 2024-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding different age profiles and concluded the following:</p> <p>Poor physical housing conditions in Northern Ireland's stock have declined but older people remain more likely to have inadequate non-decent housing conditions than younger age groups. Homeownership contains the largest pool of older people in poor housing conditions. Previous reports have highlighted this differential suggesting it is a persistent problem.</p> <p>Private renting is associated with a significant increase in poverty after housing costs for people aged 16 to 24 years old.</p>
Marital status	<p>Marital status is rarely a focus of housing studies, but data resources do allow some examination of different people's housing outcomes. Marital status does not, however, neatly align with people's living arrangements, which can be more influential than status alone. Some trends were apparent that placed some households, those likely to include more single income households, at a potential disadvantage in the housing market.</p> <p>The Budget 2024-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding different marital status profiles and concluded single, divorced, and separated people experienced poorer housing conditions than married people, especially in the private rented sector, with divorced and separated people having the highest incidence of non-decent homes.</p> <p>Incomes may vary by household by marital status, data from the NI Family Resources Survey shows the makeup of households and the source of income. Research commissioned by the Department "Defining Fuel Poverty in Northern Ireland" reports on the use of equivalised incomes to seek to monitor household rather than personal income.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>There is no evidence available to provide information on the risk of fuel poverty due to sexual orientation.</p>

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Men and women generally	<p>There is no evidence that suggests there is a risk of fuel poverty to a specific group of either men or women in the household. The Family Resources Survey collects information on the circumstances of private households in Northern Ireland, the report is divided into sections covering, occupation, and employment and households' characteristics.</p> <p>The Budget 2024-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding different gender profiles and concluded. Overall, households with female household reference persons have smaller homes and are more frequently in rented accommodation than households with male household reference persons. Single women that live alone, however, obtain larger homes and are more frequently in owner-occupation than single men living alone, suggesting that intersections with dependants, marital status or living arrangements and income is important to housing outcomes.</p> <p>Other households of female household reference persons are more frequently found in social housing than those of male household reference persons. Lone parents were overwhelmingly female and predominantly in either the private or social renting sector.</p> <p>Older women more frequently experience poor housing conditions than older men in rural areas, while in urban areas the situation is reversed, and older men experience poorer housing conditions than older women.</p> <p>Rates of relative poverty in the private rented sector increase once housing costs are taken into account more for women rather than men; but rates of relative poverty are reduced for women more than men, when the minimal housing costs in outright homeownership are considered.</p>
Disability	<p>The Family Resources Survey contains data on income and disability.</p> <p>The DfC Budget 2025-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding people with a disability and concluded there is a strong association between older people and disability; disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members.</p>
Dependants	<p>The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.</p>

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
	<p>The DfC Budget 2025-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding people with a disability and concluded: Housing costs of private renting increases the rate of relative poverty among households with dependents by 27 percentage points compared to five percentage points for households without dependents.</p> <p>Low-income families are increasingly found in private renting, where they lack security of tenure, rather than social housing.</p> <p>The proportion of non-decent homes for families in the private and social rented sectors was the same in 2009, but households without dependents in the private rented sector experienced poor conditions, with the highest rate of non-decent homes.</p>

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 for **each** of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Political opinion	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Racial group	Census data indicate that those people from other ethnic backgrounds could be experiencing higher rates of fuel poverty.
Age	Households headed by older people are much more likely to be living in fuel poverty.
Marital status	The Budget 2024-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding different marital status profiles and concluded single, divorced, and separated people experienced poorer housing conditions than married people, especially in the private rented sector, with divorced and separated people having the highest incidence of non-decent homes.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Disability	The DfC Budget 2025-26 Equality Impact Assessment provides information regarding people with a disability and concluded there is a strong association between older people and disability;

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
	disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members.
Dependants	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.

Part 2. Screening questions

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 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

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

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

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

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

In favour of a 'major' impact

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

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;

- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

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

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

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? minor/major/none

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	<p>Neutral</p> <p>This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people of different religious beliefs.</p>	None
Political opinion	<p>Neutral</p> <p>This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people of different political opinion.</p>	None
Racial group	<p>Neutral</p> <p>This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people from different racial groups.</p>	None
Age	<p>Positive</p> <p>We do not expect any adverse impact on equality of opportunity for people of different ages. The Scheme information will be available on the NIHE website, through the freephone NI Energy Advice Service and through stakeholder engagement with interested parties who have knowledge of age-related issues regarding accessing schemes such as this. NIHE will be available for enquiries regarding the Scheme and the application process and have experience from operating other grants of guiding people from this category</p>	Major

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
	through the processes. Excluding war pension as income for the Affordable Warmth Scheme can be seen as a positive change for this category as it now removed an unintended disadvantage for those in receipt of war pension, mostly people age 65+.	
Marital status	<p>Neutral</p> <p>This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people with different marital status.</p>	None
Sexual orientation	<p>Neutral</p> <p>This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people of different sexual orientation.</p>	None
Men and women generally	<p>Neutral</p> <p>This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for men and women in general.</p>	None
Disability	<p>Positive</p> <p>Excluding war pension as income for the Affordable Warmth Scheme can be seen as a positive change for this category as it now removed an unintended disadvantage for those in receipt of war pension.</p>	Major
Dependants	Neutral	None

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
	This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people with dependants.	

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

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People from all religious backgrounds to have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria.
Political opinion		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People with different political opinions to have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria.
Racial group		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People from

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
		<p>different racial groups have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria. However, language barriers have been recognised as a potential risk to accessing the scheme. Therefore, there is an interpretation service currently available, with both a face-to face service and by telephone via thebigword service. In addition, there is a translation service available as befitting the needs of the customer.</p>
Age		<p>The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People from this category have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria. However, to enhance access to the Scheme information is available on the NIHE website, through the NI Energy Advice Service and through stakeholder engagement with interested parties who have knowledge of age-related issues regarding accessing schemes such as this. NIHE will be available for telephone enquiries regarding the Scheme and the application process and will be able to signpost applicants to other agencies and support groups who can assist with the</p>

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
		completion of the application forms.
Marital status		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People with different marital status have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria.
Sexual orientation		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People from this group have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria.
Men and women generally		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People from this group have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria.
Disability		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People from this group have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria. However, there may be some barriers by disabled people to accessing the scheme and these have been addressed through several

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
		services. Interpreters for the 2 Sign Languages used in NI are available along with a Video Relay Service and Relay UK service for people with impaired hearing. There are also a number of alternative formats for written material such as DAISY, Large Print, Audio, Braille and information available in other languages.
Dependants		The Scheme is designed to assist low-income households most at risk of the impacts of fuel poverty. People with or without dependants have the same access to the Scheme, subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria.

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	This policy is not expected to have any impact on good relations between people of different religious background.	None
Political opinion	This policy is not expected to have any impact on good relations between people of different political background.	None

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Racial group	This policy is not expected to have any impact on good relations between people of different racial background.	None

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

Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote good relations between people of different religious background.
Political opinion		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote good relations between people of different political opinion.
Racial group		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote good relations between people of different racial background.

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?

(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.

It is considered that there are no potential impacts of this policy/ decision on people with multiple identities.

Part 3. Screening decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please underline one)

1. **Not be subject to an EQIA**
2. **Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)**
3. **Be subject to an EQIA**

If 1 or 2 (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

An EQIA is not required as the screening identified no actual or potential adverse impacts on any Section 75 group,

If 3. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

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?

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

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

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

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

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

We will monitor feedback, complaints, and application processing times for any evidence of adverse impact on Section 75 groups.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Phil Corrigan	Staff Officer, Affordable Warmth Scheme	
Approved by:	Paul Price	6/5/26

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.