

DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING TEMPLATE

This form should be completed when considering options for a new policy, service or programme, or changing an existing policy, service or programme. Those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full EQIA.

The template will provide a record of the factors taken into account if a policy is screened out, or excluded for EQIA. It will be included in the quarterly Screening Report which is published on the Department's website.

Please complete the Cover Sheet Table below

Policy Title (in full):	Extension of the 'HE-EU Framework Support Fund' (going forward to be renamed as the ' Collaborative Research Support Fund ').
Policy Aim	Horizon 2020 is the EU's eighth Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. It is the world's largest competitive research and innovation programme with a budget of around €80 billion and funds all stages of research and innovation. Northern Ireland researchers from academia, the private and public sectors are therefore eligible to apply to Horizon 2020 for research funds on a competitive basis as part of project collaborations with other, largely EU, countries. Project applications to Horizon are submitted directly to the European Commission (EC) for consideration, rather than via Government Departments. Government Departments and public bodies are not regularly involved in

projects and funding secured through Horizon goes directly to the successful applicants.

Against this background, the Department for the Economy's Higher Education (HE) – European Union (EU) Framework Support Fund has supported the work of Horizon 2020 Northern Ireland Contact Points (NICPs), based at Ulster University and Queen's University, since 2012 .

The NICPs, who are employees of the respective universities in which they are based, provide a range of hands-on support, guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in Horizon 2020 to all potential applicants from Northern Ireland who are interested in engaging with the programme, with the aim of not only seeking to increase the level of Northern Ireland activity, but also to enhance the quality of the applications submitted. The Fund supports the salaries of up to six NICPs and the associated costs in the two Universities, as well as other programmes and initiatives which support the Fund's objectives.

It is worth noting that, although the NICPs are based in the Universities, the expectation is that they provide a service to any potential applicants from across Northern Ireland, not just researchers based within their own institutions, in order to support Horizon 2020 engagement across the region.

Funding to the Universities for each funding period is dependent on the submission of an Action Plan to the Department for the relevant funding period which the Department must approve. Following approval of the Action Plan, the University is then required to accept of the Department's terms and conditions of the financial assistance provided by the Fund,

	<p>as outlined in a Letter of Allocation.</p> <p>The previous round of Funding for the HE-EU Framework Support Fund ended in March 2019 and, in line with established processes, an Economic Appraisal was completed and approved by the Department's Permanent Secretary to extend the existing Fund for the period from April 2019 – December 2020. The Fund has been renamed as the 'Collaborative Research Support Fund' for the new funding period. This Equality of Opportunity screening template is therefore completed in respect of the extension of the Fund.</p>
Decision (delete as appropriate)	<p>Policy screened in Policy screened out with mitigation or an alternative policy adopted Policy screened out without mitigation or an alternative policy adopted</p>
Business Area:	Higher Education Research and Knowledge Exchange Branch (Higher Education Division)
Contact:	Michael Leonard
Date of form completion:	30 th May 2019

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.

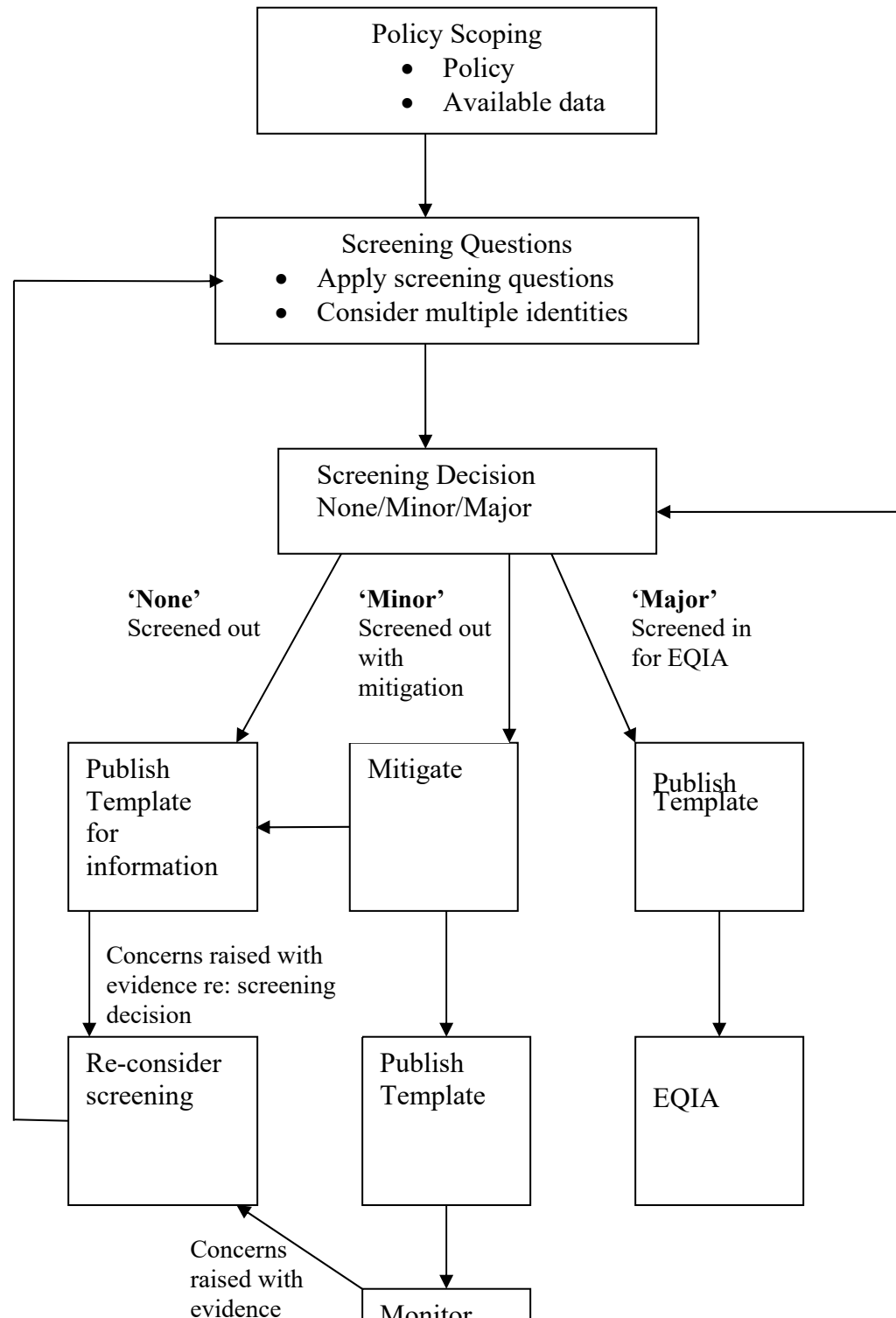
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

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

Collaborative Research Support Fund

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

This is an extension of the existing policy / funding programme.

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

In overall terms the Fund supports the work of the university-based Horizon 2020 NICPs who provide support to potential applicants with the aim of increasing the level of Northern Ireland activity and enhancing the quality of the applications submitted, in support of the Executive's target for Northern Ireland applicants to successfully draw down €145m through Horizon 2020.

The overarching aim for the Collaborative Research Support Fund for the period April 2019 – December 2020 is:

Northern Ireland applicants should increase drawdown of funding from Horizon 2020 in comparison to FP7 (FP7 was Horizon predecessor programme), with a view to making a significant contribution towards the Executive's drawdown target for Horizon 2020.

A number of underpinning targets have been developed in order to deliver the overarching aim.

Objectives:

1. Increase participation in Horizon 2020

By the end of Horizon 2020, increase the total number of Northern Ireland applications made to Horizon 2020 in comparison to FP7.

2. Increase the number of successful applications to Horizon 2020

By the end of Horizon 2020, increase the number of successful Northern Ireland applications made to Horizon 2020 in comparison to FP7.

3. Increase the value of awards made to the Northern Ireland applicants including the Universities

By the end of 2020: 1. Increase the overall Northern Ireland financial drawdown from Horizon 2020, in comparison to FP7; 2. Increase the financial drawdown from Horizon 2020 by the Northern Ireland Universities in comparison to FP7; 3. Increase the overall Northern Ireland financial drawdown from Horizon 2020 in comparison to FP7 when taken as a % of the overall programme budget.

4. Increase the level of Project Coordination

By the end of Horizon 2020: 1. Increase both the number and proportion of Northern Ireland applicants applying to Horizon 2020 as Project Coordinators in comparison to FP7; 2. Increase both the number and proportion of successful Horizon 2020 Northern Ireland University applicants acting as Project Coordinators in comparison to FP7. 3.

5. Increase Northern Ireland industry participation

By the end of Horizon 2020: 1. Increase the number of Northern Ireland industry applications to Horizon 2020 in comparison to FP7; 2. Increase the number of successful Northern Ireland Industry applications in comparison to FP7; 3. 1. Increase the overall Northern Ireland Industry financial drawdown from Horizon 2020, in comparison to FP7.

6. Increase North/South collaboration

By the end of Horizon 2020: 1. Increase the number of Horizon 2020 applications involving at least one partner from both Northern Ireland and Ireland in comparison to FP7; 2. Increase the number of successful Horizon 2020 applications involving at least one partner from both Northern Ireland and Ireland in comparison to FP7; 3. Increase the financial drawdown from successful Horizon 2020

applications involving at least one partner from both Northern Ireland and Ireland in comparison to FP7.

7. Increase the quality of submissions to Horizon 2020

By the end of Horizon 2020, increase the proportion of Northern Ireland applications to Horizon 2020 meeting the quality threshold score in comparison to FP7.

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

If so, explain how.

No, except in so far as those categories which might be more heavily represented in the research community are more likely to benefit from support to access research funding. The policy is essentially a funding agreement to support the work of the NICPs employed by the universities who, in turn, aim to support NI researchers with the capacity successfully to draw down Horizon 2020 funding, regardless of characteristic. This involves promoting international collaboration.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The then Department for Employment and Learning and the then Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment initiated the policy originally in FY 2012/13.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Higher Education Research and Knowledge Exchange Branch (DfE) owns and implements the policy.

Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they:

- financial
- legislative
- other - please specify

The implications of Brexit may affect the outcome in terms of impacting Northern Ireland's drawdown from Horizon 2020, as facilitated by the NICPs. The lack of clarity in relation to the UK's likely future access arrangements to Horizon 2020 (and beyond) in terms of Brexit has resulted in a degree of uncertainty among both UK and EU researchers. This creates a challenging environment for the NICPs to operate within to support potential Northern Ireland applicants to continue to successfully draw down funding from Horizon 2020 (with the potential for increased reluctance from local researchers to engage with Horizon, along with a reluctance from some potential EU partners to engage with UK / NI organisations).

Whilst a negotiated UK exit from the EU would result in continued access to the Horizon programme for the UK under the existing terms, in a 'no deal' scenario the UK's post Brexit access to certain elements of the Horizon programme would be restricted. This might impact the operation and effectiveness of the NICPs through the Fund and therefore the aim / outcome of the Fund. In order to mitigate the risk created by Brexit, in extending the Fund the Department has retained the right to review the scope and purpose of the Fund (and associated aim/objectives) in the event of Northern

Ireland participants' access to Horizon 2020 being restricted following Brexit. There is therefore scope potentially to alter the scope of the Fund (and associated aim/objectives), including the remit of the NICP role, beyond the confines of Horizon 2020 to have a focus on other competitive Research and Innovation funding programmes, particularly those concerned with international collaboration.

Main stakeholders affected

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

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations
- voluntary / community/trade unions
- other - please specify

Northern Ireland researchers (as well as researchers from the EU and beyond) from the business, academia and the public sectors engage with the NICPs.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?
- who owns them?

The UK Government owns the policy in relation to future access or otherwise to European Framework Programmes for competitive funding for research (i.e. Horizon

2020 and its successor programme Horizon Europe).

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

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

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/ information
Religious belief	N/A. The NICPs funded through the Collaborative Research Support Fund are employees of the Universities, who have their own Section 75 statutory obligations. The NICPs provide support to Northern Ireland researchers from the business, academia and public sectors who have an interest in applying to the Horizon 2020 programme. Information on Section 75 categories of those supported by the Fund is not collected. The criteria for successfully securing Funding through Horizon 2020 itself is based solely on the relative quality and research excellence of the application submitted. In light of the above the policy is therefore not considered to impact on any section 75 category.
Political opinion	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’
Racial group	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’

Age	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’
Marital status	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’
Sexual orientation	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’
Men and women generally	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’ Note - In terms of the NICPs, three of the four individuals currently in post are female. They were appointed by the Universities using their standard recruitment procedures, in line with their equality responsibilities.
Disability	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’
Dependants	N/A – see ‘Religious belief’

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	N/A
Political opinion	N/A
Racial group	N/A
Age	N/A
Marital status	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A
Men and women generally	N/A

Disability	N/A
Dependants	N/A

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 10-12 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	No impact on equality of opportunity. The NICPs funded through the Collaborative Research Support Fund are employees of the Universities, who have their own Section 75 statutory obligations. The NICPs provide support to Northern Ireland researchers from the business, academia and public sectors who have an interest in applying to the Horizon 2020 programme. Information on Section 75 categories of those supported by the Fund is not collected. In light of the above the policy is therefore not considered to have any impact on the on equality of opportunity impact as it is beyond the scope of this fund.	None
Political opinion	See 'Religious belief'	None
Racial group	See 'Religious belief'	None

Age	See 'Religious belief'	None
Marital status	See 'Religious belief'	None
Sexual orientation	See 'Religious belief'	None
Men and women generally	See 'Religious belief'	None
Disability	See 'Religious belief'	None
Dependants	See 'Religious belief'	None

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?		
Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious		No. No opportunities for better promotion of equality of opportunity. NICPs funded through the Collaborative

belief		Research Support Fund are employees of the Universities, who have their own Section 75 statutory obligations. The NICPs provide support to Northern Ireland researchers from the business, academia and public sectors who have an interest in applying to the Horizon 2020 programme. Information on Section 75 categories of those supported by the Fund is not collected. In light of the above the policy is therefore not considered to provide opportunities for better promotion of equality of opportunity.
Political opinion		No. See ‘religious belief’.
Racial group		No. See ‘religious belief’.
Age		No. See ‘religious belief’.
Marital status		No. See ‘religious belief’.
Sexual orientation		No. See ‘religious belief’.

Men and women generally		No. See 'religious belief'.
Disability		No. See 'religious belief'.
Dependants		No. See 'religious belief'.

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	N/A – Not likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.	None
Political opinion	N/A – Not likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.	None
Racial group	N/A – Not likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.	None

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

Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons

Religious belief		<p>No. No opportunities for better promotion of good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. NICPs funded through the Collaborative Research Support Fund are employees of the Universities, who have their own Section 75 statutory obligations. The NICPs provide support to Northern Ireland researchers from the business, academia and public sectors who have an interest in applying to the Horizon 2020 programme. Information on Section 75 categories of those supported by the Fund is not collected. In light of the above the policy is therefore not considered to provide opportunities for better promotion good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.</p>
Political opinion		<p>No. See ‘religious belief’.</p>
Racial group		<p>No. See ‘religious belief’.</p>

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).

N/A

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

N/A

Part 3. Screening decision

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

The policy is funding / administrative mechanism that funds NICPs, who are employees of the Universities. The NICPs provide support to Northern Ireland researchers who have an interest in applying to the EU's Horizon 2020 research programme. Given the fact that University is the employer of the NICPs and the policy has no direct relevance to, or impact on, equality of opportunity or good relations, it is not considered necessary to complete an equality impact assessment.

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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

Mitigation

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

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

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

N/A

Timetabling and prioritising

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

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

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

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

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:	Position/Job Title	Date
Michael Leonard	NI Horizon 2020 Manager – Manage the Fund	30/5/19
Approved by:		
Lynne Miskelly	Head of Branch	18/6/2019

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.