

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.

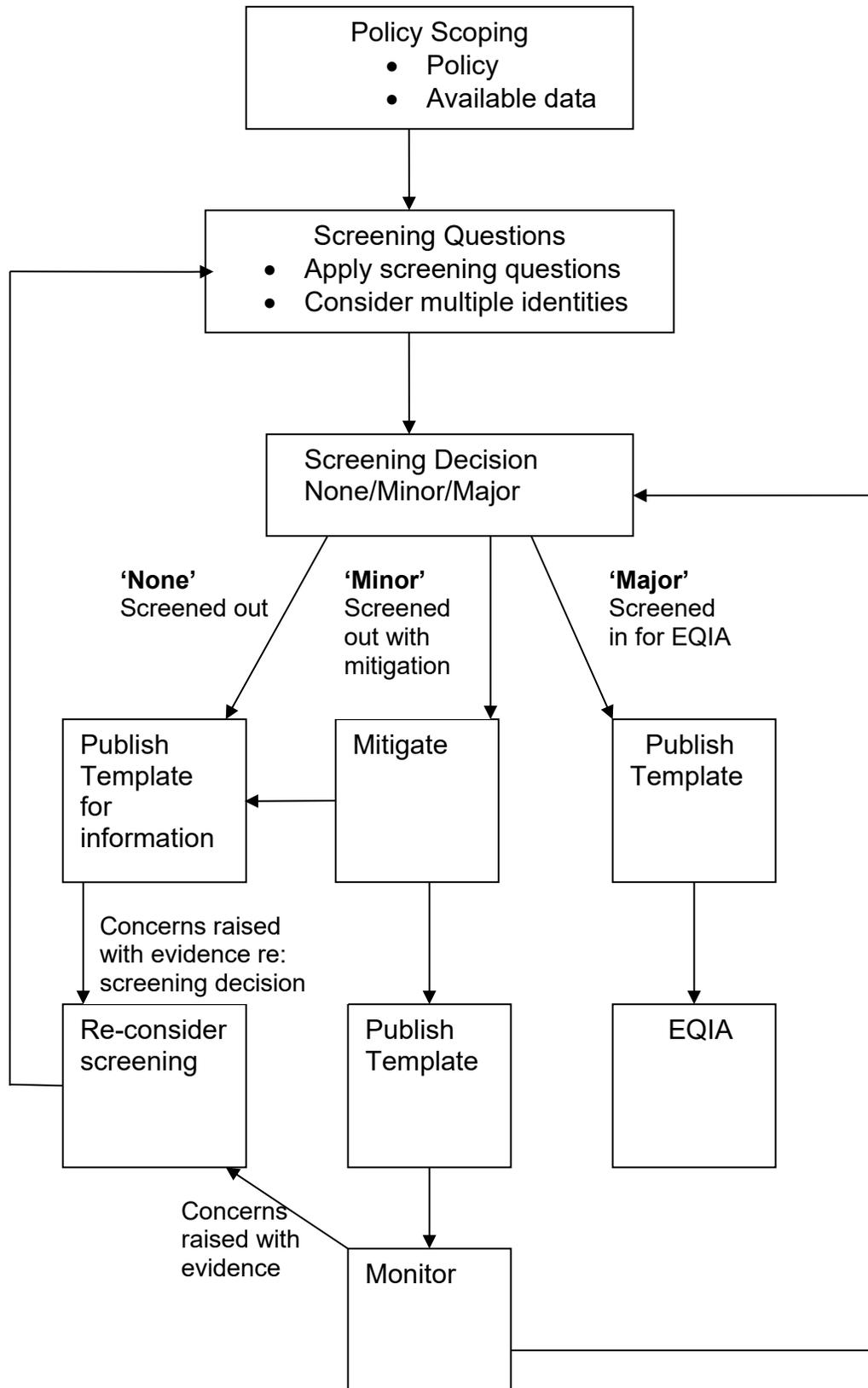
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

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.



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

Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group Three Year Plan 2026-2029

The Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group (SSSG) Three Year Plan was established to create a multi-agency approach to lead the way in ensuring that everyone (children and adults alike) can enjoy sport and achieve their potential free from all forms of abuse and exploitation. By working together, the group will ensure that everyone participating in sport will have a positive and safe experience that will lead to healthier life choices and deliver a life-long love of sport and physical activity.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

A revised policy.

To provide a framework for the multi-agency group to work within, in order to deliver the vision of ensuring everyone (both adults and children) can participate in sport and associated physical activities free from the risk of harm or abuse.

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

A coordinated multi-agency approach to achieving the aim of safeguarding children and adults in sport.

To influence policy on safeguarding in sport and act as the voice for safeguarding in sport with government and other key bodies.

Safeguarding in the sector aligns closely with Sport NI's Corporate Plan 'The Power of Sport' (2021-2026), and the DfC Active Living Strategy. This SSSG plan is an important part of Sport NI's approach to safeguarding.

The main objectives of the revised plan are in place to encourage progress that will ensure:

1. The SSSG is supported by senior representatives to enable sport and physical activity sectors to work together with statutory bodies at a strategic level to safeguard everyone in sport consistently.
2. The need for Adult Safeguarding within the sports sector becomes embedded within the culture of all sporting organisations in receipt of public funds.
3. The legal requirement to vet a person in regulated activity is introduced to ensure a level of parity across the Island of Ireland as many sports are All-Ireland bodies.
4. Sporting and physical activity providers who receive public funds or hire publicly funded facilities have attained the minimum Safeguarding Standards that are proportionate to their activity and capacity. This must include:
 - A policy statement demonstrating the organisation's commitment to safeguarding
 - Clear codes of behaviour that are communicated to all stakeholders
 - Approved safeguarding training to raise awareness that all participants have an equal right to protection from all forms of abuse or harm and that each person's rights are upheld.
 - Robust safe recruitment processes including vetting as standard practice.
5. Promotion of a culture in sport where everyone is free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse, and harm within the sports setting.

The plan's five objectives align with Sport NI's Corporate Plan Outcomes:

- Retention and Growth – Creating welcoming and inclusive environments that attract and retain participants from all backgrounds, particularly under-represented groups.
- Medals and More – Building athlete-centred environments that enable Northern Ireland athletes to excel and succeed at the highest level.

To support delivery of these priorities, the plan requires a high level of governance standards from sport and physical activity providers- ensuring strong leadership and governance underpin all activity, creating safe, ethical, and inclusive sporting environments.

Sport NI are a member body represented in this sector wide group and achievement of these objectives is the responsibility of the wider group rather than Sport NI specifically.

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

This service is designed to benefit all in society, and ultimately those most vulnerable children and adults, and through some correlation each of the Section 75 categories are expected to indirectly benefit from this service including religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, people with a disability and people with dependants.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group – multi-agency stakeholder group of which Sport NI is a member.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Owned by: Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group membership bodies.
Implemented by: Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group

Implementation factors

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

Yes

If yes, are they (please delete as appropriate)

Meeting the objectives is reliant upon the success of achieving the legal requirement (to vet a person in regulated activity) to ensure a level of parity across the Island of Ireland, as many sports are All-Ireland bodies. This will require lobbying of government officials and parties for support.

Furthermore, the intended aim of keeping children and adults safe in sport relies heavily upon those sporting and physical activity providers who receive public funds or hire publicly funded facilities attaining and maintaining the Safeguarding Children and Young People Standards that are proportionate to their activity and capacity. This must include,

- A policy statement demonstrating the organisations commitment to safeguarding
- Clear codes of behaviours that are communicated to all stakeholders
- Approved safeguarding training to raise awareness that all children have an equal right to protection from all forms of abuse¹ or harm and that children's rights are upheld.
- Robust safe recruitment processes including vetting as standard practice.

Should sporting providers cease to ensure they follow the standards and requirements of funders, the proposed objective of keeping children and adults safe in sport becomes harder to achieve.

Main stakeholders affected

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

- **Internal:** Sport NI board and staff;
- **External:** Governing bodies of sporting including umbrella organisations, local clubs, local authorities, members of the public, participants, athletes, coaches, officials, administrators and clubs;

¹ The term “abuse or harm” can mean physical, sexual, emotional, domestic abuse, exploitation or neglect

- **Strategic Partners:** Member organisations of the Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Groups including DfC and Sport Ireland.

other, please specify _____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

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

- Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport Policy & Procedures

This policy sets the wider organisational commitment to keeping children and young people safe in sport.

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.

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.

DfC - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland – Active Living

This strategy was published in March 2022 following endorsement by the NI Executive and was developed as part of a co-design consultation with the sports sector, government departments and key stakeholders. The Sport and Physical Activity is based around inclusion, engagement, community, excellence, partnership, collaboration and shared spaces that collectively maximise the benefits of more people, being more active, more of the time. The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy has six key themes (The numbering of the themes should not be interpreted as being in a priority order):

1. Recovering from the Impact of the Pandemic
2. Promoting Participation, Inclusion and Community Engagement
3. Promoting Excellence in Sport
4. Promoting Partnership and Integration
5. Providing Inclusive, Shared Spaces and Places

6. Promoting the Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity

This proposal will directly impact on Themes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Programme for Government

- Active Living: A Strategy for sport and Physical Activity DfC [Active Living | About Us](#)

The Sport NI policy framework will also be adhered to.

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

[Kyniska Advocacy - Stamping Out Sexual Violence in Sport Report 2022](#)

[Duty of Care in Sport Review](#)

[Whyte Review](#)

[Keeping-Adults-Safe-A-Shared-Responsibility.pdf](#)

[Sport NI Safeguarding-Adults-in-Sport-Policy-and-Procedures.pdf](#)

Religious belief evidence / information:

Evidence relating to religious belief is drawn from the Continuous Household Survey 2024/25, 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](#)

[3343 unwomen unesco vawg handbook 6a singlepage.pdf](#) also highlights the importance of considering safeguarding for adults in sport from a religious perspective.

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

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](#)

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and

NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

Racial Group evidence / information:

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](#)

[3343 unwomen unesco vawg handbook 6a singlepage.pdf](#) also highlights the importance of considering safeguarding for adults in sport from a racial perspective ensuring those people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are safeguarded and protected throughout their sporting lives.

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

Age evidence / information:

This plan has been revised to include adults, the original three year plan was originally focused on children and young people. The focus now for the strategic group's plan is to ensure everyone from children to adults are able to participate in safe sporting environments free from harm.

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](#) [Adult Safeguarding Inequalities in Northern Ireland: An Exploratory Study | The British Journal of Social Work | Oxford Academic](#) shows the need for safeguarding across the spectrum of age ranges i.e. from childhood into adulthood.

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

Marital Status evidence / information:

The 2024/25 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. [Equality Impact Assessment – Sport NI Corporate Plan](#)

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

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, 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. Source: [Equality Impact Assessment – Sport NI Corporate Plan](#)

[3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf](#) also highlights the importance of considering safeguarding for adults in sport from a sexual orientation perspective ensuring those people from LGBTQIA+ backgrounds are safeguarded and protected throughout their sporting lives.

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

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, 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.

Source: [Equality Impact Assessment – Sport NI Corporate Plan](#)

In addition to the above, the following research pieces highlight the need to ensure safeguarding of adults and children - men, women, boy, girl, LGBTQI, disabled people, adults with dependents, young adults, older population, as well as children and vulnerable adults is a priority for the sporting sector.

[An analysis of child safeguarding cases managed by National Governing Bodies of sport across England and Wales - Rhind - 2024 - Child Abuse Review - Wiley Online Library](#)

[FEPSAC position statement on safeguarding athletes in sport - ScienceDirect](#)

[Safe-Sport-and-Safeguarding-in-Sport-SIRC-Literature-Review-Jan-2025-FINAL.pdf](#)

[Safeguarding in sports settings: unpacking a conflicting identity](#)

[Sport integrity and safeguarding within UK sporting organisations - University of Hertfordshire \(Research Profiles\)](#)

[Safeguarding in sport: Sport in Society: Vol 18 , No 5 - Get Access](#)

[Resource library for safeguarding children in sport](#)

[Adult Safeguarding Inequalities in Northern Ireland: An Exploratory Study | The British Journal of Social Work | Oxford Academic](#)

[update163.pdf](#)

[Quarterly Child Protection Statistics for Northern Ireland \(March 2025\) - GOV.UK](#)

[Safeguarding | Sport England](#)

[Whyte Review | Sport England](#)

[Safeguarding talented and elite athletes | CPSU](#)

[An analysis of child safeguarding cases managed by National Governing Bodies of sport across England and Wales - Rhind - 2024 - Child Abuse Review - Wiley Online Library](#)

[Annual Report 2023-2024](#)

[CAMPAIGN: Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Women and Girls On and Off the Pitch - IWD22 | News and events | Zero Tolerance](#)

[Women's Experiences of Gender-Based Interpersonal Violence in Sport: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis - PMC](#)

[Sports Organisations' Responses to Social Media Abuse Against Professional Sportswomen in UK Team Sports - Amberlie Williams, Beth Fielding-Lloyd, James Newman, Ruth Deller, 2025](#)

Further to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

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 to participation in sport data, as safeguarding issues may relate to criminal activity, the following has been considered: [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#) and NISRA Police Recorded Crime at link: [All crime](#) and [Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 30th June 2025](#)

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](#)

Consultation for the Corporate Plan was reviewed..

Source: [Equality Impact Assessment – Sport NI Corporate Plan](#)

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

It may be the case that some religious beliefs may affect disclosures of safeguarding concerns or issues, however particularly the under-representation and experience of some minority religious communities in sport in NI may also inhibit confidence to report.

This may be inferred from the Race and Racial Inequality in Sport body of research (pertaining to religious backgrounds), and NISRA crime statistics on race hate crime (May 2025) which found:

- Race hate incidents reached 1,807 in 2024/25, the highest financial year level since records began in 2004/05, with an increase of 454 incidents compared to the previous year.
- Race hate crimes similarly rose to 1,188, an increase of 349 crimes, also marking the highest level since recording began.
- August 2024 saw 349 race incidents recorded - the single highest monthly level ever recorded, approximately double the previous high of 171 in July 2024.
- Sectarian hate incidents and crimes saw the largest decreases, falling by 181 incidents and 142 crimes respectively.
- Sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity motivations also saw decreases in both incidents and crimes compared to 2023/24.
- Faith/religion motivated incidents increased, though by a smaller margin than race incidents.
- The number of sectarian hate crimes (588) was the second lowest financial year level recorded since 2005/06, with the lowest (576) recorded in 2017/18.

In the 12 months from 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025: Crimes with a race hate motivation saw the largest increase, with smaller increases also seen in sectarian and faith/religion identity crimes. There was a decrease of 48 sectarian incidents, while the number of crimes rose by 1. Faith/religion incidents were unchanged with 94 and crimes increased from 59 to 71.

There is no available evidence from review undertaken that shows disparities in safeguarding reporting amongst Protestant and Catholic communities and sectarian crime has been decreasing according to NISRA.

While all safeguarding may not be deemed criminal, there are some overlaps and correlates that merit consideration of this data by the service delivery to consider best practice guidance.

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. There is no evidence to indicate Political opinion is a driver for reporting or under-reporting.

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.

This evidence of need for safety (due to discriminatory reaction to political opinion) could inhibit confidence to report.

In the 12 months from 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025: Crimes with a race hate motivation saw the largest increase, with smaller increases also seen in sectarian and faith/religion identity crimes. There was a decrease of 48 sectarian incidents, while the number of crimes rose by Disability incidents decreased from 88 to 69 and crimes fell from 47 to 43. Faith/religion incidents were unchanged with 94 and crimes increased from 59 to 71.

Racial Group

Participants in the Race and Racial Inequality in Sport explained that poor or non-existent representation is damaging on many levels, impacting progression and maintaining existing unequal relationships. A lack of visible role models also reinforces negative stereotypes and the perception that ethnically diverse participants have limited skills and abilities. Participants across all Home Nations shared examples of unrepresentative leadership and observed that the absence of representation leads to decision-making that is unlikely to be in the interests of Black and Asian communities and sports participants.

Across the portfolio of jobs in sport measured by standard occupational classification codes, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds account for 7% of the workforce, which is half their incidence in the working population (14%). Representation is notably low for the influential roles of Sport Coaches, Instructors and Officials (5%) and Leisure and Sport Managers (6%)

Participants reported anxiety and mental health issues as a direct result of negative coaching behaviours and practices based on their race. Young participants reported that the attitude and

behaviours of coaches affected their confidence and motivation in early years. For elite athletes and those on performance pathways negative coaching attitudes had caused participants to leave clubs or their sport altogether.

Exclusion also exists for culturally diverse coaches who told stories of unwelcoming environments, disbelief of the validity of skills and expertise and limited opportunities for career progression and access to top coaching roles.

There is evidence within participants' stories that funding mechanisms do not reach the communities most in need. This was reported by participants representing grassroots organisations, elite athletes, and teams. Black and Asian communities, groups and clubs are poorly represented in grant-making structures. The research found that these communities are also less likely to be aware of support structures that can help in accessing grants and funds. Organisations adopt "colour blind" approaches that favour organisations who can best navigate the application process

Culturally diverse groups may therefore feel disenfranchised from the established sporting system and lack trust in reporting safeguarding concerns. This may also be impacted by language barriers and feelings of social exclusion. Thus people from culturally diverse groups may be more reluctant to report. This may be inferred from the Race and Racial Inequality in Sport body of research (pertaining to religious backgrounds), and NISRA crime statistics on race hate crime (May 2025) which found:

- Race hate incidents reached 1,807 in 2024/25, the highest financial year level since records began in 2004/05, with an increase of 454 incidents compared to the previous year.
- Race hate crimes similarly rose to 1,188, an increase of 349 crimes, also marking the highest level since recording began.
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- The number of sectarian hate crimes (588) was the second lowest financial year level recorded since 2005/06, with the lowest (576) recorded in 2017/18.

In the 12 months from 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025: While there were more race incidents when compared with the previous twelve months. Crimes with a race hate motivation saw the largest increase. There were 646 more race incidents and 434 more race crimes recorded. The number of both race incidents (2,049) and race crimes (1,329) are the highest 12 month levels recorded since the data series began in 2004/05. Four of the five highest monthly levels of race incidents in the data series were recorded between July 2024 and June 2025. The 349 race incidents recorded in August 2024 was the single highest monthly level in the data series, followed by the 345 race incidents recorded in June 2025.

There is no available evidence from review undertaken that shows disparities in safeguarding reporting amongst Protestant and Catholic communities and sectarian crime has been decreasing according to NISRA.

While all safeguarding may not be deemed criminal, there are some overlaps and correlates that merit consideration of this data by the service delivery to consider best practice guidance.

Age

This plan considers safeguarding for both children and adults equally, however older people may need to be considered, as capacity decreases, and disabilities and illness increase.

[chapter-9-----crimes-against-older-and-vulnerable--people-22.10.19.pdf](#) notes the level of crime against older people.

Nexus, which hosts the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, reported: “Last year only six older people per week (approx. 300 in year) reached out to the DSA Helpline for support, with about half of callers citing experience of coercive control, one quarter sexual abuse and one quarter physical abuse. Research shows that one in five older people in the UK are victims of abuse - that means over 100,000 older people experience abuse in Northern Ireland.

The [PSNI](#) Public Protection Branch, said: “Unfortunately, abuse against older people happens here in Northern Ireland and is often unreported for many reasons. This may be the physical or mental ability of the victim, their dependency on the abuser for care and/or the fear of retaliation from the abuser. “We recorded 2,522 domestic or sexual abuse crimes against people aged 55 or over in 23/24, representing approximately 10% (1in10) of all domestic and sexual abuse recorded crimes. We hope that raising awareness on spotting the signs will encourage and give people the confidence to report this crime. “Older people are often scared to speak up in fear of what will happen to them. Therefore, it is important that we are their voice, and we are looking out for older people. We as a police service are committed to preventing, deterring and detecting crimes against older people in our communities.”

Marital status

Single parents are most impacted by poverty and so may not have the personal agency and feelings of power to advocate their needs and safe boundaries.

The *Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021*, which came into force in February 2022, criminalises patterns of non-physical abusive behaviour as well as physical abuse. It introduced a new stand-alone domestic abuse offence, as well as two child aggravators that can be attached to the offence, and a statutory aggravator which can be applied to any other offence. Most prosecutions under the 2021 Act involve the aggravator rather than the stand-alone offence.

There were 1,625 prosecutions under the 2021 Act in 2022/23, resulting in 840 convictions (51.7 per cent). This rose in 2023/24 to 2,728 prosecutions and 1,515 convictions (55.5 per cent). Of the 396 cases involving the stand-alone offence dealt with at court in 2023/24, 210 resulted in convictions. Of the 2,656 cases with offences with the statutory aggravator, 1,478 resulted in a conviction. There were convictions in 17 cases where there was a child-related aggravator in 2023/24, with the aggravator proved in eight of them. In 2022/23, there were convictions in eight such cases, with the aggravator proved in six of them.

In both years, the vast majority of people convicted of an offence under the Act were male — 91.9 per cent in 2023/24 and 94.8 per cent in 2022/23. People aged 30 to 39 made up the highest proportion of those convicted of an offence under the Act during both years.

In all courts, convictions under the Act resulted in a custodial sentence in 30.6 per cent of cases in 2023/24 and 37.1 per cent of cases in 2022/23. At the Crown Court, 72 per cent of cases in 2023/24 and 100 per cent of cases in 2022/23 resulted in a custodial outcome. There were 154 cases in 2023/24 and 90 cases in 2022/23 where a sentence imposed was enhanced because of a conviction for an offence under the 2021 Act.

Sexual orientation

LGBTQI+ remain fairly invisible in longitudinal data but the following body of research and our engagement with Rainbow, Cara Friend and Stonewall indicates a lack of confidence within the sporting sector.

In the 12 months from 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025, while there were more race incidents when compared with the previous twelve months, there were fewer sexual orientation, sectarian, disability and transgender identity incidents. Sexual orientation crimes saw the largest decrease, with smaller decreases in disability and transgender identity crimes. Sexual orientation incidents and crimes fell from 376 to 355 and from 230 to 205 respectively. Transgender identity incidents fell from 73 to 60 and the number of transgender identity crimes fell from 41 to 34.

Men and Women Generally

Research suggests 98% of women in Northern Ireland have experienced at least one form of violence or abuse in their lifetime, with half (50%) experiencing this before they were 11 years old. The 'Every Voice Matters! Violence Against Women in Northern Ireland' report from Ulster University was commissioned by the Executive Office and launched at an event today by Head of the Civil Service, Jayne Brady, alongside a report by Queen's University Belfast. Both reports have been commissioned to inform the 'End Violence Against Women and Girls' strategy. Based on responses from more than 540 women, the Ulster University report has found seven out of 10 of those surveyed experienced some form of violence or abuse in the last 12 months. Other findings of the report include:

- The worst experience of violence or abuse was most commonly committed by stranger (29%), however often the perpetrator was known to the victim (romantic partner 23%; friend or acquaintance 19%) and occurred in their own home (26%);
- Participants reported a broad range of experiences of forms of violence and abuse with harassment or sexual harassment the most commonly reported type of abuse;
- Overall, only 1/3 of the participants felt able to speak about, or report, the violent incident that had occurred with shame and embarrassment the greatest barrier to reporting.

Women's Aid reports that in the financial year 2023/24 alone, **527 women** and **291 children** stayed in one of their emergency accommodation refuges throughout Northern Ireland.

Disability

The ability and confidence to report may be impacted by the type of disability and discriminatory/prejudicial behaviour experience.

In the 12 months from 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025: Disability incidents decreased from 88 to 69 and crimes fell from 47 to 43.

Dependents

According to the evidence reviewed, a carer or parent with dependants is not likely to have additional needs when reporting.

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

This service will not directly impact S75 groups, it provides a service of best practice guidance to the organisations within the sector. The guidance provided by the contractor will consider the needs of each group, but this will be implemented by sporting sector organisations, who are not bound by this contract. The impacts are likely to be none by this service contract. This contract does not directly manage reporting and disclosure of safeguarding issues. On a sub minor level the best practice guidance. Which will consider S75 groups will be disseminated to sports organisations who may implement said best practice and positively impact S75 groups concerning safeguarding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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)

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

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

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

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

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

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 details:

The strategic group in its role within the sector will specifically consider the needs and barriers for religious groups when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons:

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group in its role within the sector will specifically consider the needs and barriers for political opinion when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group in its role within the sector will specifically consider the needs and barriers for racial groups when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons

Age - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group will specifically consider the needs and barriers for people whom age would be categorised as causing vulnerability i.e. older people when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons:

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group will specifically consider the needs and barriers for marital status when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group will specifically consider the needs and barriers for LGBTQI+ groups when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons:

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group will specifically consider the needs and barriers for men and women when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons:

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group will specifically consider the needs and barriers for disabled people when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons:

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

The strategic group will specifically consider the needs and barriers for dependants when reaching out to sports groups and organisations.

If No, provide reasons:

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 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)

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

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

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

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / **None** (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 details:

Through achieving it's objectives, the strategic group's plan will have by default indirect impacts on improving good relations.

If No, provide reasons:

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

As above.

If No, provide reasons

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

As above

If No, provide reasons

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 service will therefore indirectly benefit adults from different religious beliefs, adults and children with different political opinions, from catholic and protestant communities, from different ethnic backgrounds, older people, young people, those who identify as single, married, separated or divorced, children and adults from across the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, people from urban and rural communities, and finally adults with children with caring responsibilities.

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

The strategic plan recognises the importance of intersectionality. It will address the safeguarding needs of all people specifically those from within the Section 75 categories that would identify as high risk in terms of safeguarding, for example - people with a disability, people from ethnic minorities, people from LGBTQ+ community, and people from rural areas. The strategic group through it's member bodies will disaggregate data, highlight lived experiences of service users and their safeguarding needs and provide an understanding for the need to tailor interventions as a result, and ensure no one is left behind due to overlapping inequalities.

Part 3. Screening decision

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

The investment into the revised strategic plan is not deemed to have an adverse impact on S75 groups, however responsibility to consider S75 groups is built into the work of the member body organisations and the work undertaken by those organisations.

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.

The strategic group is required to consider the needs of S75 groups through its member bodies and the work specifically undertaken by the strategic group in it's own name be that training sessions, conferences, and other learning opportunities offered by the group.

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.

The mitigation is the requirement of the member bodies that make up the strategic group and their own contractual requirements to consider the needs of S75 (and other vulnerable groups) within their own best practice guidance, resources and information disseminated to organisations within the service. It should be noted that this strategic plan is not a direct delivery service to S75 groups but it does consider their needs when delivering the plan's objectives.

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.

N/A

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: Christine Rea
Position/Job Title: Sport Developer
Date: 10.12.25

Approved by: Rebecca Hope
Position/Job Title: Interim Director of Sport
Date: 08.02.26

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.