

EQIA and 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.

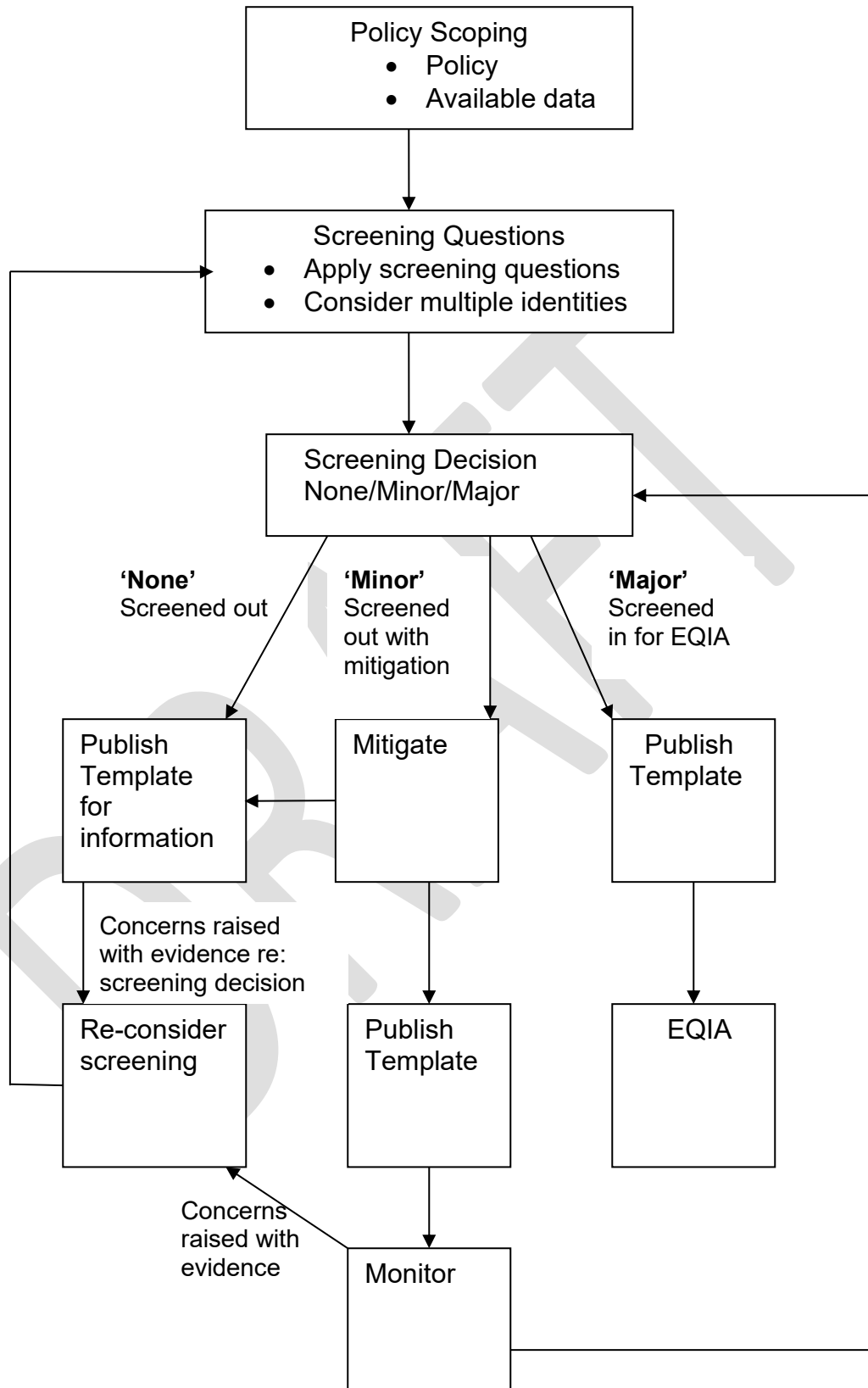
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

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 – verify the public authority's approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

A screening flowchart is provided overleaf.



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

Women in Sport Engagement & Delivery Plan 2024–2026 (Sport NI)

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

A revised policy.

A strategic plan to influence Northern Ireland's sporting sector to enhance the experience of women and girls—across leadership, visibility, culture, participation, and data. Actions delivered via programmes and staff across Sport NI.

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

- Increase sports participation rates for women and girls
- Enhance gender equity in leadership, coaching, volunteer roles
- Improve visibility and media representation
- Foster safe, inclusive sports environments
- Enhance gender-disaggregated data to guide future action

Core Aims and Outcomes

A Strong Focus on Inclusion and Diversity

The Women in Sport Plan embeds inclusion and diversity across five pillars: Leadership, Visibility, Culture, Participation, and Data. It directly targets structural inequalities by ensuring women and girls are represented, visible, and empowered in all areas of sport. The approach includes tackling gender bias, supporting women in coaching and leadership, promoting body confidence, and removing barriers such as cost, safety, childcare, and access to safe spaces.

Monitoring and Measuring Impact

Impact will be measured through gender-disaggregated data collected across funded programmes and partners. Key indicators include participation rates, retention, visibility of female leaders and role models, and leadership representation. Sport NI will also monitor cultural shifts in confidence and attitudes, using qualitative feedback and programme-specific monitoring tools, with oversight built into the wider corporate performance framework.

Positive Impact Statement

This policy will deliver positive, long-term change for women and girls by addressing systemic barriers to participation and progression. It promotes equality of opportunity through dedicated investment, co-designed delivery, targeted workforce development, and stronger representation in leadership and media. The policy contributes to good relations by making sport more inclusive and welcoming, supporting confidence, safety, and wellbeing for all genders.

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

Yes

If so, explain how.

Section 75 Category	Impact	Rationale
Gender	Positive	Targets gender gap: women's participation (40%) lags behind men (55%)
Age	Neutral	No material impact identified
Disability	Neutral	No material impact identified
Racial Group	Neutral	No material impact identified
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	No material impact identified
Dependants	Neutral	No material impact identified
Religion, Political Opinion, Marital Status	Neutral	No material impact identified

Embedding EDI in Planning and Delivery

The policy is underpinned by an equality and inclusion framework. Gender equality is embedded at every stage: from strategy and funding to programme design, communications, and workforce training. Funded partners are required to evidence inclusive practice, and the policy supports cultural change through capacity-building, leadership development, and collaborative delivery with sectoral partners.

Ongoing Monitoring and Accountability

Sport NI has embedded monitoring through its funding and delivery frameworks. Key metrics include gender-disaggregated participation and leadership data, impact assessments of programme interventions, and qualitative feedback from underrepresented groups. Accountability is maintained through programme reviews, partner reporting, and integration into the wider *Power of Sport* outcome framework.

Consultation and Evidence Base

The policy draws on extensive engagement across governing bodies, clubs, councils, and women's organisations. Evidence from the Women and Girls in Sport research (2022), the Corporate Plan EQIA, focus groups, and stakeholder panels has directly informed its design. The policy is also

shaped by Continuous Household Survey data, Kids' Life and Times findings, and lessons from previous short-term interventions.

Sport NI's Commitment

Sport NI is committed to advancing equality for women and girls at every level of sport. This includes improving participation rates, leadership representation, and media visibility; removing barriers such as childcare, safety concerns, and stereotypes; and embedding equity in funding, training, and governance. The organisation pledges to lead cultural change, challenge structural bias, and work collaboratively to build a more inclusive sporting system.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Sport, Culture and Integrity Manager

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Owned by: Board and SRO – Head of Sports Systems

Implemented by: The Sports Systems Teams within Sport NI

Implementation factors

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

Yes.

Explanation:

Key enabling factors include strategic leadership, cross-sectoral partnerships, and sustained investment. Risks include resistance to cultural change, financial constraints on delivery partners, and over-reliance on short-term interventions. Mitigation includes embedding EDI in funding criteria, offering training and support to partners, and prioritising longer-term cultural shifts over tokenistic initiatives.

Main stakeholders affected

Internal and external stakeholders impacted by the policy include:

Stakeholders include:

- **Internal:** Sport NI board and staff, particularly delivery teams within the Sports Systems unit.
- **External:** Governing bodies, clubs, local authorities, schools, community groups, and women's networks.
- **Strategic Partners:** Women in Sport UK, Department for Communities, Active Living stakeholders, Equality Commission NI, education and health sector partners.

These stakeholders are responsible for co-design, delivery, data sharing, and creating supportive, inclusive environments.

Other Policies with a Bearing on this Policy

The implementation and success of this policy is closely aligned with and supported by:

- Sport NI Equality Scheme
- Sport NI EDI Plan

These policies set the wider organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and will act as guiding frameworks for the delivery of this investment.

Sport NI Corporate Plan [Power of Sport – Sport NI’s New Five-Year Plan | Sport NI](#)

The Sport NI Corporate Plan following significant partner consultation identified the following mission statement and outcomes which will focus its delivery across the period 2021-2026.

Mission: We are passionate about maximising the *power of sport* to change lives. By 2026 we want the power of sport to be recognised and valued by all.

Outcome 1: People adopting and sustaining participation in sport and physical activity.

Outcome 2: NI Athletes among the best in the world.

Sport NI believes the delivery of these outcomes will be with the implemented through a strategic approach to investing into the sports systems. These outcomes are underpinned specifically by 4 cornerstones

- Building a positive and inclusive sports culture, recognising the rights of everyone to access and participate in sport.
- Retaining a duty of care to all those engaged in the Sporting System.
- Promoting wellness and well-being.
- Targeting sport in rural communities, in disadvantaged areas and with under-represented groups.

The above will guide Sport NI’s support to the sector over the period of the corporate plan.

Programme for Government

- New Decade, New Approach – NI Executive [2020-01-08 a new decade a new approach.pdf](#)
- Department for Communities 5 Year Strategy 2020 – 2025 [Department for Communities Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020-2025 | Department for Communities](#)
- National Sports Policy 2018-2027 - Government of Ireland [www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf#page=null](#)
- Active Living: A Strategy for sport and Physical Activity DfC [Active Living | About Us](#)
- Sport NI Equality Scheme: [Equality scheme for](#)

Available Evidence

Evidence used to inform this screening process includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Sport NI has drawn on a wide range of research, consultation activities, and stakeholder engagement to ensure that investment decisions are informed by robust evidence and aligned with equality considerations. See pages 19-22 for specific sources and evidence.

Engagement and Consultation

Sport NI undertook an extensive co-design process in developing its Corporate Plan, involving:

- A major conference bringing together key stakeholders.
- Thematic engagement workshops focused on specific areas of need.
- Public engagement surveys to gather broad-based feedback.
- Sectoral surveys targeting organisations within the sporting sector.
- One-to-one meetings with stakeholders for deeper qualitative insights.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was carried out as part of this process, reviewing Section 75-specific data, research, and insights to ensure that equality considerations were fully integrated.

Additionally, during the summer of 2022, further consultation took place with:

- Governing Bodies
- Local Authorities
- Local sports clubs
- Other key stakeholders

Engagement was conducted through face-to-face focus groups, one-to-one meetings, and online consultation sessions. The insights gathered helped shape the priority investment areas and enablers that form the foundation of this programme.

Co-Design Approach and Equality Focus

Sport NI adopted a co-design model that emphasises a system-wide approach to sport investment. This approach was problem-solving in nature, working closely with partners and stakeholders to:

- Increase sustained participation in sport and physical activity.
- Address barriers for under-represented groups, particularly those identified under Section 75.
- Embed inclusivity, equality, and culture as key enablers to strengthen the sporting system.

Through this engagement, Sport NI has reinforced its commitment to developing an inclusive sporting system that does not treat equality as a separate concern but rather integrates it as a mainstream approach.

Data and Research Sources

Sport NI's approach is further supported by a range of research and data sources, including:

- The 2023-24 Continuous Household Survey, which provides insight into participation trends across different demographics, including those outside of the sporting sector.
- Additional research studies specific to various Section 75 groups, offering detailed evidence on participation trends, barriers to engagement, and key equality considerations.
- Sport NI's Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), which summarises key evidence and findings relevant to this investment programme: [Equality-Impact-Assessment-Sport-NI-Corporate-Plan.pdf](#).

This comprehensive evidence base ensures that the investment programme is data-driven, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all communities.

Religious Belief

Evidence relating to religious belief is drawn from the Continuous Household Survey 2023/24, 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 2023/24](#)

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](#)

Political Opinion

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](#)

Racial Group

Currently, Sport NI does not hold comprehensive participation data disaggregated by racial group. 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](#)

Age

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 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.

Marital Status

The 2023/24 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 2023/24](#).

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.

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.

However, evidence gathered through extensive consultation for the Corporate Plan highlighted a number of 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.

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 and Women

The 2023-24 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 2023/24](#).

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

- Caring responsibilities, which disproportionately impact women.
- Concerns around personal safety, particularly when accessing facilities or participating in sport after dark.
- Gendered stereotypes affecting perceptions of who sport is for and what activities are seen as appropriate for different genders.

Disability

The 2023/24 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 2023/24](#).

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 such as:

- Accessibility of facilities and equipment.
- Limited availability of inclusive programmes.
- Gaps in awareness and understanding among coaches and volunteers.

Persons with Dependants

The 2023/24 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 2023/24](#).

Consultation for the Corporate Plan further reinforced how caring responsibilities create a significant barrier to regular participation, particularly for women. Issues raised include:

- Lack of affordable childcare.
- Timetabling of sessions, which may not be compatible with family schedules.
- Limited availability of family-friendly sport and physical activity options.

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 of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious Belief

Current Participation Patterns

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](#)

Research Insights and Consultation Feedback

Evidence from the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for Sport NI's Corporate Plan 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:

- 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 for activities such as gym classes and swimming.
 - 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.

Inclusive Provision and Facility Access

The Department for Communities (DfC) screening of the Active Living Strategy reinforces these priorities, highlighting:

- Facility access at times that respect religious observances.
- Programming of gender-specific sessions to align with religious and cultural requirements.

Sport NI also acknowledges that community background continues to influence sporting preferences and participation. This reality should inform the allocation of resources and the design of inclusive programmes.

Further, Sport NI respects the personal choice of athletes in relation to national representation, recognising the diverse identities within Northern Ireland's sporting landscape.

Political Opinion

Historical Context and Evolving Trends

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 particular 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.

Consultation Feedback and Strategic Priorities

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.

Sport NI also recognises the importance of respecting personal choice in relation to international representation, acknowledging that some athletes may choose to represent Northern Ireland, Ireland, or the UK — and that this choice should be fully supported within the system.

Racial Group

Current Evidence and Research Insights

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.

Headline Findings:

- 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

Sources:

- [Tell Your Story](#)
- [Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport](#)
- [5 Common Themes for Action](#)

Consultation Feedback and Community Insights

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:
 - A multi-language app to support signposting, tailored to different confidence levels, sports and local club options.
 - 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:
 - Anti-racism training for clubs, officials and coaches.
 - 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.

Broader Strategic Alignment

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

Sport NI has reviewed a range of research and data to understand how age affects people’s participation in sport and physical activity. Key sources include the 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey, the Children’s Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study (CSPPA), and the Kids Life and Times (KLT) and Young Life and Times (YLT) surveys.

What we know from the data:

- Sport participation declines as people get older, particularly between primary and post-primary school.
- 17% of students aged 10-18 in Northern Ireland meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Boys are more likely to meet this target than girls.
- Participation rates are lower for children with disabilities and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 92% of primary pupils and 76% of post-primary pupils take part in school sport outside of PE at least once a week.

What older people told us:

- 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.

In summary:

There is clear evidence that participation levels change across the life course, with steep declines during adolescence and into adulthood. Different age groups face distinct barriers, from the cost of after-school sport for children, to transport and health concerns for older adults. The consultation highlighted strong support for improving PE in schools, providing affordable community sport for all ages, and ensuring that messaging, facilities and programmes are truly inclusive.

Marital Status

Overview

The 2022/23 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) gathered data on participation in sport. Findings related to marital status are available in the published tables: [engagement-culture-arts-heritage-sport-by-adults-in-northern-ireland-202223.xlsx \(live.com\)](#).

Participation levels by marital status were as follows:

- Married / Cohabiting: 50%
- Single: 52%
- Widowed: 21%
- Separated / Divorced: 36%

More recent data from the 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) 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.

Needs, Experiences and Priorities

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

Overview

There remains a lack of robust data on the sexual orientation of those participating in sport in Northern Ireland.

However, the Sport NI Corporate Plan consultation highlighted important insights:

"There is an invisibility of narrative around trans inclusion and sexuality, a lack of athletes comfortable to come out, and cultural normalisation of homophobic microaggressions and both reported and unreported hate crime. These factors present serious barriers to accessibility within the sporting system. Single-identity teams exist, but they often struggle to sustain themselves."

Key Research and Evidence Sources

In preparing the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Corporate Plan, Sport NI reviewed academic and other relevant sources on LGBTQIA+ experiences in sport, including:

- (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.

Needs, Experiences and Priorities

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.

Findings from Sport NI Corporate Plan Consultation

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.

Developing the Sporting System

Innovative ideas emerged through creative discussions with culturally diverse groups, including the concept of a translated app. This app would:

- Allow users to select their preferred language, sport, and confidence level.
- Signpost users to inclusive clubs.
- Feature welcome videos from relatable participants to break down perceptions of exclusivity and competitiveness.

Organisations such as Stonewall, Rainbow Project, and Sporting Mermaids supported the idea of clubs actively indicating their LGBTQ+ inclusivity via this app.

The invisibility of trans and LGBTQ+ narratives within sport, coupled with a lack of visible role models, creates systemic barriers. Sport NI is now working with Stonewall, the Rainbow Project, and Sporting Mermaids through their Ambassadors Programme, building training and education tools for the sector, as well as storytelling campaigns to increase empathy and awareness.

People Development

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.

Connected Communities

Focus groups raised further concerns, particularly around:

- 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.

These experiences reinforce the need for proactive, ongoing work to foster an inclusive and welcoming sporting environment.

Men and Women

Participation Data (2022/23 and 2023/24)

The 2022/23 **Continuous Household Survey (CHS)** examined participation in sport by gender. Findings are available in the report: [Engagement in Culture, Arts, Heritage & Sport by Adults in Northern Ireland 2022/23](#).

Key findings:

- 55% of males participated in sport at least once in the previous year compared to 40% of females (2022/23).
- Males participated in a wider range of sports, while females were more likely to participate in activities such as keep-fit, aerobics, dance exercise, yoga, and weight training (26% of females compared to 22% of males).

The **2023/24 Continuous Household Survey** indicated similar patterns:

- In the past 7 days, 55% of males participated in sport compared to 42% of females.
- Full findings available here: [Experience of Sport by Adults in Northern Ireland 2023/24](#).

Women's Participation – Sport NI Insights

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.

Sporting System – Women's Focus Group Findings

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.

High Performance – Women's Pathway Challenges

Women's groups also highlighted barriers in the high-performance pathway:

- 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.

People Development – Addressing the Coaching Gap

There is a clear need to develop coach education to:

- 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.

Department for Communities – Active Living Strategy

The **Department for Communities' screening assessment** of the **Active Living Strategy** identified specific needs for men and women, summarised below.

Common Needs for Both Genders:

- Safe, affordable, welcoming facilities.
- Wide range of sports and opening hours.
- Clear coaching pathways and opportunities for progression.
- Innovative use of technology to support engagement.

Gender-Specific Needs and Priorities

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.
-

Disability

The 2022/23 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) included questions on participation in sport by adults with disabilities. Findings are presented in the report available at: [NISRA Data Visualisation](#).

The report highlighted a significant participation gap between disabled and non-disabled adults. In 2022/23, only 26% of adults with a disability participated in sport over the previous year, compared to 56% of adults without a disability. This pattern was also evident when looking at participation within the previous four weeks — only 21% of disabled adults took part, compared to 48% of non-disabled adults.

The 2023/24 CHS (available at: [Experience of Sport by Adults in NI](#)) revealed a slight improvement in participation rates among disabled adults, rising to 30%, but this remained significantly lower than the 59% participation rate of non-disabled adults.

Barriers and Challenges

Disability Sport NI (DSNI) has highlighted the complex range of factors contributing to lower participation rates among disabled people. These include:

- The lasting negative impact of COVID-19 on participation habits.
- Reduced provision of disability-specific sports opportunities by District Councils.
- Disruption to Governing Body programmes during the pandemic.
- Financial pressures due to the cost-of-living crisis, making it harder for disabled people to afford participation fees and travel costs.

DSNI expressed particular concern about this decline, as it follows a period of steady progress up to 2019/20 when disabled sports participation was at its highest. This progress had been driven by targeted programmes delivered by Sport NI, District Councils, and Governing Bodies across Northern Ireland.

Research Findings and Insights

The **Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service (2015)** examined sports provision for disabled people and found that disabled adults were far less likely to engage in regular physical activity than their non-disabled peers (19% compared to 37%).

Disability Sport NI estimates that approximately 20% of Northern Ireland's population — around 360,000 people — live with a long-term limiting illness, which is the current working definition of 'disability'.

Consultation Feedback and Recommendations

Consultation on **Sport NI's 2021-2026 Corporate Plan: The Power of Sport**, and the Department for Communities' screening assessment on the **Active Living Strategy**, identified several critical themes from the disability sector:

- Marginalised and under-represented groups, including disabled people, stressed the need for an open, welcoming, inclusive sporting culture, which promotes both wellness and wellbeing.
- Participants reported that many sports environments still feel unwelcoming and inaccessible.
- There was evidence of **underreporting** of disability, meaning some disabled people's needs may go unrecognised in sport participation data.
- A **targeted focus on inactive people** (rather than just those identifying as disabled) was seen as a more effective engagement strategy.
- Inconsistent accessibility support across Councils was noted, with accessibility provisions appearing to decline in recent years as capital asset management became a higher priority.
- There were calls for a more **diverse leadership** within sports organisations, noting that cognitive bias at Board and committee level can perpetuate exclusion.
- Limited **data quality and granularity** on disability participation makes it harder to design effective policies and programmes.
- The importance of **advocacy, awareness raising, storytelling, training, and the integration of inclusivity requirements into funding criteria** was strongly emphasised.

Specific Needs and Barriers

The **Department for Communities screening assessment** on the **Active Living Strategy** further highlighted several specific needs and barriers for disabled people:

- Tailored approaches for different types of disability — physical, mental health, sensory, and learning disabilities.
- **Transport and accessibility barriers**, especially in rural areas.
- **Financial barriers**, including the cost of public transport and sports services — with community-based options seen as more accessible.
- Lack of awareness and **poor promotion** of available services and opportunities.
- **Low confidence, motivation and self-esteem**, along with fears of being judged, create psychological barriers to participation.
- The importance of **peer support** — disabled people were more likely to engage if attending with someone they know.
- The need for **advocates or support workers** to help individuals build motivation and confidence to take part.

Dependants

The 2022/23 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) also gathered data on sporting participation levels among adults with dependants. Findings are available in the associated data tables: [Engagement in Culture, Arts, Heritage & Sport by Adults in NI 2022/23](#).

In 2022/23, participation rates were slightly higher among adults with dependants (50%) compared to adults without dependants (46%).

In 2023/24, this gap widened slightly, with 54% of adults with dependants participating in sport, compared to 49% of those without dependants.

This indicates that having dependants is not necessarily a barrier to participation in sport, and may in some cases act as a motivator, potentially linked to family-based or child-led activity programmes. However, further exploration is needed to understand the nature of these activities and whether they provide meaningful opportunities for sustained engagement.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In deciding 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 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 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 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. ☐

Considering 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 details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different religious belief. Any impacts of this investment should be positive.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different political opinion. Any impacts of this policy should be positive.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different racial group. Any impacts of this policy should be positive.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different age. Any impacts of this policy should be positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different marital status. Any impacts of this policy should be positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different sexual orientation. Any impacts of this policy should be positive

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? **Minor** / Major / None (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different gender. Any impacts of this policy should be positive for women and girls.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people with a disability. Any impacts of this policy should be positive.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**:

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

DRAFT

We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people with dependants. Any impacts of this policy should be positive.

Aims and Commitments

The Women in Sport Plan aims to transform sport into a more equitable and inclusive environment for women and girls. It commits to:

- Increasing participation and retention.
- Developing female leaders, coaches, and officials.
- Improving visibility of women in sport and media.
- Ensuring programmes are safe, welcoming, and tailored to lived experiences.
- Embedding gender-disaggregated monitoring across all delivery.

Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

EDI is a core theme across all aspects of this policy. From funding design to delivery expectations, partners must demonstrate commitment to inclusive practice. EDI training, inclusive communications, representation targets, and targeted workforce development are key enablers. Gender equality is not treated as a standalone goal but as an integrated value within the entire sport system.

A Commitment to Transformation

This policy goes beyond incremental change and aims for transformational, system-wide reform. It challenges historic norms, promotes inclusive leadership, and rethinks how sport is delivered and represented. Through long-term investment, co-design, and accountability, it aims to shift power and culture — supporting women and girls not just to participate, but to lead and thrive in sport.

Religious Belief - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The policy promotes culturally safe spaces for participation, including faith-sensitive provision such as women-only sessions. It encourages neutral, welcoming environments and respects religious observances in scheduling and delivery. It also supports collaboration with faith-based organisations to improve access for women and girls from various religious backgrounds.

Political Opinion - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The policy fosters inclusive spaces free from political symbolism. It promotes shared facilities and encourages cross-community participation, helping to break down sectarian divisions and support peacebuilding. Sport is used as a vehicle for social cohesion, with neutral branding and emphasis on shared values such as health, confidence, and belonging.

Racial Group - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The policy includes targeted outreach to women and girls from ethnically diverse communities, recognising cultural and structural barriers. It promotes co-design, supports culturally competent delivery, and addresses visibility gaps through leadership development and inclusive representation. It also aligns with the TRARIIS themes: anti-racism, representation, cultural awareness, and accountability.

Age - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons

The policy addresses life-stage participation gaps: school transitions, teenage drop-off, motherhood, and post-retirement. It supports age-tailored interventions—e.g. social activities for older women, confidence-building for girls, and flexible offers for women with caring responsibilities. It also links with early years, youth, and Age Friendly strategies.

Marital Status - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons

While not directly targeted, the policy benefits all women regardless of marital status. It promotes family-friendly programming, flexible scheduling, and removes barriers such as childcare, making it easier for single parents, carers, and women in dual-working households to engage in sport and physical activity.

Sexual Orientation - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The plan supports LGBTQ+ inclusion by promoting safe, welcoming environments and visibility of diverse role models. It encourages inclusive programming, flags safe clubs, and supports sectoral training on microaggressions and LGBTQ+ rights. It aligns with work by the Rainbow Project and other equality partners.

Men and Women - If **Yes**, provide details: The core aim is to improve equality for women and girls — addressing their under-representation in participation, leadership, and media. For men, the policy promotes more inclusive coaching practices, challenges gender stereotypes, and supports men's engagement in allyship and equitable delivery environments.

If No, provide reasons:

Disability - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

Disabled women and girls are a priority group. The plan supports inclusive design, better data capture, and tailored interventions in partnership with DSNI. It recognises intersectional barriers and includes actions on visibility, training, facility accessibility, and leadership pathways for disabled women in sport.

Dependants - If **Yes**, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The plan explicitly addresses caring responsibilities as a barrier. It promotes flexible, local delivery models, co-located family activities, and supportive scheduling. Family-focused initiatives and low-cost programmes are encouraged to allow carers and parents to participate without guilt or logistical difficulty.

2. **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 details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

The plan promotes mixed participation spaces that are respectful of religious practices. Female-only or culturally tailored sessions help improve access for women and girls from conservative or faith-based communities, building shared understanding and integration.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

By creating inclusive, politically neutral environments and supporting cross-community initiatives, the plan promotes shared use of facilities and builds trust across divided communities. It aligns with *Active Living* peacebuilding goals.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: (insert text here)

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / **None** (circle as appropriate)

The policy supports intercultural collaboration, diverse leadership, and anti-racism education. By engaging women from different backgrounds in co-design and leadership roles, it helps break down stereotypes, build solidarity, and foster mutual respect.

3. **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 details:

If No, provide reasons:

The plan promotes mixed participation spaces that are respectful of religious practices. Female-only or culturally tailored sessions help improve access for women and girls from conservative or faith-based communities, building shared understanding and integration.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

By creating inclusive, politically neutral environments and supporting cross-community initiatives, the plan promotes shared use of facilities and builds trust across divided communities. It aligns with *Active Living* peacebuilding goals.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons:

The policy supports intercultural collaboration, diverse leadership, and anti-racism education. By engaging women from different backgrounds in co-design and leadership roles, it helps break down stereotypes, build solidarity, and foster mutual respect.

Additional Considerations – Multiple Identity

The policy explicitly recognises the importance of intersectionality. It addresses the compound barriers faced by, for example, disabled women, ethnic minority mothers, LGBTQ+ teenagers, or older women in rural areas. Programmes are encouraged to disaggregate data, tailor interventions to lived experience, and ensure no one is left behind due to overlapping inequalities.

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:

Mitigation

Potential barriers such as under-representation in data or delivery capacity among small organisations are mitigated by:

- Embedding EDI in funding requirements.
- Providing inclusive delivery training.
- Supporting community outreach and trusted intermediaries.
- Offering flexible models of participation and leadership.
- Continually reviewing progress and adapting approaches based on lived experience and feedback.

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	3
Social need	2

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on people's daily lives	3
Relevance to a public authority's functions	2

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? No

If yes, please provide details.

Part 4. Monitoring

- Sport NI will monitor this policy through:
- Gender-disaggregated data reporting from funded partners.
- Regular review of participation trends via CHS and other datasets.
- Feedback from women's groups, community panels, and sector stakeholders.
- Annual impact assessments to identify emerging gaps or barriers.
- Transparent reporting aligned with the *Power of Sport* outcomes and Sport NI's Equality Scheme.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Ian Weir
Position/Job Title: SCIT Manager
Date: 19.09.25

Approved by: Rebecca Hope
Position/Job Title: Interim Director of Sport (G6)
Date: 22.09.25

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.