



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

Proposal to increase rents by 4.8% for protected and statutory tenancies for 2026/2027

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revised

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

Aims to set a rent level for protected and statutory tenancies that meet the fitness standard. At present this applies to 309 tenancies.

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

Yes

If Yes, explain how.

In general, the wider community and in particular, specific sections of the community who live in protected and statutory tenancies which meet the fitness standard will be impacted by the rent increase.

As a result of a 4.8% increase, the average registered rent will be approximately £92.24 per week, representing an average weekly increase of £4.22. In considering the impact of this decision, it is important to note that protected and statutory tenancies already have extremely low rents (comparable to NIHE properties and substantially lower than that for other PRS properties).

Moreover, permitting an increase is also important to maintain the principle that controlled tenancies which are properly maintained (fit) can increase rents, while those who aren't (unfit) are frozen.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

DfC Housing

Who owns and who implements the policy?

DfC Housing

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 _____

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 _____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they and who owns them?

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
All	<p>The private rented sector (PRS) has grown in size and importance in recent decades. Census data shows that over the last forty years (1981 to 2021) the percentage of households privately renting has nearly doubled (from 9.1% of households in 1981 to 17.2% in 2021). In 2021 307,300 people lived in 132,400 privately rented households.</p> <p>Almost half (46%) of those in the PRS receive state financial support via Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (UC).</p> <p>We have been able to obtain specific information in relation to those that receive Housing Benefit and the housing element of UC to help with housing costs in those tenancies that will be impacted by the rent uplift of 4.8%. This exercise has shown that 83 of the 309 (27%) tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit and 48 of the 309 (16%) are in receipt of the housing element of UC. This broadly correlates with the 46% of those receiving housing support in the wider PRS.</p> <p>If a rent increase is applied, Housing Benefit/UC housing element entitlement would increase for those in receipt of assistance with housing costs. Thus, the rent increase will not impact on affordability for these tenants.</p> <p>Discussions with tenant representatives of those in social housing suggests that tenants prefer to follow a</p>

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
	<p>path of small affordable increases rather than larger increases which need to be applied later.</p> <p>There is a strong link between rental income and investment in homes. Maintenance and investment in homes will help ensure that tenants are warm, safe and dry in their homes.</p>
Religious belief	<p>The 2021 Census figures show that of 307,274 persons living in private rented accommodation, 42.6% are Catholic, 27.1% are Protestant or other Christian, 2.7% are other religion with 27.6% as no religion or religion not stated.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The NIHE House Condition Survey 2016 provides information on the sample of PRS tenants (House Condition Survey Main Report 2016 (nihe.gov.uk))</p> <p>The 2021 Census did not ask about political opinion, therefore the latest evidence available is the NIHE House Condition Survey 2016.</p>
Racial group	<p>The 2021 Census figures show that of 307,274 persons living in private rented accommodation, 92.2% are White, 3.6% are Asian, 1.8% are Black, 1.5% are mixed with 1% as other, not stated.</p>
Age	<p>The 2021 Census figures show that of 307,274 persons living in private rented accommodation, 26% are aged between 0-15, 14.1% between 16-24, 20.7% between 25-34, 15.9% between 35-44, 10.6% between 45-54, 6.9% between 55-64 and 5.7% 65+.</p>
Marital status	<p>The 2021 Census figures show that of 227,261 persons over the age of 16 living in private rented accommodation, 56.3% are single, 25.8% are married or</p>

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
	in a civil partnership, 4.8% are separated, 6.3% are divorced or were previously in a civil partnership, 2.1% are widowed or a surviving civil partner.
Sexual orientation	The 2021 Census figures show that of 227,261 persons over the age of 16 living in private rented accommodation, 85.9% are straight or heterosexual, 4.4% are gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation and 7.2% prefer not to say/or did not state.
Men and women generally	The 2021 Census figures show that of 307,274 persons living in private rented accommodation, 49.4% are male and 50.6% are female.
Disability	The 2021 Census figures show that of 307,274 persons living in private rented accommodation, 20.2% have a disability which limits day to day activities and 79.8% do not have a disability which limits day to day activities.
Dependants	The 2021 Census figures show that of 307,274 persons living in private rented accommodation, 50.2% have dependent children and 49.8% do not have dependent children.

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: info.rentofficer@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	<p>The rent increase will be applied to rents that have been determined by the rent officer for all protected and statutory dwellings that meet the fitness standard.</p> <p>There is no evidence of different needs, experiences and priorities for this group in relation to this proposal.</p> <p>It is important to note that rent in these tenancies are low (comparable to NIHE properties, which have rents lower than other social properties, and substantially lower than rents in the PRS more generally).</p>
Political opinion	
Racial group	
Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

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	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Political opinion	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Racial group	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Age	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Marital status	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Sexual orientation	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Men and women generally	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Disability	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Dependants	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	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		The policy does not offer any opportunities to

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Political opinion		better promote equality of opportunity.
Racial group		Furthermore, our letter to landlords and agents advising of the rent increase will also ask that tenants be made aware that they can seek advice from Housing Rights if they are experiencing any housing related difficulties, including meeting rental costs. This will hopefully prompt any tenants that may experience affordability issues to seek advice, including a check on their entitlement for help with housing costs.
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		A decision to grant an increase now, which is fair and proportionate, also provides a more affordable trajectory for tenants. In contrast, deferring the decision places additional pressure on the need to implement more significant increases in the future to make up the shortfall - this would be more likely to be detrimental to tenants than spreading the cost of rent rises by having
Dependants		

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
		<p>smaller rises over a longer period.</p> <p>It would not be unreasonable to anticipate that in the medium to longer term, a proportion of the stock may no longer meet the fitness standard due to the limited level of investment available. The impact being that we lose properties from our viable housing stock. While statutory and protected tenancies constitute only a small number of homes, the impact of their loss is amplified when viewed in the context of wider evidence of contraction in the Private Rented Sector and our high levels of housing stress.</p>

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 has no specific bearing on good relations.	
Political opinion		
Racial group		

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 has no specific bearing on good relations.	
Political opinion		
Racial group		

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.

This is a strategic policy decision that does not at this stage give consideration to specific characteristics of households.

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:

After having considered the policy, we are satisfied that there is no scope to better promote equality or good relations and no risk of adverse impact on S75 groups.

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:

No potential/actual adverse impacts have been identified. A new database is being developed and it was planned to include monitoring to capture information on protected and statutory tenancies but this has not been possible due to budget and time constraints. Alternative forms of monitoring will be considered.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Sharon Allen	Rent Officer	10/03/2026
Approved by:		
David Polley	Director, Housing Supply Policy	11/03/2026

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.