Screening flowchart and template (taken from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for public authorities April 2010 *(Appendix 1))*.

Introduction

Part 1. Policy scoping – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.
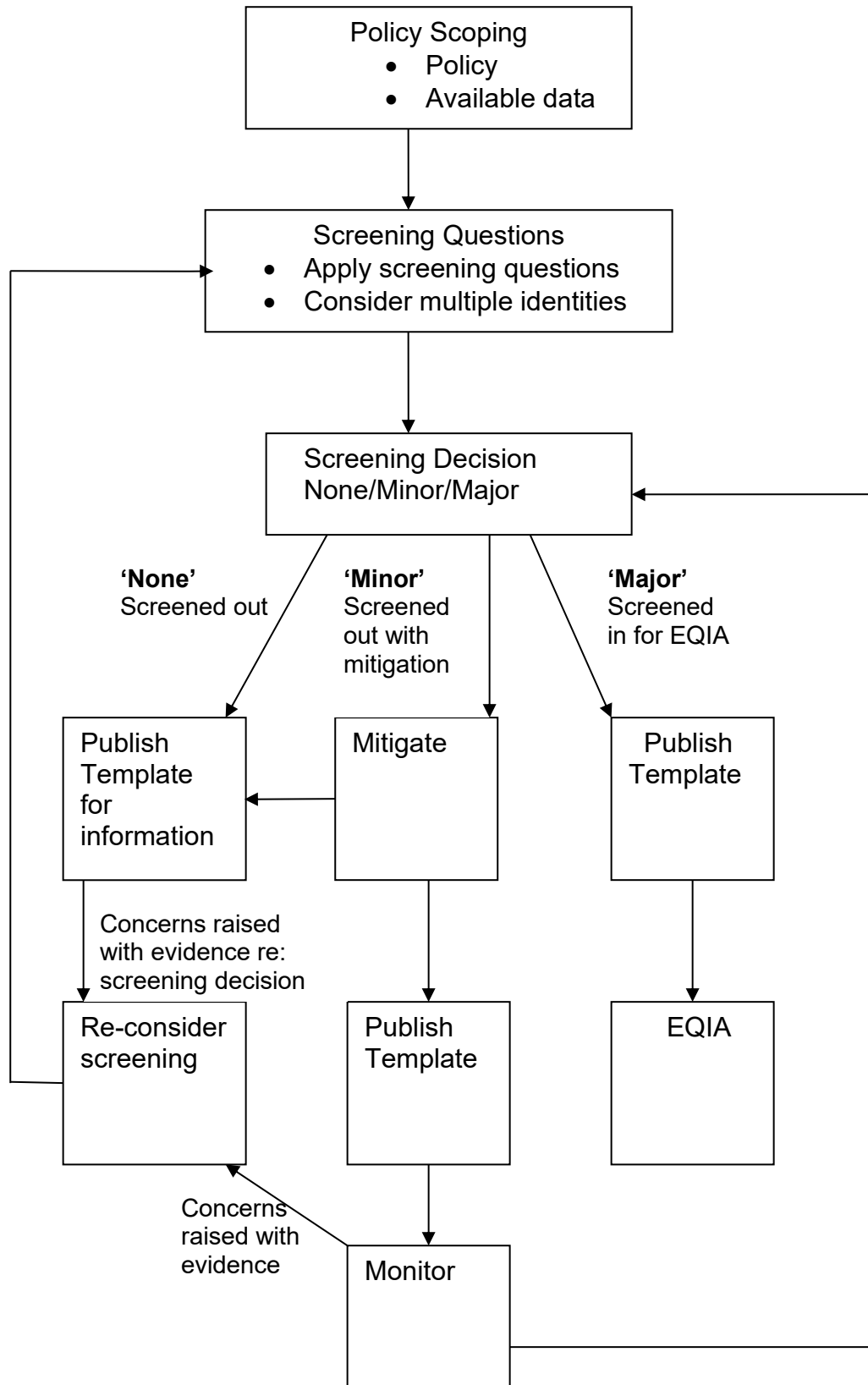
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

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

Part 4. Monitoring – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

Part 5. Approval and authorisation – verifies the public authority's approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

A screening flowchart is provided overleaf.

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Policy Scoping         │
│   • Policy                  │
│   • Available data          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Screening Questions     │
│  • Apply screening questions│
│  • Consider multiple        │
│    identities               │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Screening Decision      │
│      None/Minor/Major       │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

'None' Screened out

'Minor' Screened out with mitigation

'Major' Screened in for EQIA

```
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Publish      │ ◄─│ Mitigate │   │ Publish      │
│ Template     │   │          │   │ Template     │
│ for          │   │          │   │              │
│ information  │   │          │   │              │
└──────────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────────┘
```

Concerns raised with evidence re: screening decision

```
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Re-consider  │   │ Publish  │   │     EQIA     │
│ screening    │   │ Template │   │              │
└──────────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────────┘
```

Concerns raised with evidence

```
              ┌──────────┐
              │ Monitor  │
              └──────────┘
```

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

The Sports Councils' Recognition Policy

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revised – update of the 2017 policy.

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

This Policy sets out the purpose of Recognition, the basis upon which a Sport is recognised by the Sports Councils and the Criteria upon which the Sports Councils Recognise a National Governing Body as a leading organisation that governs and develops a Sport within the UK, GB or a Home Country.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?
If so, explain how.

This is a technical policy, limited in scope to recognition only on grounds of agreed recognition criteria. This policy will build on the establishment of a clear and consistent recognition criteria, none of which provides scope to influence impact on S75 groups.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The UK Sports Councils – Sport England, sportscotland, Sport Wales, Sport Northern Ireland and UK Sport.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The UK Sports Councils, as above.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? **No**

If yes, are they (please delete as appropriate)

financial

legislative

other, please specify _____

Main stakeholders affected

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

Staff – **Sport NI staff implement the policy in determining eligibility for funding programmes. Sport NI staff also represent Sport NI on the UK Recognition Panel, charged with directly implementing the policy in terms of assessing on Recognition applications.**

~~service users~~

Other public sector organisations – **the implementation of the UK policy is used by other public bodies in determining what is considered a 'Recognised' sport and which organisations lead on those sports' development.**

~~voluntary/community/trade unions~~

other, please specify _____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- [The Programme for Government](#) – NI Executive
- [Active Living Strategy for Sport](#) – Dept for Communities
- [Sport NI Corporate Plan](#) – Sport NI Board
- [Sport NI Equality Scheme and annual action plan](#) – Sport NI Board
- [Sport NI Equality Delivery Plan](#) – Sport NI Board

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

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

Religious belief evidence / information:

Evidence relating to religious belief is drawn from the Continuous Household Survey 2024/15, which captures data on religious identification within the population and their engagement with sport and physical activity. Source: [Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities](#).

Additionally, the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for Sport NI's Corporate Plan highlights the importance of supporting sports to develop more mixed and inclusive participant bases that are not segregated along religious lines. Source: [Equality Impact Assessment – Sport NI Corporate Plan](#)

Other evidence includes Sport and Community Relations in Northern Ireland, by John Sugden and Scott Harvie, Published by the University of Ulster, Coleraine 1995 4.125. Source: [Citations: Sport and community relations in Northern Ireland](#)

Ref 26/01 Wednesday, 10 October 2001 SECTARIANISM AND SPORT IN NORTHERN IRELAND https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/sport/docs/rlsnia101001.pdf for the NI Assembly reviewed: Bairner, A. (2000) "After the War? Soccer, Masculinity and Violence in Northern Ireland" pp176-194 in J, McKay; Michael. A. Messner & Don Sabo (eds) Masculinities, Gender Relations and Sport. California: Sage. Bairner, A. & Darby, P (2000) "Divided Sport in A Divided Society: Northern Ireland" pp51-72 in J. Sugden & A. Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. Cronin, M. (1999) Sport and Nationalism: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884. Dublin: Four Courts Press Ltd. Guelke, A. & Sugden, J. (2000) "Sport and the 'Normalising of the New South Africa" pp73-96 in J. Sugden & A. Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. Hargreaves, J (2000) "Spain Divided: The Barcelona Olympics and Catalan Nationalism" pp13-30 in J. Sugden & A. Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. Harvey, J (2000) "Sport and Quebec Nationalism: Ethnic or Civil Identity" pp31-50 in J. Sugden & . Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. McDonald, I. (2000) "Between Salem and Shiva: The Politics of Cricket Nationalism in "Globalising" India" pp213-234 in J. Sugden & A. Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. McGinley, M; Kremer, J; Trew, K & Ogle, S (1998) "Socio-cultural identity and attitudes to sport in Northern Ireland". The Irish Journal of Psychology, 1998, 19, 4, 464-471. Merkel, U. (2000) "Sport in Divided Societies – The Case of the Old, the New and the Re-united Germany" pp139-166 in J. Sugden & A. Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. Sugden, J. (1993) Sport, Sectarianism and Society in A Divided Ireland. New York: St Martin's Press Inc. Sugden, J. (1995) "Sport, Community Relations and Community Conflict in Northern Ireland, pp199-214 in Seamus Dunn (ed) Facets of the Conflict in Northern Ireland. London: McMillan Press Ltd. Sugden, J. & Harvie, S. (1995) Sport and Community Relations in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Centre for the Study of Conflict. Vanreusel, B.; Renson, R & Tollenner, J. (2000) "Divided Sports in a Divided Belgium" pp97-112 in J. Sugden & A. Bairner (eds) Sport in Divided Societies. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport Ltd. (2016) David Mitchell, Ian Somerville and Owen Hargie, Sport and Social Exclusion.

The good relations strategy 'Together: Building a United Community' was published by the Northern Ireland Executive in May 2013.

The Strategy sets out a range of actions and commitments for government departments, communities and individuals who will work together to build a united community and achieve change against four key strategic priorities:Our Children and Young People

- Our Shared Community
- Our Safe Community
- Our Cultural Expression

[Northern Ireland Good Relations Indicators 2024 Report](#)

Political Opinion evidence / information:

The EQIA for Sport NI's Corporate Plan also references research (2016) which identified the symbolic nature of sport in Northern Ireland's divided society, where some sports can reflect religious, cultural, and political allegiances. However, the same research suggested that the politicisation of sport may be gradually weakening, indicating a potential shift toward greater inclusivity across political divides. Source: [Equality Impact Assessment – Sport NI Corporate Plan](#)

The Contested Identities of Ulster Catholics pp 127-142, Sport, Politics and Catholics in Northern Ireland, David Hassan, Conor Murray

(2018) Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report, Number Five October 2018 Ann Marie Gray, Jennifer Hamilton, Gráinne Kelly, Brendan Lynn, Martin Melaugh and Gillian Robinson

https://www.acu.ac.uk/the-acu-review/sport-and-peace-in-northern-ireland/ Journal: Association of Commonwealth Universities Review Magazine.

The good relations strategy 'Together: Building a United Community' was published by the Northern Ireland Executive in May 2013. The Strategy sets out a range of actions and commitments for government departments, communities and individuals who will work together to build a united community and achieve change against four key strategic priorities:

- Our Children and Young People
- Our Shared Community
- Our Safe Community
- Our Cultural Expression

[Northern Ireland Good Relations Indicators 2024 Report](#)

Racial Group evidence / information:

This gap in data was explicitly identified through Sport NI's participation in the 2021 'Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport' collaborative study, conducted alongside the other UK Sports Councils. Source: [Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport Review 2021](#)

A key finding for Northern Ireland was that a lack of available data and insight into the racial diversity of participants in sport makes it difficult to measure progress or identify specific barriers faced by ethnically diverse communities

The study's lived experience component — #TellYourStory — further highlighted this issue, stating that:

"The final numbers provide sufficient data for the England analysis, but the in-depth one-to-one interviews conducted in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales offer only initial insights for these countries. Low engagement may also reflect weaker networks and relationships between the Sports Councils and ethnically diverse communities at local level."

Further contextual evidence can also be drawn from the Northern Ireland Assembly's paper on grassroots sport, which outlines general participation trends and potential challenges across communities.

Sources: [Grassroots Sport in NI: A Summary of Participation and Potential Challenges](#) & [Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport Review 2021](#)

Further data may be extracted from Children's Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2022([CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie](#)), the Children's Report Card 2022 ([PA-Report-card-full-report-final.pdf)](#)), the UK Coaching Survey 2025 ([Coaching in the UK | Our Research - UK Coaching](#)), Kids Life and Times and Young People Life and Times ([Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023](#) and ([Young Life and Times Survey: Sport)](#) and Outdoor Motivations for Sport 2025 and POMNI ([POMNI 2025: Who's Getting Outdoors – and Who's Missing Out? - Outscape](#)).

Age evidence / information:

The 2024/25 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides the most up-to-date data on participation in sport across different age groups in Northern Ireland. Findings are available at: [Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities](#)
In addition, the 2022 the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Survey ([CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie](#)), the 2022 Children's Report Card ([PA-Report-card-full-report-final.pdf)](#) the 2023 Kids' Life and Times Survey (focused on P7 pupils) and the Young People Life and Times Survey (focused on 16-year-olds) offer valuable insights into participation patterns and attitudes towards sport and physical activity among children and young people ([Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023](#) and ([Young Life and Times Survey: Sport)](#). These surveys highlight a clear decline in participation levels as children transition from primary to post-primary education, indicating the importance of targeted interventions to sustain participation into adolescence and adulthood.

Further data may be extracted from Children's Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2022([CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie](#)), the Children's Report Card 2022 ([PA-Report-card-full-report-final.pdf)](#)), the UK Coaching Survey 2025 ([Coaching in the UK | Our Research - UK Coaching](#)), Kids Life and Times and Young People Life and Times ([Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023](#) and ([Young Life and Times Survey: Sport)](#) and Outdoor Motivations for Sport 2025 and POMNI ([POMNI 2025: Who's Getting Outdoors – and Who's Missing Out? - Outscape](#)).

Marital Status evidence / information:

The 2024/15 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) also provides insight into sport participation rates based on marital status. This evidence helps Sport NI better understand how relationship status may influence participation. Findings can be accessed at: [Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities](#).

This evidence is supplemented by the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for Sport NI's Corporate Plan, which reviewed broader research and data on participation patterns across different Section 75 groups, including marital status.

(2006) Influence of Marital Status on Physical Activity Levels among Older Adults PETTEE, KELLEY; BRACH, JENNIFER; KRISKA, ANDREA; BOUDREAU, ROBERT; RICHARDSON, CAROLINE; COLBERT, LISA; SATTERFIELD, SUZANNE; VISSER, MARJOLEI; HARRIS, TAMARA; AYONAYON, HILSA; NEWMAN, ANNE.

(2011) Family structure, time constraints, and sport participation, Jane E. Ruseski, Brad R. Humphreys, Kirstin Hallmann & Christoph Breuer, European Review of Aging and Physical Activity

(2006) Does marital status and marital status change predict physical health in older adults? K Bennett, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

Marital status effects on health: are there differences between never married women and divorced and separated women? I Waldron , C C Weiss, M E Hughes

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

Currently, Sport NI does not hold robust quantitative data on sport participation rates disaggregated by sexual orientation, largely due to the absence of this data in standard population-level surveys. However, evidence gathered through extensive consultation for the Corporate Plan highlighted a number of barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ people in sport. These insights are captured within the Corporate Plan's Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and demonstrate the ongoing cultural and structural barriers impacting LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport.

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

The 2024/25 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides gender-disaggregated data on sport participation, enabling Sport NI to track differences in participation rates between men and women. The data is available at: [Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities](#)

In addition to participation rates, consultation evidence from the development of the Corporate Plan highlighted gender-specific barriers to participation.

Further data may be extracted from Children's Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2022([CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie](#)), the Children's Report Card 2022 ([PA-Report-card-full-report-final.pdf)](#)), the UK Coaching Survey 2025 ([Coaching in the UK | Our Research - UK Coaching](#)), Kids Life and Times and Young People Life and Times ([Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023](#) and ([Young Life and Times

Survey: Sport) and Outdoor Motivations for Sport 2025 and POMNI (POMNI 2025: Who's Getting Outdoors – and Who's Missing Out? - Outscape).

Disability evidence / information:

The 2024/25 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) also captures participation rates for disabled and non-disabled people, providing a key evidence base for understanding disparities in participation. This data can be accessed at:Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities.

Further data may be extracted from Children's Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2022(CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie), the Children's Report Card 2022 (PA-Report-card-full-report-final.pdf)), the UK Coaching Survey 2025 (Coaching in the UK | Our Research - UK Coaching), Kids Life and Times and Young People Life and Times (Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023 and (Young Life and Times Survey: Sport) and Outdoor Motivations for Sport 2025 and POMNI (POMNI 2025: Who's Getting Outdoors – and Who's Missing Out? - Outscape).

Alongside this quantitative data, Sport NI continues to engage closely with Disability Sport NI, gathering practical insights into the lived experiences of disabled athletes, participants, coaches, and volunteers. This qualitative evidence helps contextualise participation data and highlights barriers.

Dependants evidence / information:

The 2024/25 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides further evidence on participation in sport among individuals with caring responsibilities. This data helps identify the impact of dependants on levels of participation, particularly for parents of young children, lone parents, and carers of disabled or older relatives. Data is available at: Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities

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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 <u>details</u> of the <u>needs, experiences and priorities</u> for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious belief

The 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides the most recent data on participation in sport across different religious backgrounds in Northern Ireland. According to the survey:

- 46% of people identifying as Catholic participated in sport at least once in the previous seven days.
- 47% of people identifying as Protestant participated in sport at least once in the previous seven days.
- 56% of people identifying as 'Other' or having no religion participated in sport at least once in the previous seven days.

    Source: [Experience of Sport by Adults in Northern Ireland 2023/24](#)

A wealth of distinguished research exists regarding the issue of sectarianism and sport in Northern Ireland. The majority of this research concentrates upon how sport in Northern Ireland is used as an expression of cultural identity and emphasises in particular how sectarianism impacts upon two of Northern Ireland's largest sporting bodies, that is, the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) and the Irish Football Association (IFA).

Below is a brief review of some of the current research into sectarianism and sport in Northern Ireland: McGinley et al (1998) "Socio-cultural identity and attitudes to sport in Northern Ireland".

The Irish Journal of Psychology, 1998, 19, 4, 464-471. This is a survey of 1007 adults in Northern Ireland which aimed to provide a broad view of popular opinion regarding sport and cultural identity. The survey results highlighted that religious belief and community affiliations effected decisions in relation to all aspects of sporting life in Northern Ireland. For example: in relation to sports funding, 73% of respondents were not opposed to funding sports facilities on an "all-Ireland" basis, however, Protestants were three times more likely than Catholics to state that the UK National Lottery Funds should not be invested in all-island facilities; in regards to which sporting events were important to them, Catholics were more likely to state Gaelic football or hurling finals, Protestants were more likely to choose sporting events such as the Rugby World Cup, the World Snooker Championships or Wimbledon. Protestants were more likely to support competitors and teams from Great Britain, Catholics were more likely to support competitors and teams from the Republic of Ireland. The survey highlighted that the types of sports people participate in and the teams they support usually reflect their community background and perceived political and cultural allegiances. For example, Catholics are more likely to participate in sports which celebrate the Irish tradition (Gaelic football, hurling) whilst Protestants are more likely to engage in sports which celebrate the British tradition (hockey, cricket,

rugby etc). When asked to identify the ways in which sport has been effected by the troubles, 46% of respondents stated spectator violence and 36% stated that the troubles had effected travel to venues. 25% of respondents believed that soccer was influential in building bridges across the divide. Sport perceived as reinforcing divisions included Gaelic football (27% of respondents), hurling (15%) and soccer (14%).

Alan Bairner (2000) "After the War? Soccer, Masculinity and Violence in Northern Ireland" pp176-194 in J. McKay; Michael. A. Messner & Don Sabo (eds). Masculinities, Gender Relations and Sport. California: Sage. Bairner (2000) explores the relationship between working class loyalist males and football in Northern Ireland. He argues, that instead of displacing aggression, spectator sports such as football can feed hegemonic masculinity which in turn can lead to patterned male violence in Northern Ireland (Bairner, 2000:176). Football is dominated by the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. Catholic involvement in top-level soccer has declined, a factor in this being the withdrawal from the Irish League of clubs with a large Catholic following such as Belfast Celtic (1949) and Derry City (1971). However, Catholic support of Irish League has also declined because they often feel intimidated while attending matches because of loyalist chants and the display of support for loyalist paramilitaries (Bairner, 2000:182). Football spectatorship is a means by which working class loyalist males can assert their hegemony. Bairner (2000:191) suggests that the increase in sectarian tension at football games could be associated with a "crisis" of masculinity within working class Protestant areas because of the peace process. That is, many loyalists may feel that their identity is being undermined and are using football spectatorship as a means of reasserting both their masculine and community identity. John Sugden (1995) "Sport, Community Relations and Community Conflict in Northern Ireland" pp199-214 in Seamus Dunn (ed) Facets of the Conflict in Northern Ireland. London: McMillan Press Ltd. Sugden (1995) examines, amongst other things, the role of the school's sports curriculum in perpetuating community conflict. He argues that the games curriculum in schools in Northern Ireland is highly dependent upon whether the school is Catholic or Protestant. For example, Gaelic Games predominate in Catholic schools whilst rugby, cricket and hockey are predominantly played in Protestant schools. This ensures that there is very little cross community contact between schools regarding sport. When schools do participate in a common game such as football, Protestant and Catholic children rarely play in the same team, it is more common for them to play against each other which can lead to conflict both on and off the pitch. McLaughlin (1993) argues that whilst there have been several cross-community sports programmes in schools, many of these are simply 'one-off' events and that there still exists considerable resistance to any long-term alteration of the school games curriculum to meet the objectives of community relations (Sugden, 1995:201). Within this chapter Sugden (1995:202-212) also conducts a comprehensive examination of the historical development of the GAA, rugby union, boxing and association football and explores the role that these sports play regarding community relations and community conflict. John Sugden & Scott Harvie (1995) Sport and Community Conflict in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Centre for the Study of Conflict. This study examined the views of 16 sport's governing bodies in Northern Ireland examining how their structure, their attitudes to the use of flags, emblems and anthems, their opinion on how the conflict has affected their sports and their attitude to community relations programmes. Surprisingly the study highlighted that very few sports' governing bodies, particularly those which are dominated by one section of the community (e.g. rugby, GAA), admitted that community divisions impacted upon recruitment to their sport. Sugden & Harvie (1995:48) advocate that there may be a reluctance amongst sport governing bodies, particularly those dominated by one religion or the other, to admit that community divisions have affected recruitment to their sport for fear that this admission would be interpreted as an admission that their sport was in some way sectarian. The survey also highlighted that sport's governing bodies tended to exaggerate the extent of contact between Catholics and Protestants in their sports, perhaps because they were eager to reinforce the image of their sport as anti-sectarian (Sugden & Harvie, 1995:59). The report noted that only three sports out of the sixteen examined had undertaken formal cross-community initiatives - basketball, Providing research and information services to the Northern Ireland Assembly 2 Northern Ireland Assembly, Research and Library Service rugby, GAA. However, these initiatives were mostly directed at children, there were no formal efforts

to increase cross-community contact in sport amongst adults. (Sugden & Harvie, 1995:69). Evidence from the survey suggests that most sports governing bodies do not include and have no desire to include community relations themes in their constitution or coaching programmes. Sugden and Harvie believe that "at present, community relations themes appear to hold negative associations for a number of sports, related to fears that since their activity may be played largely by one community they may be identified as in some way sectarian or bigoted. This suggests that any effort to introduce community relations into their activity would be met with hostility." Mike Cronin (1999) Sport and Nationalism: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884. Dublin: Four Courts Press. Cronin (1999) examines the role of Gaelic sports in Irish nationalism and explores the origins and historical development of soccer and Gaelic games in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In addition to this, Cronin also investigates the role of Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) in the Nationalist/Catholic community and examines the controversial Rule 21 which prohibits the security forces from membership of the GAA.

Evidence gathered within the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for Sport NI's Corporate Plan 2021-26 references a 2016 study (Mitchell, Somerville & Hargie) on Sport and Social Exclusion. This research found: Strong public support (86%) for the principle of sport as a peacebuilding tool in Northern Ireland. Both Protestant and Catholic communities expressed a desire for sports to become more mixed in terms of participation and support bases. Source: [Sport NI Corporate Plan EQIA](#)

Through Sport NI's extensive public consultation for the 2021-2026 Corporate Plan, further religious and cultural considerations were identified, namely religious and cultural practices impact participation, particularly for some women and girls from specific faith backgrounds. Issues raised included the need for: female-only sessions; private changing facilities for those unable to use communal spaces; the need for dedicated development officers to support participation within culturally diverse communities, helping sustain engagement and facilitate progression within sport.

The Department for Communities (DfC) screening of the Active Living Strategy reinforces these priorities, highlighting: facility access at times that respect religious observances and programming of gender-specific sessions to align with religious and cultural requirements.

Political Opinion

The EQIA for Sport NI's Corporate Plan references evidence (Mitchell, Somerville & Hargie, 2016) that highlights the historical politicisation of sport in Northern Ireland, where certain sports became associated with political, religious and cultural identities. However, this research also found emerging evidence that the politicisation of sport may be gradually weakening, with some sports becoming more cross-community in character. Source: Sport NI Corporate Plan EQIA.

Through consultation on Sport NI's Corporate Plan (2021-2026) and the Department for Communities' Active Living Strategy, the following needs and experiences were identified for people of differing political opinions: Neutral and accessible facilities: Facilities should be seen as welcoming to all and free from political or sectarian symbolism that could discourage participation. Safe and inclusive environments: Participants highlighted the importance of feeling safe and secure when using facilities, venues, and open spaces. Avoidance of territorial markings: Facilities should be free from flags, emblems, murals, or other territorial markers that could alienate potential users.

Racial Group

Sport NI, alongside the other Home Country Sports Councils, commissioned an extensive quantitative and qualitative research programme to better understand racial inequalities and racism in sport across the UK. This resulted in two key reports: "Tell Your Story" (2021) – capturing the lived experiences of people from ethnically diverse communities within sport, highlighting racism, microaggressions and structural inequalities. "Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport" (TRARIIS) – bringing together existing data to map inequalities in participation, representation, and experience within sport and physical activity. Sources: Tell Your Story, Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport, 5 Common Themes for Action. The following needs and experiences were identified:

- People from ethnically diverse backgrounds consistently report lower participation rates in sport and physical activity compared to White British/White Irish populations.
- Structural and cultural barriers, including language barriers, lack of visible role models, experiences of overt racism and microaggressions, contribute to lower engagement.
- Inequalities exist across all levels of sport – from grassroots participation through to elite performance and leadership roles.
- The research identified five common themes for action, which guide Sport NI's approach:
  - Representation and Leadership
  - Embedding Anti-Racism
  - Education and Cultural Awareness
  - Data and Insight
  - Systems and Accountability

The five common themes for action that may be embedded into this programme include:

- Our internal structures and systems:
  (a) We will look at our overall grant, investment and supply-chain arrangements, to ensure fairness, creativity and representation are at the heart of the way funding and contracts are awarded.
  (b) Through our respective frameworks and strategies, we will look at how we can ensure that we and our funded organisations have or are putting in place policies and procedures that support inclusion, in areas such as;
  (c) Challenging racism and racist behaviour within our respective areas of responsibility
  (d) Reviewing recruitment practices as well as the design of guidelines, programmes and interventions to help engage and attract more diverse people.
  (e) Supporting ongoing training and education to understand racism and the impact it has on individuals and our sector.
  (f) Engaging with relevant support networks and partners to challenge racism and championing anti-racist behaviours and practices.
- Improving representation:
  (a) Under-representation of diverse ethnic communities within sporting structures is a recurrent theme within the research. We want to see increased representation at all levels of sport, whether that's in participation, administration, volunteering or recruitment. We will therefore place greater emphasis on understanding the negative impact of racial inequalities in sport and how better representation can help create an inclusive and more diverse environment, reflective of UK society. We will work to embed the connection between improved representation and better strategic and operational decision making. We will work with partner organisations to share good practice, paying particular attention to actions aligned to longer term equality, diversity and inclusion planning and implementation. We will be clear where we want our partners to do more, work with allies to create an environment that offers positive experiences, tackles discrimination and empowers individuals to reach their full potential.
- People – our workforce: The research has identified issues which contribute to racial inequalities in the paid and voluntary workforce. It has also pointed to the need to improve practices such

as the gathering and analysis of workforce data to inform action plans and determine measurable outcomes. We will therefore work to improve how and where data is collected across our workforce so that we can have a much clearer picture of the inequalities that have been identified through this review. We will take a proactive approach to identifying the existing systems and structures currently acting as barriers for people from ethnically diverse communities and it will be our priority to make improvements to processes in workforce recruitment, development and retention. This will include embedding the approaches which mean we can begin to address this area from the perspective of individuals, groups, leadership and broader society.

- Insight: The research has given us rich insight that should challenge us to rethink how we approach the delivery of sport. It has also highlighted that we need more and better information about diverse ethnic communities in sport if we are to be truly effective in understanding and tackling racial inequalities. This includes further analysis of high-quality data sources that are yet to be fully investigated; exploring means of achieving greater granularity of data between and within different ethnic groups; developing further insights about the interplay of race, socioeconomic status and deprivation; and furthering our understanding of the lived experiences of ethnically diverse groups. As a group of Sports Councils, we will look to be more systematic in the way we collate data; in the research we commission around inequality and inclusion; and in measuring and tracking the progress we are able to make. We will proactively engage and share reports with key partners, supporting them with digesting, understanding and reflecting on the findings with a view to challenging what this means for their own ways of operating. 5. Investment What we invest in and how we invest are key factors in how we reach communities and drive change in engaging positively with sport and physical activity. We acknowledge that more should and will be done to get investment to where it is needed by working with new and existing partners as part of our wider priorities to tackle inequalities of which racial inequality is part. We will work with communities to understand their needs and target investments to help address these needs. Where relevant, we will continue to invest in targeted programmes that reach ethnically diverse communities and continually measure the impact of our investments to ensure that it brings about the necessary change we want to see.

Through consultation on Sport NI's Corporate Plan 2021-2026 ('The Power of Sport'), alongside the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Plan, the needs, experiences and priorities of ethnically diverse communities were explored in greater detail. Key messages from consultation included:

- *Inclusive Culture:* Participants highlighted the need for a genuinely open, welcoming and inclusive sporting culture that actively promotes wellbeing and inclusion, rather than simply expecting participation.
- *Cultural and Language Barriers:* Stakeholders proposed practical tools to overcome cultural and language barriers, including:
  - o A multi-language app to support signposting, tailored to different confidence levels, sports and local club options.
  - o Welcome videos from relatable participants to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions around sport being elite-focused.
- *Tackling Racism and Bias:* Participants reported both blatant racism and subtle microaggressions in sporting environments. This aligns with the findings of the TRARIIS research and further emphasises the need for:
  - o Anti-racism training for clubs, officials and coaches.
  - o Stronger policies and enforcement mechanisms to challenge discrimination when it occurs.
- *Targeted Development and Pathways:* Feedback highlighted the need for culturally diverse development officers, who can act as bridges between communities and the sporting system, helping build trust and sustained engagement.

- Affordability and Accessibility: Cost was consistently raised as a barrier to participation. This includes not only membership fees, but also kit, equipment and transport costs. Clubs and governing bodies were encouraged to explore more flexible pricing structures and targeted outreach programmes to remove these barriers.
- *Pathways to Leadership and Representation:* Feedback highlighted the lack of ethnically diverse representation within coaching, officiating and governance roles. Clear pathways to leadership were seen as essential, alongside targeted mentoring and outreach.
- *'Who You Know' Culture:* A strong theme across consultations was frustration at the informal networks that often shape access to development and leadership opportunities within Northern Ireland sport. More transparent recruitment and targeted outreach to ethnically diverse communities were identified as a critical priority.

The Sport NI EQIA also referenced the Sport England "Sport for All" study (2020), which provides further evidence that:

- Different ethnic communities have diverse needs and preferences, which should inform programme design.
- People's experiences are shaped by multiple factors, including age, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation — meaning solutions must account for these intersecting identities.
- Systemic change requires collective action across the whole sporting system, not just at club or governing body level.

Source: Sport for All: Why Ethnicity and Culture Matters

Age

NISRA predictions based on census data (Appendix B) informs us that we will have an increasingly aging population with estimated increases in young immigrants, and people with disabilities.

NISRA Summary:

- The NI population is estimated to be 1,949,269 by 1st July 2025.
- Census 2021 population is recorded at 1,903,175 people, which was increased from 1,810,863 people in 2011.
- The number of people aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000, to nearly one-third of a million people in Census 2021; a near 25% increase on 2011.
- The ageing of the population can also be seen in the median age of the population (the age at which half the population are above or below), which over the last decade has increased by two years from 37 in 2011 to 39 in 2021.
- 3.4% of the population, or 65,600 people, belonged to minority ethnic groups. Within this classification, the largest groups were Mixed Ethnicities (14,400), Black (11,000), Indian (9,900), Chinese (9,500), and Filipino (4,500) residents. This is around double the 2011 figure (1.8% – 32,400 people) and four times the 2001 figure (0.8% – 14,300 people). This increasing diversity is evident to a greater or lesser degree across all 11 Local Government Districts. The most diverse Local Government Districts are Belfast (7.1% of the population with a minority ethnic group), Mid Ulster (4.0%) and Lisburn and Castlereagh (3.9%).
- The School Census showed there are nearly 21,000 'newcomer' pupils, compared with 8,700 in 2011. In some primary schools, the proportion of such pupils exceeds 50 per cent of the total school population.
- Net migration is projected to cause a population increase of 53,800 while natural change is projected to cause a population decrease of 32,400 people between mid-2022 and mid-2047.

- There are 463,500 projected births and 495,900 projected deaths over the period. While birth rates continue to fall, death rates are rising sharply, and by 2035, the number of deaths is expected to exceed the number of births.
- With an ageing population, and a growing shortage of young people moving into the labour market, a regular flow of young international migrants will be essential to maintain public services and the economy.
- The proportion of disabled people is likely to increase with an ageing population and if the increase in obesity and related health issues is not corrected, this will increase further, with mobility impairment representing over half of the reported disabilities.

This programme must therefore consider the increasing older population, disabled people and culturally diverse groups in terms of representation and inclusion.

The 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides the most up-to-date data on participation in sport across different age groups in Northern Ireland. Findings are available at:
[Experience of Sport by Adults in Northern Ireland 2023/24](#).

In 2023/24, just over half of all adults (51%) had participated in sport within the last year, an increase on the 2022/23 figure of 48%. More than three-quarters (77%) of adults had participated in sport or physical activity (i.e. participa ted in sport or walked for recreation) in the last year, with 74% doing so in the previous 4 weeks. seven in every ten adults who had participated in sport cited "improved physical health" (73%), "keep fit" (72%) and "improved mental health" (68%) as benefits of participating. Just over a quarter of adults (27%) were a member of a sports club or organisation within the previous year, this is the highest proportion recorded across the trend period.

More detailed analysis of sport participation in the last year by age group shows no difference between adults aged 16-24 years (72%) and adults aged 25-34 years (67%). The participation rate decreased for those aged 35-44 years (59%) and was similar for those aged 45-54 years (55%). The participation rate then decreased with each subsequent age group to 26% of those aged 65 and over.

Similarly, when looking at participation rates over the last 4 weeks, two-thirds of adults aged 16-24 (66%) had taken part in sport compared to just over a fifth of adults aged 65 and over (22%).

Adults aged 16-44 years were more likely to have participated in 9 out of the 12 sports listed compared to those aged 45 and over in the last year. The sports were there was no significant difference in participation between the age groups include "Golf or pitch and putt", "Bowls or tenpin bowling" and "Angling or fishing".

When looking at participation in sport over the last 4 weeks, the results were similar. However, a higher proportion of adults aged 45 and over had participated in "Golf or pitch and putt" or "Bowls or tenpin bowling" in the last 4 weeks compared to those aged under 45.

Generally speaking participation in sport decreases with age. This is especially true beyond the 45-54 age group with lower proportions from successive age groups participating in sport within the previous year. Over the trend period adults aged 16-24 years have consistently been the most likely to participate in sport while those aged 65 years and over have been the least likely to participate in sport.

Disability and age are closely related. On balance, the older we become the more likely we are to have a disability. Results have also shown that age and sport participation are negatively correlated, as we get older, the less likely we are to participate in sport.

Considering age and disability, analysis was conducted on broad age groups under 50 years and 50 years and over. The results show that both younger and older adults who have a disability were less likely to participate in sport within the previous year than those who do not have a disability. This suggests that irrespective of age, disability negatively affects the likelihood of adults participating in sport.

When participation rates over the last four weeks were considered, the results were similar. Adults in Northern Ireland were asked how many days per week do they normally take part in sport or physical activity (i.e. participated in sport or walked for recreation). Whilst over three-quarters of all adults (77%) had participated in sport or physical activity at least once within the previous year, 48% normally participated in sport or physical activity at least one day per week, with just over a fifth (22%) normally participating on 4 or more days per week.

When looking at adults who participated in sport or physical activity at least one day per week, the proportion was lower for women, older adults, adults with a disability and adults living in the most deprived areas.

In addition, the 2022 the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Survey (CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie), the 2022 Children's Report Card (PA-Report-card-full-report-final.pdf) the 2023 Kids' Life and Times Survey (focused on P7 pupils) and the Young People Life and Times Survey (focused on 16-year-olds) offer valuable insights into participation patterns and attitudes towards sport and physical activity among children and young people (Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023 and Young Life and Times Survey: Sport). These surveys highlight a clear decline in participation levels as children transition from primary to post-primary education, indicating the importance of targeted interventions to sustain participation into adolescence and adulthood.

CSPPA 2022 found:
- Seventeen percent (17%) of students in Northern Ireland report participating in at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity a day (21% primary and 16% post-primary students). These proportions are higher than in 2018, when 13% reported being active daily (20% primary and 11% post-primary students).
- Forty-four percent (44%) of primary and 42% of post-primary school students report meeting the muscle strengthening guidelines. This was measured for the first time in 2022.
- Seventy-three percent (73%) of primary and 71% of post-primary school students reported participating in community sport at least once a week, compared to 65% and 49% respectively in 2018. The proportion of post-primary school students who reported never participating in community sport decreased from 47% in 2018 to 16% in 2022.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of primary and 76% of post-primary school students reported participating in school sport at least once a week. This represented an increase at both primary (65%) and post-primary school (58%) levels since 2018.
- Eight percent (8%) of primary and 20% of post-primary school students reported meeting the Physical Education guidelines of at least 120 minutes/week. In 2018, 40% of postprimary students reported meeting the guidelines and this was not reported for primary school students.
- Forty percent (40%) of primary and 18% of post-primary school students reported active travel to or from school. This represents an increase at primary school level (36%) and the proportions remain unchanged for post-primary school students since 2018

The consultation on the Sport NI Corporate Plan with older people found:

- They want more adapted sports like walking football, table tennis and bowls.
- Transport, costs and lack of local facilities are big barriers, especially in rural areas.
- Better communication and promotion of activities is needed.

- Feeling self-conscious about going to classes alone puts people off.
- Health concerns, lack of changing facilities and digital barriers (for online classes) also affect participation.
- There is strong support for fun, social and non-competitive activities.
- Linking with initiatives like Age Friendly programmes and ensuring sports facilities meet accessibility standards was highlighted.

What children and young people told us:

- There is strong demand for better quality PE in schools, with more focus on skill development and physical literacy, not just competition.
- Early focus on competitive sports leaves many children feeling excluded.
- School-to-club pathways need to improve to help children stay involved.
- After-school activities are often unaffordable for low-income families.
- Young people want a wider range of sports and more adventure-style activities, especially in rural areas.
- Transport, self-confidence, and stereotypes around which sports are for boys or girls are barriers.
- 17/18-year-olds feel there are fewer suitable activities for them locally.

What parents, early years staff and community workers told us:

- Early years play and fundamental movement skills are crucial but often overlooked.
- Many parents lack the knowledge or confidence to encourage physical activity at home.
- Financial pressures, lack of local support, and digital exclusion all affect family participation.
- Outdoor play and using natural environments should be encouraged, but weather is often seen as a barrier.
- Costs of clothing, equipment and club fees can exclude families.
- There's a need for better partnerships between clubs, schools and local community groups to offer low-cost options.
- Messaging should focus on fun, health and wellbeing rather than competition.

Marital status

The 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey, [Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland](#) indicates:

- 51% of married people had participated in sport within the previous 7 days.
- 54% of single people had participated in sport within the previous 7 days.

The Department for Communities' screening assessment on the Active Living Strategy highlights several factors affecting participation across different marital status groups:

- Access to facilities at times that fit around family and work commitments.
- Encouraging parental involvement in children's sports and physical activity.
- Childcare issues are a significant barrier for many parents, particularly those in dual-working households.
- Cost is a limiting factor, particularly for those on lower incomes.

Sexual orientation

Currently, Sport NI does not hold robust quantitative data on sport participation rates disaggregated by sexual orientation, largely due to the absence of this data in standard population-level surveys. The following sources were also reviewed: Sources: (2016) Outstanding in your field: Exploring the needs of LGB&T people in rural Northern Ireland, Rainbow Project. (2015) Through Our Eyes: Housing and homelessness experiences of LGBT people in Northern Ireland, Rainbow Project & Council for the Homeless NI. (2013) Through Our Minds: Emotional health and wellbeing of LGBT people in Northern Ireland, Malachai O'Hara. (2012) Multiple Identity; Multiple Exclusions and Human Rights, Disability Action & Rainbow Project. (2012) All Partied Out: Substance use in Northern Ireland's LGBT community, Eoin Rooney. (2011) Making this Home my Home: Inclusive nursing/residential care for older LGBT people, AgeNI & Rainbow Project. (2011) Left Out of the Equation: Experiences of LGB young people at school, Gavin Boyd. (2011) Through Our Eyes: Experiences of LGB people in the workplace, Matthew McDermott. (2009) Through Our Eyes: Perceptions and experiences of LGB people towards homophobic hate crime and policing, John O'Doherty.

However, evidence gathered through extensive consultation for the Corporate Plan highlighted several barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ people in sport, including: The invisibility of LGBTQIA+ identities within many sporting environments. The absence of visible role models and a reluctance among athletes to come out. Homophobic microaggressions and unreported hate incidents creating hostile environments in some sports settings. Specific challenges faced by single-identity LGBTQIA+ teams, particularly around sustainability and broader acceptance.

Findings from the Department for Communities Active Living Strategy screening assessment (through pre-consultation focus groups) further illustrate the barriers faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in sport:

- The need for exclusive access sessions for LGBTQ+ participants and appropriate changing facilities.
- A lack of understanding and awareness of LGBTQ+ needs within the sport sector.
- LGBTQ+ participants often feel they need to belong to be motivated to join groups — many feel isolated because of their sexual orientation.
- Fears of judgement at facilities such as gyms.
- Transphobic abuse experienced during outdoor exercise, with some feeling safer walking in different areas.
- Transgender inclusion is a cross-sport issue, requiring sector-wide consideration.
- Separate sessions with dedicated changing facilities for trans participants were requested.

The public consultation on Sport NI's Corporate Plan 2021-2026 reinforced these insights:

- Marginalised and under-represented groups consistently emphasised the need for an open, welcoming, inclusive sporting culture, one that promotes wellbeing.
- Many felt this welcoming culture does not currently exist across the sporting landscape.
- Specific solutions proposed by focus groups (including the Celebrating Diversity Panel, Young Persons Panel, and Women's Panel) will be integrated into future plans.
- Organisations such as Stonewall, Rainbow Project, and Sporting Mermaids supported the idea of clubs actively indicating their LGBTQ+ inclusivity via this app.
- LGBTQ+ groups (along with others) reported a significant lack of signposting to development opportunities — reinforcing Northern Ireland's perceived 'who you know' culture. Outreach via non-traditional channels was suggested to better engage underrepresented communities.
- Racist and homophobic aggressions in sport — both blatant and subtle microaggressions.
- Outing of young people/athletes transitioning.

Wheelchair athletes being deemed health and safety risks in some school settings.

Men and Women Generally

The **2023/24 Continuous Household Survey** indicated women (44%) were less likely to have taken part in sport at least once within the last year than men (58%). Similarly, when looking at participation rates over the previous four weeks, just under two-fifths of women (38%) stated that they had taken part in sport compared to just over half of all men (51%). Furthermore, men were more likely to be a member of a sports club than women (35% and 18% respectively). There were differences in the types of sports men and women participated in within the last year. Compared with women, a higher proportion of men participated in 8 of the 12 sports listed in the survey. Sports with the most notable differences include 'Football', 'Cycling for recreation', 'Golf or pitch and putt' and 'Jogging/running'.

Women were more likely than men to have participated in two of the 12 sports listed. These were 'Keep fit/aerobics/yoga/dance exercise/weight training' and 'Swimming or diving'.

There were no differences between men and women for 'Bowls, indoor or outdoor' and 'Racket sports (tennis, badminton, squash)'.

Throughout the entire trend period a higher proportion of men participated in sport than women year on year. The same trend is seen when looking at sport participation over the last 4 weeks.

CSPPA 2022 identified that the proportion of students taking part in 60 minutes of daily aerobic physical activity by gender. For both primary and post-primary level, a greater percentage of boys participated in 60 minutes of physical activity daily compared to girls. Reported daily physical activity levels for primary school girls decreased from 19% in 2018 to 16% in 2022. Levels of physical activity were higher for boys at both school levels and for girls at post-primary level in 2022 compared to 2018. The greatest difference was in post-primary boys which increased from 14% to 22%.

At primary school level, self-reported physical activity levels only differed by gender, with boys the most physically active. At post-primary level, self-reported daily physical activity levels differed significantly by gender, school location, disability status, socio-economic status, percentage of free school meals and age group.

At both primary and post-primary level, there was a significant difference in meeting the muscle strengthening guidelines by gender, with a greater percentage of boys meeting the guidelines. Over half of boys in primary and post-primary school meet the guidelines.

There was no significant difference in community sport participation by gender at primary school level. At post-primary level, a significantly higher percentage of boys (73%) reported participating in community sports at least once a week than girls (70%) or students who identify as other (50%). ([CSPPA 2022 Report – CSPPA.ie](#))

Sport NI's **2019 Club Survey** highlighted ongoing gender disparities in club membership:

- 65% male, 35% female membership split.
- Female representation was particularly low among ages 19-49, with 71% male and only 29% female.
- Among club coaches, 69% were male and 31% female. This disparity worsened with age, as women aged 31-49 accounted for just 11% of all coaches.

Sport NI's **Women and Girls in Sport** research (November 2022) identified these key challenges for females:

- Lower participation rates, declining further with age, social class, and disability.
- Preference for recreational activities over competitive sport.
- Reduced visits to outdoor spaces (2020/21).
- Under-representation in club participation, coaching, performance, and leadership roles.
- Declining enjoyment and participation at post-primary school level.

Women's focus groups identified the need for gender-specific approaches to participation:

- Inactive girls are more influenced by friends and social media; therefore, initial activities must align with their existing social habits.
- Lack of confidence and competence (physical literacy) was a barrier, with issues stemming from both school PE and traditional club environments.
- Women preferred flexible, family-friendly club offerings rather than rigid competitive structures.
- Greater visibility of relatable female role models, particularly on social media, is needed.
- Short-term funded projects were deemed ineffective in driving sustained change.
- Lack of female role models in performance and coaching roles.
- Need for empathetic coaching, life skills training, and post-athlete career support.
- Low media coverage of female athletes reduces visibility and aspiration.
- Recognise women's different learning styles.
- Embed empathetic, athlete-centred coaching approaches.
- Improve safeguarding and wellbeing provisions, particularly in female sports.
- Remove barriers to female coaching and volunteering, such as rigid qualification processes and time commitments.

The **Department for Communities' screening assessment** of the **Active Living Strategy** identified specific needs for men and women as: safe, affordable, welcoming facilities; wide range of sports and opening hours; clear coaching pathways and opportunities for progression; and innovative use of technology to support engagement. Pertaining to women and then to men, the following needs were identified:

Women:
- Increased visibility of female role models.
- Challenge unconscious bias in clubs to ensure equal opportunities.
- Targeted recruitment and training of female coaches.
- Address transport barriers and rural access issues.
- Improved promotion and advertising of available opportunities.
- Build confidence and self-esteem, especially in gym and changing environments.
- Encourage buddy systems for new participants.
- Address family/work/time commitments.
- Combat societal attitudes towards women in sport.
- Provide women-only swimming/exercise classes.
- Use local, community-based venues rather than large leisure centres.
- Align exercise opportunities with children's activities so parents can participate too.
- Encourage GPs to prescribe physical activity.
- Offer non-competitive, social or fun-based activities.
- Empower women to prioritise their health without guilt.
- Emphasise lifelong participation over competitive success at school level.
- Maximise use of local outdoor spaces and school facilities.
- Expand successful community initiatives such as Couch to 5K and parkrun.
- Develop tailored classes for women with limited mobility.

Men:

- Recognition that not all men are active and some face significant barriers.
- Stronger link between physical activity and health prevention.
- Specific focus on men transitioning into retirement to avoid isolation.
- Address lack of confidence and motivation.
- Use sport as a vehicle for tackling social isolation and mental health.
- Rebrand sport-based interventions as "activities" to reduce intimidation.
- Improve rural facilities (walking paths, lighting).
- Address facility availability and access in disadvantaged areas.
- Improve access to GP referral schemes at affordable rates.
- Encourage greater community use of stadiums and elite sports facilities.
- Foster partnerships between Men's Sheds and sports clubs to promote physical activity.
- Ensure programmes are long-term rather than short interventions.

Embed mental health support into physical activity initiatives.

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?**

   Please provide <u>details of the likely policy impacts</u> and <u>determine the level of impact</u> for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**: <mark>None anticipated.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

2. **Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?** Yes/<mark>No</mark>

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Racial Group - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Age - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Marital Status - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Disability - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>

If No, provide <u>reasons</u>: <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Dependants - If Yes, provide <u>details</u>:
If No, provide <u>reasons</u>: <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

3. **To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

   Please provide <u>details of the likely policy impact</u> and <u>determine the level of impact</u> for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: <mark>None anticipated. The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: <mark>None anticipated. The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: <mark>None anticipated. The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>
   What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / <mark>None</mark>   (circle as appropriate)

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

   Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

   Religious Belief - If Yes, provide <u>details</u>:

If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

Racial Group - If Yes, provide <u>details:</u>
If No, provide <u>reasons:</u> <mark>The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.</mark>

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*).

The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.

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

This policy does not have scope to influence impact on people with multiple identifies.

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

No reasons identified to conduct an EQIA. The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

No mitigations/alternative considered. The policy is intended to determine what is considered a sport and which organisations are best placed to develop those sports. It is intended to be applied equally across all sectors of society.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/a.

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

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

N/a.

Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been **'screened in'** for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details.

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities 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, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Ian Weir
Position/Job Title: Sport, Culture & Integrity Manager
Date: 18.11.25

Approved by: Rebecca Hope
Position/Job Title: Interim Director of Sport
Date: 24/11/25

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.