



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

Name of the policy

Historic Environment Fund 2026-27

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

~~Existing~~/Revised/~~New~~

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

The proposed Historic Environment Fund 2026-27 has been developed by Historic Environment Division (HED) whose aim is '*to help communities to enjoy and realise the value of the historic environment*'. Through heritage protection, this ties into the Department's overall 'purpose' to '*support people, build communities, and shape places.*'

Stimulating and encouraging work by third parties is key to realising this aim and the Historic Environment Fund (HEF) was set up for this purpose in 2016. Each subsequent year it has been divided into four streams; this year funding will be provided to the Repair Stream, Revival Stream, Research Stream and Regeneration Stream.

A proposed total of £1,183,675 will be allocated to the fund, £750,000 of which will be allocated to the Repair Stream (subject to available budget). A small proportion may be allocated to applications which received a letter of offer in the same scheme in 2025/26 but did not complete or proceed due to situations out of the applicant's control, at the discretion of the Department. Repair applications this year will receive support capped at £10,000 and £20,000 per successful application dependent on building roof type (non-thatch or thatch). £80k will be ringfenced specifically for repairs to scheduled monuments and there will be no caps on awards within this amount. £347k will be allocated to Regeneration, Research and Revival Stream projects, which are either open to stimulate work in these areas and capped at £10,000 per project or support partner organisations to deliver strategic initiatives such as: heritage at risk; historic places of worship maintenance; community activity to maintain monuments; and part-funded posts for cultural world heritage site management (Gracehill), Community Monument Support Officer and as secretariat for the NI Historic Environment Stakeholder Group.

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

Yes

If Yes, explain how.

The funding initiative seeks to generate 3rd party action to conserve heritage; the funding is within a single year cycle and is to be spent by financial year end March 2027.

While socio-economic disadvantage is not a specified ground under Section 75, the barriers and inequalities experienced by equality groups can be exacerbated by poverty and social exclusion.

Those applicants on income and guaranteed pension support (and/or the equivalent Universal Credit, with annual income <£15k) are prioritised within scoring of Repair Stream applications for listed buildings, to redress financial imbalances encountered in maintaining such structures.

In previous years some of the support provided has helped Section 75 groups, such as an intergenerational conference on vernacular buildings or support to the National Churches Trust to bring denominations together to tackle common heritage issues.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Historic Environment Division, within the Engaged Communities Group (ECG)
Department for Communities

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Historic Environment Division, within the Engaged Communities Group (ECG)
Department for Communities

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
- legislative
- other, please specify:-
 - time pressures for delivery of schemes; and
 - availability of suitably skilled craftspeople to undertake repair work.

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
- voluntary/community/trade unions
- other, please specify -
 - Owners of listed buildings and scheduled monuments or those employed to work on them

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they and who owns them?

Regional Development Strategy ¹
Strategic Planning Policy Statement²
The Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland 2024³
Programme for Government 2024-2027⁴ – NI Executive
The Heritage, Culture and Creativity Programme (HCC)
The Green Growth Strategy⁵
Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland 2022)⁶
Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Plans⁷ (NICCAP)
Architecture and Built Environment Policy NI
Northern Ireland Building Regulations
Draft Tourism Strategy for NI – 10-year plan – Department for Economy
Housing Strategy – Department for Communities
Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2022-2040
Archaeology 2030
The Adaptive Re-use of Existing Assets - SIB⁸
Shaping Sustainable Places – Department for Communities
UN Sustainable Development Goals
Enriched Landscapes – Landscapes NI
Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation – A New Framework |
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

¹ [Regional Development Strategy 2035 | Department for Infrastructure](#)

² [The Strategic Planning Policy Statement | Department for Infrastructure](#)

³ [Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland 2024 | www.the-ies.org](#)

⁴ [Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' | The Northern Ireland Executive](#)

⁵ [A Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland - Balancing our climate, environment and economy | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

⁶ [Climate Change Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#)

⁷ [Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

⁸ [AREA-Report-2024.pdf](#)

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.

For the purpose of obtaining data for this screening exercise, DfC Historic Environment Division are of the view that the Northern Ireland Census 2021 statistics would have the most relevance in providing an illustration of the likely patrons of the area covered by the Historic Environment Fund.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information																		
Religious belief	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to religious belief in Northern Ireland:</p> <p>45.70% stated their religion as Catholic; 43.48% stated their religion as Protestant; 9.32% none or religious belief not stated; 1.50% stated their religion as other.</p>																		
Political opinion	<p>In the 2024 Westminster Elections, 779,840 valid votes were cast. The results were as follows:</p> <table data-bbox="418 1535 922 1913"><thead><tr><th>Party</th><th>Northern Ireland</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Sinn Fein</td><td>27.0%</td></tr><tr><td>DUP</td><td>22.1%</td></tr><tr><td>Alliance</td><td>15.0%</td></tr><tr><td>UUP</td><td>12.2%</td></tr><tr><td>SDLP</td><td>11.1%</td></tr><tr><td>TUV</td><td>6.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Green</td><td>1.1%</td></tr><tr><td>PBP</td><td>1.1%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Party	Northern Ireland	Sinn Fein	27.0%	DUP	22.1%	Alliance	15.0%	UUP	12.2%	SDLP	11.1%	TUV	6.2%	Green	1.1%	PBP	1.1%
Party	Northern Ireland																		
Sinn Fein	27.0%																		
DUP	22.1%																		
Alliance	15.0%																		
UUP	12.2%																		
SDLP	11.1%																		
TUV	6.2%																		
Green	1.1%																		
PBP	1.1%																		

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
	<p>Aontu 1.0%</p> <p>Other 3.25%</p>
Racial group	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics Northern-Ireland-wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96.55% were of the white ethnic group; • 86.5% were born in Northern Ireland; • 4.85% were born in GB; • 3.54% were born in other EU countries; • 2.12% were born in the Republic of Ireland; • 2.99% were born elsewhere.
Age	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to age breakdown within Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19% were aged 0-15; • 66% were aged 16-64; • 15% were aged 65+
Marital status	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to marital or same-sex civil partnership status of persons over the age of 16 within Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.07% were single and had never been married or registered a same-sex civil partnership; • 45.77% were currently married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership; • 6.02% were divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved; • 3.78% were separated, but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership;

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.36% were widowed or the surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership
Sexual orientation	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to Sexual Orientation within Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90.04% identified as straight or heterosexual 2.09% identified as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or other 7.87% preferred not to say.
Men and women generally	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to gender within Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50.81% male; and 49.19% female.
Disability	<p>Primary data is not available for the “persons with a disability and persons without” Section 75 category. However, the 2021 Northern Ireland Census collected data on “<i>persons with a limiting long-term health problem or disability</i>”. Statistics showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11.45% of people stated they had day to day activities limited a lot. 12.88% of people stated they had day to day activities limited a little 75.67% of people stated they were not limited.
Dependants	<p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded that within Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30.69% of households have dependents

Note to reader - If you are aware of and would like the Department to take into account any further evidence or information relevant to this policy, please send this to:

HistoricEnvironmentfund@communities-ni.gov.uk

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	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of their religious belief. It is not open to churches as they can avail of Departmental funding through an alternative route, namely the National Churches Trust. HED bids for capital funding specifically for this organisation and, if successful, they distribute funding to churches for repair and maintenance works.
Political opinion	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of their political opinion.
Racial group	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of their racial identity.
Age	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of age, provided they are over 18.
Marital status	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of marital status.

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Sexual orientation	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of sexual orientation.
Men and women generally	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of whether they are men, women or those who choose not to say.
Disability	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of ability. The Historic Environment Fund information will be on DfC Historic Environment Division’s Funding and Grants webpage once it is launched, and this webpage is accessible.
Dependants	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to all applicants regardless of their dependants.
All	The Department considers this initiative to be of a technical nature and therefore deems there to be no needs, experiences or priorities for any of the Section 75 groups in relation to this funding initiative. The ‘conservation deficit’ described above will affect all categories within the wider community.

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	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category.	None
Political opinion	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None
Racial group	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None
Age	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None
Marital status	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Sexual orientation	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category.	None
Men and women generally	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None
Disability	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None
Dependants	This programme is technical in nature and is not expected to have any adverse impact on this section 75 category	None

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		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Political opinion		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Racial group	Application documents could be translated if necessary for anyone who does not have English as a first language.	
Age		No opportunities identified
Marital status		No opportunities identified
Sexual orientation		No opportunities identified
Men and women generally		No opportunities identified
Disability	Reasonable adjustments could be made if applicant required forms etc. to be provided in a different format.	
Dependants		No opportunities identified

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	Support provided to the National Churches Trust through Resource funding to the Places of Worship Forum brings Christian denominations together to look come together, celebrate, better understand and address the challenges around ecclesiastical heritage. This work by default develops connections in a non-contentious environment.	Minor
Political opinion	<p>One of the conditions applicants must sign up to before receiving support from the HEF Repair Stream is to provide access for European Heritage Open Day to members of the public. Buildings such as Orange Halls would therefore be open to all sections of the community who would not otherwise visit.</p> <p>Community ownership in areas of deprivation, facilitated through Regeneration funding to the AHF, in addition to volunteering/ caring for the historic environment, has been shown to have a positive impact on pride of place and good relations.</p> <p>Understanding and interpretation of historic places and associated events through the Research and Revival</p>	Minor

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
	Streams can provide common ground for people of different political opinions. Through storytelling, art, music and drama we can create better understanding and empathy for others.	
Racial group	<p>One of the conditions applicants must sign up to before receiving support from the HEF is to provide access for European Heritage Open Day to members of the public. Buildings would therefore be open to all sections of the community who would not otherwise visit.</p> <p>Heritage assets can provide common ground for people of different racial groups. Understanding and interpretation of historic places and associated events through storytelling, art, music and drama we can create better understanding and empathy for others.</p>	Minor

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	Yes, see response to Q.3 above; there is an opportunity for better relations between people of different denominations through the work of the National Churches Trust, which receives funding from the HEF.	
Political opinion	Yes, see response to Q.3 above; there is an opportunity for better relations between people of different political opinion through applicants providing access on European Heritage Open Day. In addition, increased understanding and awareness of the history and significance of these assets can promote empathy for others.	
Racial group	Yes, see response to Q.3 above; there is an opportunity for better relations between people of different racial identity through applicants providing access on European Heritage Open Day. In addition, increased understanding and awareness of the history and significance of these assets can promote empathy for others.	

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).

- This programme represents no differential impact on those from multiple groups in comparison to those from within a single group.

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

- Any impact from the programme will benefit all groups within the equality categories, including those with multiple identities, by
 - improving the condition of heritage assets;
 - by supporting communities to unlock the potential of disused heritage assets by providing sustainable uses for those most at risk of loss through ongoing deterioration;
 - by promoting the social value and increasing public awareness of the significance of heritage assets; and
 - by encouraging research that furthers the preservation, conservation and regeneration of heritage assets.

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:

No negative impacts have been identified, and no other significant impacts have been identified for any equality group. However, mitigation measures are proposed to address potential issues should the need arise, namely the potential for the application form to be provided in a different format or translated into a different language. It is therefore considered that the undertaking of an EQIA is not necessary at this time.

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 - there is a minor positive impact

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:

This initiative is technical in nature and will be kept under review by the Department.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Nicola Golden	SPTO	23/12/2025
Approved by:		
Natalie O'Rourke	PPTO	29/12/2025

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.