



# 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

**Reduction in Rates Support Grant (RSG) 2023/24**

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**Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?**

Revised.

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

The (budget) policy is trying to meet the challenge of the Department operating within their current spending limits while delivering services and meeting objectives. The RSG budget is a discretionary amount of funding which is able to provide financial support to less wealthier councils as defined in Section 27 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Local Government (Rates Support Grant) Regulations 2011. There is no change to the statutory

formula or how the budget is allocated to eligible councils. The overall total budget allocated by the Department for Communities (DfC) for distribution is discretionary and must therefore be considered in the context of the Department's overall budget priorities and challenges.

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

No

**If Yes, explain how.**

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**Who initiated or wrote the policy?**

DfC is responsible for both the RSG policy and budget allocation policy.

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**Who owns and who implements the policy?**

The overall total budget which is allocated centrally by DfC for distribution is discretionary. This budget is then distributed to eligible councils via a statutory formula by Local Government Finance.

A DfC central budgetary decision was taken to reduce the RSG discretionary budget as the 2023-24 DfC Budget allocations result in a Non Ring-Fenced Resource funding gap of £111.2m (15.5%) and a £59m (27.3%) shortfall in Capital required for 2023-24. Around 90% of the Departments spend is contractual or committed which leaves approximately 10% to find the savings – although the RSG is a statutory grant, the level of funding is not set in legislation within this category as no set amount is laid out in statute. Therefore, as part of the process to deliver savings a level of reduction was required on RSG.

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## Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they

financial

In-year monitoring may / may not improve the funding position on this discretionary grant.

legislative

other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## Main stakeholders affected

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

**staff** - DfC could be challenged by councils who receive this grant for 2023/24. The funding is intended to support comparatively less wealthier councils who may have to reduce their level of services.

**service users** - District Councils and indirectly rate payers - funding may impact on the provision of council services, but this is a matter for district councils.

**other public sector organisations** - Other organisations financially supported by district councils could be indirectly impacted, but this is a matter for district councils.

**voluntary/community/trade unions** - Other organisations financially supported by district councils could be indirectly impacted, but this is a matter for district councils.

other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## Other policies with a bearing on this policy

### What are they and who owns them?

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.

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

The anticipated percentage level of RSG budget for 2023/24 was notified to district councils in advance of rate setting. Any impact of funding should be considered by local councils when agreeing their own budget and plans for 2023/24.

There is no change to the statutory formula with regards to how the budget is allocated to local councils. There are no conditions attached with the funding to the eligible Councils and it is for Councils solely to decide how it will be spent.

The options to manage any reduction in grant will occur at district council level and therefore it is difficult for the Department to identify the likely impacts on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the S75 equality categories. In addition, a Council may choose to mitigate any reduction in RSG by drawing on Reserves or by an increase in the district rate.

Each council is a designated public authority subject to the statutory requirements of the Section 75 equality duties and any policy changes arising from a reduction in RSG will be subject to that Council's Equality Scheme commitments in respect of its overall budget (or any sub-budget areas) that it sets.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information																																																										
<b>Religious belief</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="391 590 753 667">Sum of Count</th> <th colspan="3" data-bbox="756 590 1333 667">Column Labels <input type="button" value="v"/></th> <th data-bbox="1336 590 1451 667"></th> <th data-bbox="1455 590 1469 667"></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <th data-bbox="756 667 922 701">⊕ Catholic</th> <th data-bbox="925 667 1091 701">⊕ Other Religious</th> <th data-bbox="1094 667 1333 701">⊕ No religion/Not stated</th> <th data-bbox="1336 667 1451 701">Grand Total</th> <td></td> </tr> </thead> </table>					Sum of Count	Column Labels <input type="button" value="v"/>						⊕ Catholic	⊕ Other Religious	⊕ No religion/Not stated	Grand Total																																											
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Political opinion	<p data-bbox="402 331 906 373"><b><u>Opinion Polling 18 May 2023</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="435 422 1101 470">2023 Northern Ireland local elections</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="440 527 1446 751"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="440 527 565 621">Date(s) conducted</th> <th data-bbox="565 527 667 621">Pollster</th> <th data-bbox="667 527 756 621">Client</th> <th data-bbox="756 527 854 621">Sample size</th> <th data-bbox="854 527 922 621">DUP<sup>U</sup></th> <th data-bbox="922 527 992 621">SF<sup>N</sup></th> <th data-bbox="992 527 1065 621">APNI<sup>O</sup></th> <th data-bbox="1065 527 1135 621">UUP<sup>U</sup></th> <th data-bbox="1135 527 1208 621">SDLP<sup>N</sup></th> <th data-bbox="1208 527 1278 621">TUV<sup>U</sup></th> <th data-bbox="1278 527 1351 621">Green<sup>O</sup></th> <th data-bbox="1351 527 1446 621">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="440 621 565 751">18 May 2023</td> <td data-bbox="565 621 667 751">2023 local elections</td> <td data-bbox="667 621 756 751"></td> <td data-bbox="756 621 854 751">N/A</td> <td data-bbox="854 621 922 751">23.3%</td> <td data-bbox="922 621 992 751">30.9%</td> <td data-bbox="992 621 1065 751">13.3%</td> <td data-bbox="1065 621 1135 751">10.9%</td> <td data-bbox="1135 621 1208 751">8.7%</td> <td data-bbox="1208 621 1278 751">3.9%</td> <td data-bbox="1278 621 1351 751">1.7%</td> <td data-bbox="1351 621 1446 751">7.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="435 758 976 783"><i>In the table above, U signifies unionist, N nationalist and O other.</i></p> <p data-bbox="402 825 1008 863"><a href="#">2023 Northern Ireland local elections</a></p> <p data-bbox="402 898 1398 978">In terms of political opinion 39.6% are Nationalist, 38.1% are Unionist, and 22.3% are Other.</p>	Date(s) conducted	Pollster	Client	Sample size	DUP <sup>U</sup>	SF <sup>N</sup>	APNI <sup>O</sup>	UUP <sup>U</sup>	SDLP <sup>N</sup>	TUV <sup>U</sup>	Green <sup>O</sup>	Other	18 May 2023	2023 local elections		N/A	23.3%	30.9%	13.3%	10.9%	8.7%	3.9%	1.7%	7.2%
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18 May 2023	2023 local elections		N/A	23.3%	30.9%	13.3%	10.9%	8.7%	3.9%	1.7%	7.2%														

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<b>Racial group</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Year</td> <td>2021</td> </tr> </table>	Year	2021	
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	<b>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>3.31%</td> </tr> </table>	Other ethnic group	3.31%
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	<b>Causeway Coast and Glens</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>1.45%</td> </tr> </table>	Other ethnic group	1.45%
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	<b>Derry City and Strabane</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>2.26%</td> </tr> </table>	Other ethnic group	2.26%
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	<b>Fermanagh and Omagh</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>1.71%</td> </tr> </table>	Other ethnic group	1.71%
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<b>Newry, Mourne and Down</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>1.67%</td> </tr> </table>	Other ethnic group	1.67%	
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<b>Nothern Ireland Average 7 Councils</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>2.44%</td> </tr> </table>	Other ethnic group	2.44%	
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	<p>For the 7 eligible councils within Northern Ireland who receive the RSG there are 2 Council areas with Ethnic Groups of between 3% to 4%. The average of the 7 Councils receiving the grant had an ethnic group percentage of 2.44%.</p>			

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of evidence/information</b>
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**Age**

Sum of Count	Column Labels				Grand Total
	0-14 years	15-39 years	40-64 years	65+ years	
Councils	Broad age bands (years)	Broad age bands (years)	Broad age bands (years)	Broad age bands (years)	
2021					
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	20.77%	30.96%	32.26%	16.00%	100.00%
Causeway Coast and Glens	18.32%	28.85%	33.56%	19.27%	100.00%
Derry City and Strabane	19.89%	31.07%	33.03%	16.02%	100.00%
Fermanagh and Omagh	19.89%	29.04%	32.72%	18.35%	100.00%
Mid and East Antrim	17.41%	28.65%	34.27%	19.67%	100.00%
Mid Ulster	21.71%	32.17%	31.13%	14.99%	100.00%
Newry, Mourne and Down	20.77%	30.09%	32.48%	16.66%	100.00%
Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils	19.94%	30.23%	32.72%	17.11%	100.00%

[explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/](https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/)

For the 7 eligible councils within Northern Ireland who receive the RSG, it appears that there are 3 Council areas within the broad age band 65+ that have a higher percentage population than the average percentage of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.

It also appears that there are 3 Council areas within the broad age band 0-14 years that have a higher percentage population than the average percentage of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.



Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information						
<b>Marital status</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>Year</span> <span>2021</span> <span>▾</span> </div>						
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>Sum of Count</span> <span>Column Labels</span> <span>▾</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <span>Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership</span> <span>Married or in a civil partnership</span> <span>Separated</span> <span>Single</span> <span>Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership</span> <span>Grand Total</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <span>Marital and civil partnership status</span> <span>Marital and civil partnership status</span> <span>Marital and civil partnership status</span> <span>Marital and civil partnership status</span> <span>Marital and civil partnership status</span> </div>						
	Councils	▾					
	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavor	6.02%	49.19%	3.42%	35.25%	6.11%	100.00%
	Causeway Coast and Glens	6.36%	47.94%	3.32%	35.67%	6.71%	100.00%
	Derry City and Strabane	5.89%	41.24%	4.92%	41.87%	6.08%	100.00%
	Fermanagh and Omagh	4.92%	49.28%	3.44%	35.81%	6.55%	100.00%
	Mid and East Antrim	6.83%	49.31%	3.53%	33.43%	6.91%	100.00%
	Mid Ulster	4.55%	49.98%	3.24%	36.33%	5.90%	100.00%
	Newry, Mourne and Down	5.43%	48.08%	3.50%	36.71%	6.28%	100.00%
Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils	5.74%	47.89%	3.62%	36.42%	6.34%	100.00%	
<a href="https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/">explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/</a>							
<p>The evidence / information available does not suggest any significant differentials.</p>							

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of evidence/information</b>
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**Sexual orientation**

Year	2021			
Sum of Count	Column Labels			
	Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other	Prefer not to say or not stated	Straight or heterosexual	Grand Total
Councils	Sexual orientation	Sexual orientation	Sexual orientation	
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavor	1.47%	8.01%	90.52%	100.00%
Causeway Coast and Glens	1.43%	7.29%	91.28%	100.00%
Derry City and Strabane	2.09%	7.61%	90.30%	100.00%
Fermanagh and Omagh	1.15%	9.32%	89.52%	100.00%
Mid and East Antrim	1.56%	7.40%	91.04%	100.00%
Mid Ulster	1.14%	8.84%	90.03%	100.00%
Newry, Mourne and Down	1.48%	8.11%	90.41%	100.00%
Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils	1.48%	8.05%	90.47%	100.00%

[explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/](https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/)

The evidence / information available does not suggest any significant differentials.

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Men and women generally	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Year</td> <td>2021</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sum of Count</td> <td colspan="3">Column Labels</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Females</td> <td>Males</td> <td>Grand Total</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Councils</td> <td>Sex</td> <td>Sex</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavor</td> <td>50.48%</td> <td>49.52%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Causeway Coast and Glens</td> <td>50.72%</td> <td>49.28%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derry City and Strabane</td> <td>51.14%</td> <td>48.86%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fermanagh and Omagh</td> <td>50.07%</td> <td>49.93%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mid and East Antrim</td> <td>51.04%</td> <td>48.96%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mid Ulster</td> <td>49.90%</td> <td>50.10%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newry, Mourne and Down</td> <td>50.53%</td> <td>49.47%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils</td> <td>50.56%</td> <td>49.44%</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> </table> <p><a href="https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/">explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/</a></p> <p>The evidence / information available does not suggest any significant differentials.</p>	Year	2021			Sum of Count	Column Labels				Females	Males	Grand Total	Councils	Sex	Sex		Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavor	50.48%	49.52%	100.00%	Causeway Coast and Glens	50.72%	49.28%	100.00%	Derry City and Strabane	51.14%	48.86%	100.00%	Fermanagh and Omagh	50.07%	49.93%	100.00%	Mid and East Antrim	51.04%	48.96%	100.00%	Mid Ulster	49.90%	50.10%	100.00%	Newry, Mourne and Down	50.53%	49.47%	100.00%	Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils	50.56%	49.44%	100.00%
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Mid Ulster	49.90%	50.10%	100.00%																																														
Newry, Mourne and Down	50.53%	49.47%	100.00%																																														
Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils	50.56%	49.44%	100.00%																																														

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information				
<b>Disability</b>					
	Year	2021			
	Sum of Count	Column Labels			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Activities not limited	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited a little	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited a lot	Grand Total
	Councils	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term health problem or disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term health problem or disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term health problem or disability	
	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavor	77.72%	11.89%	10.40%	100.00%
	Causeway Coast and Glens	74.39%	13.88%	11.73%	100.00%
	Derry City and Strabane	72.93%	13.18%	13.89%	100.00%
	Fermanagh and Omagh	76.06%	12.95%	10.99%	100.00%
	Mid and East Antrim	74.94%	13.75%	11.31%	100.00%
	Mid Ulster	78.75%	11.50%	9.74%	100.00%
	Newry, Mourne and Down	77.12%	12.01%	10.87%	100.00%
Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils	76.15%	12.64%	11.22%	100.00%	
<a href="https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/">explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/</a>					
<p>The evidence is based on long-term health problem or disability.</p>					
<p>For the 7 eligible councils within Northern Ireland who receive the RSG there are 3 Council areas who are within the category of “limited a lot” within long-term health problem and disability above the average percentage of 11.22%.</p>					

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information			
<b>Dependants</b>				
	Year	2021		
	<b>Sum of Count</b>	<b>Column Labels</b>		
			<b>Number of dependent children</b>	
		⊕ No dependent children [note]	⊕ (1,2,&3+)	<b>Grand Total</b>
	<b>Councils</b>			
	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	67.87%	32.13%	100.00%
	Causeway Coast and Glens	72.00%	28.00%	100.00%
	Derry City and Strabane	69.43%	30.57%	100.00%
Fermanagh and Omagh	70.39%	29.61%	100.00%	
Mid and East Antrim	72.93%	27.07%	100.00%	
Mid Ulster	65.98%	34.02%	100.00%	
Newry, Mourne and Down	67.90%	32.10%	100.00%	
<b>Northern Ireland Average 7 Councils</b>	69.37%	30.63%	100.00%	
Note:				
'No dependent children' includes				
households with no children and				
households where all children are non-				
dependent.				
<a href="https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/">explore.nisra.gov.uk/area-explorer-2021/</a>				
<p>For the 7 eligible councils within Northern Ireland who receive the RSG there are 3 Council areas with 1,2 or 3 plus dependent children above the average percentage of 30.63% of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.</p>				

**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 [LGPDfinance@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:LGPDfinance@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

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>
Religious belief	<p>The religious belief of people who live within the 7 eligible councils which make up the policy area showed a larger percentage representation of the Catholic faith than Other Religious. Those two areas represent a considerably larger percentage over no religion / non stated.</p> <p>There may be evidence of different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group.</p>
Political opinion	<p>There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group.</p>
Racial group	<p>For the 7 eligible councils within Northern Ireland who receive the RSG there are 2 Council areas with Ethnic Groups of between 3% to 4%. The average of the 7 Councils receiving the grant had an ethnic group percentage of 2.44%.</p> <p>There is little evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group.</p>
Age	<p>It appears that there are 3 Council areas within the broad age band 65+ that have a higher percentage population than the average of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.</p>

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>
	<p>There also are 3 Council areas within the broad age band 0-14 years that have a higher percentage population than the average percentage of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.</p> <p>There may be some services this may have an effect on e.g. community centres; parks, open spaces and playgrounds.</p> <p>There is little evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group, but funding in this area may also be provided from other areas within the Public Sector.</p>
Marital status	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group.
Disability	<p>It appears there are 3 Council areas who are within the category of “limited a lot” within long-term health problem and disability above the average percentage of 11.22%.</p> <p>There are some areas of services this may have an effect on, and these would appear to include aspects of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• estates management - building design and maintenance;</li> <li>• building control-inspection and regulation of new buildings;</li> </ul>

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sports, leisure services and recreational facilities;</li> <li>• community centres; and</li> <li>• public conveniences.</li> </ul> <p>There may be evidence of some different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group, but funding in this area may also be provided from other areas within the Public Sector.</p>
Dependants	<p>There are 3 Council areas with 1,2 or 3 plus dependent children above the average percentage of 30.63% of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.</p> <p>There are some areas of services this may have an effect on, and these would appear to include aspects of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parks, open spaces and playgrounds;</li> <li>• community centres; and</li> <li>• sports, leisure services and recreational facilities.</li> </ul> <p>There may be some evidence of some different needs, experiences or priorities for this Section 75 group, but funding in this area may also be provided from other areas within the Public Sector.</p>



## **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>Based on the information / evidence for the 7 eligible Councils it appears that 4 councils have a larger Catholic population. In 2 other Council areas there are larger other religious populations, and 1 other Council area where there was more or less an equal split.</p> <p>A reduction in this discretionary grant has the potential to impact on the level of some services provided by Councils and it follows this may also impact on ratepayers, though we are unable to make any specific assessment, as there are no conditions attached to the funding. Therefore, without specification for use and measure, Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities. The Council may also choose to mitigate any reduction in discretionary grant by drawing on reserves or by an increase to the District rate.</p>	Minor
Political opinion	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of	None

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
	opportunity for people within this group.	
Racial group	<p>There are 2 Council areas with Ethnic Groups of between 3% to 4%. The average of the 7 Councils receiving the grant had an ethnic group percentage of 2.44%.</p> <p>A reduction in this discretionary grant has the potential to impact on the level of some services provided by Councils and it follows this may also impact on ratepayers, though we are unable to make any specific assessment, as there are no conditions attached to the funding. Therefore, without specification for use and measure, Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities. The Council may also choose to mitigate any reduction in discretionary grant by drawing on reserves or by an increase to the District rate.</p>	Minor
Age	It appears that there are 3 Council areas within the broad age band 65+ that have a higher percentage population than the average of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.	Minor

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
	<p>There also are 3 Council areas within the broad age band 0-14 years that have a higher percentage population than the average percentage of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.</p> <p>A reduction in this discretionary grant has the potential to impact on the level of some services provided by Councils and it follows this may also impact on ratepayers, though we are unable to make any specific assessment, as there are no conditions attached to the funding. Therefore, without specification for use and measure, Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities. The Council may also choose to mitigate any reduction in discretionary grant by drawing on reserves or by an increase to the District rate.</p>	
Marital status	We do not expect there to be any adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for people within this group.	None
Sexual orientation	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
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	<p>It appears there are 3 Council areas who are within the category of “limited a lot” within long-term health problem and disability above the average percentage of 11.22%.</p> <p>A reduction in this discretionary grant has the potential to impact on the level of some services provided by Councils and it follows this may also impact on ratepayers, though we are unable to make any specific assessment, as there are no conditions attached to the funding. Therefore, without specification for use and measure, Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities. The Council may also choose to mitigate any reduction in discretionary grant by drawing on reserves or by an increase to the District rate.</p>	Minor
Dependants	There are 3 Council areas with 1,2 or 3 plus dependent children above the average percentage of 30.63% of the 7 Councils receiving the grant.	Minor

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
	<p>A reduction in this discretionary grant has the potential to impact on the level of some services provided by Councils and it follows this may also impact on ratepayers, though we are unable to make any specific assessment, as there are no conditions attached to the funding. Therefore, without specification for use and measure, Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities. The Council may also choose to mitigate any reduction in discretionary grant by drawing on reserves or by an increase to the District rate.</p>	

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

Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		<p>No - The overall discretionary budget is allocated via statutory formula which incorporates weighting for deprivation and sparsity.</p> <p>There is no opportunity to further promote equality for section 75 groups within this policy (budget allocation).</p> <p>For the opening budget funding proposed within the budget period the Department faces significant inescapable pressures.</p> <p>The only possibility of better promoting equality of opportunity is if any funding became available during a Monitoring Round within Northern Ireland, or during the current financial year.</p>
Political opinion		As above
Racial group		As above



Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Age		As above
Marital status		As above
Sexual orientation		As above
Men and women generally		As above
Disability		As above
Dependants		As above

**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	<p>We are aware that DfC provides other funding in respect of Community Relations.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that the policy will impact on good relations.</p>	None

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Political opinion	As above	None
Racial group	As above	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 <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		No – There is no opportunity to better promote good relations for these groups.
Political opinion		As above
Racial group		As above

## **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.

A reduction in this discretionary grant may impact on the level of services provided by Councils and therefore also may have an impact on ratepayers (who are people with multiple identities), though as previously stated we are unable to make any specific assessment, as there are no conditions attached to the funding, and Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities.

### **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:**

The discretionary budget allocation in respect of RSG may impact district councils' funding decisions and they are, as public authorities, responsible for assessing the impact of any decisions taken. At a departmental level it is acknowledged that a reduction in RSG funding may lead to a reduction in Council services (depending on Councils available resources). If a 3-year comprehensive budget process was in place for Northern Ireland this would greatly assist both the Department and Councils with regards to budget certainty.

The RSG policy which considers the statutory formula and how the budget is allocated remains unchanged.

**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.

The RSG policy which considers the statutory formula and how the budget is allocated remains unchanged.

Councils may be able to use other funding that they receive or generate as income for their services. Councils may also have available reserves. The Council may need to consider what district rates they strike within their District Council Area. (As previously noted, there are no conditions attached to this discretionary funding. Therefore, without specification for use and measure, Councils can choose to spend the grant on other priorities).

If any funding became available during a Monitoring Round within Northern Ireland, or during the current financial year, there may be a possibility of better promoting equality of opportunity in this area.

If a 3-year comprehensive budget process was in place for Northern Ireland this would greatly assist both the Department and Councils with regards to budget certainty.

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## **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 policy may be subject to further equality screening if the discretionary budget provision changes.

## **Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

<b>Screened by:</b>	<b>Position/Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Jeff Glass	Head of Finance	6 March 2024
<b>Approved by:</b>		
Anthony Carleton	Director	15 March 2024

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.