

Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

January 2015



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

www.dardni.gov.uk

DARD Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

Title of policy / decision to be screened:-

A Rural Proofing Bill for Northern Ireland.

Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

The purpose of rural proofing is to ensure fair and equitable treatment of rural communities and that a policy does not indirectly have a detrimental impact on rural dwellers and rural communities. Rural proofing is currently part of the policy-making process across government in Northern Ireland but does not currently have a statutory footing.

Aims and objectives of the policy / decision to be screened:-

The Rural Proofing Bill is being brought forward in order to strengthen the existing policy requirements around rural proofing. The Northern Ireland Executive has been committed to undertaking rural proofing since 2002, and reaffirmed this commitment in 2009. The approach to rural proofing to date has been a non-legislative one and evidence suggests that this method has not been as effective as first envisaged. Therefore in order to better meet the commitments set by the Executive in 2002 and again in 2009, it is considered that legislating for the process will strengthen and underpin this commitment. Legislating for rural proofing will also serve to improve the effectiveness of this process and to ensure that the needs of rural communities are taken into account in the policy making process, across all departments, on an ongoing basis.

On whom will the policy / decision impact?

Consider the internal and external impacts (both actual or potential)

- Staff – no impact perceived.
- Service users – no impact perceived.
- Rural community

Statistics (2011 census) show that around 37% of the Northern Ireland population live in rural areas. Giving the rural proofing process a statutory footing will further protect the needs of the rural community when all government departments across Northern Ireland are considering introducing new or revised policies.

- Other public sector organisations

It is proposed that the Rural Proofing Bill will extend the rural proofing process to Local Councils and, potentially, other Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

- Voluntary / community groups / trade unions

The voluntary and community organisations that are based primarily in rural areas and who primarily represent the views of the 37% of the rural population in Northern Ireland, should benefit from the policies and statutory provisions that the Rural Proofing Bill will introduce.

- others, please specify – no impact perceived.

Are there linkages to other NI Departments / NDPBs?

The Rural Proofing Bill will extend to all government departments, Local Councils upon enactment and potentially other Non-Departmental Public Bodies, in the future.

Section B

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact?

Section 75 category	Details of likely impact	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Statistics from the 2011 census show the make-up of the rural community to be 45% Catholic, 52% Protestant and other Christian and 3% other or no religion. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to any particular religious belief, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their particular religious belief.	None
Political opinion	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. There is no available data to show the make-up of the political opinion in the rural community. However, given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to any particular political opinion, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their particular political opinion.	None
Racial group	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Latest statistics taken from the 2011 census show the make-up of the rural community to be 99.4% white and 0.6% other ethnic groupings. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to any particular racial group, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their	None

	racial grouping.	
Age	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Latest statistics taken from the 2011 census show the make-up of rural community to be 22% aged under 15, 24% aged 16 – 34, 39% aged 35 – 64 and 14% aged 65+. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to any particular age range, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their age.	None
Marital status	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Latest statistics taken from the 2011 census show the make-up of rural households to be 22.24% one person households, 48.67% married couple households, 0.03% same-sex civil partnership couple households, 4.58% cohabiting couple households, 11.05% lone parent households and 6.58% other types of households. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to anyone's marital status, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their marital status.	None
Sexual orientation	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. There is no available data to show the make-up of the sexual orientation of the rural community. However, given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to anyone's sexual orientation, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their sexual orientation.	None
Men and women	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the	None

generally	needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Latest statistics taken from the 2011 census show the make-up of the rural community to be 50% men and 50% women. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to anyone's gender, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their gender.	
Disability	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Latest statistics taken from the 2011 census show that 40% of rural households contain at least one person with a long term health problem or disability. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to anyone with a disability, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of their disability.	None
Dependants	The policies contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them. Latest statistics taken from the 2011 census show the make-up of rural households to be 37% with dependants and 63% without. Given that the current rural proofing policy is neutral with regard to anyone with dependants, then introducing legislation to strengthen the existing policy requirements will therefore have no impact on the equality of opportunity afforded to anyone regardless of whether they have dependants or not.	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 belief		Given that the policy proposals within the Rural Proofing Bill are neutral for all the Section 75 categories, with regard to equality of opportunity, then there is no facility in the policy proposals to better promote equality of opportunity.
Political opinion		As above.
Racial group		As above.
Age		As above.
Marital status		As above.
Sexual orientation		As above.
Men and women generally		As above.
Disability		As above.
Dependants		As above.

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

Good relations category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	As the policy proposals within the Rural Proofing Bill are targeted toward enhancing and improving the needs of <u>all people</u> living in rural communities, in terms of the effect of government policies upon them, then, de facto they are neutral with regard to promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial groups. Consequently, there is no facility in the policy proposals to better promote good relations between these groupings.	None
Political opinion	As above.	None
Racial group	As above.	None

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

Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief		Given that the policy proposals within the Rural Proofing Bill are neutral with regard to promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs,

		political opinion or racial groups, then there is no facility in the policy proposals to better promote good relations between these groupings.
Political opinion		As above.
Racial group		As above.

Available evidence

What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Set out all evidence below along with details of the different groups you have met and / or consulted with to help inform your screening assessment.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence / information and engagement
Religious belief	Detailed consideration of the existing rural proofing process, cognisance of the breakdown of rural statistical data in the 2011 census and stakeholder engagement across a range of representative groups from the rural community.
Political opinion	As above.
Racial group	As above.
Age	As above.
Marital status	As above.
Sexual	As above.

orientation	
Men & women generally	As above.
Disability	As above.
Dependants	As above.

Section C DARD also has legislative obligations to meet under the [Disability Discrimination Order](#) and [Human Rights Act](#) (insert links)

Questions 5 -9 relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

5. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for DARD to better **promote positive attitudes** towards disabled people?

Explain your assessment in full

No.

There is no facility in the policy proposals to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people as the proposals are neutral with regard to people with and without disabilities.

6. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively **increase the participation** by disabled people in public life?

Explain your assessment in full

No.

There is no facility in the policy proposals to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life as the proposals are neutral with regard to people with and without disabilities.

Consideration of Human Rights

7. The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 brings the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law and it applies in N Ireland. Indicate below (place an X in the appropriate box) any potential *adverse impacts* that the policy / decision may have in relation to human rights issues.

Right to Life	Article 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment	Article 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prohibition of slavery and forced labour	Article 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to liberty and security	Article 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to a fair and public trial	Article 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to no punishment without law	Article 7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence	Article 8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	Article 9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to freedom of expression	Article 10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association	Article 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to marry and to found a family	Article 12	<input type="checkbox"/>
The prohibition of discrimination	Article 14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of property and enjoyment of possessions	Protocol 1 Article 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to education	Protocol 1 Article 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to free and secret elections	Protocol 1 Article 3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consideration of Human Rights (cont)

8. Please explain any adverse impacts on human rights that you have identified

No adverse impact identified.

9. Please indicate any ways which you consider the policy positively promotes human rights

None.

Monitoring Arrangements

Section 75 places a requirement on DARD to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity.

Outline what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.

Equality	Good Relations	Disability Duties
No specific data will be collected as the Rural Proofing Bill will have no impact on equality.	No specific data will be collected as the Rural Proofing Bill will have no impact on good relations.	No specific data will be collected as the Rural Proofing Bill will have no impact on disability duties.

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

<p>Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened</p> <p>A Rural Proofing Bill for Northern Ireland</p>
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I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	equality of opportunity and good relations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	disabilities duties; and
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	human rights issues

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is –

*place an X in the appropriate box below

<input type="checkbox"/>	* <u>Screened In</u> – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>*<u>Screened Out</u> – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</p> <p>Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</p> <p>The policy proposals contained within the Rural Proofing Bill are giving a statutory footing to the existing process of rural proofing and thereby strengthening the existing policy that has been in place since 2002 – on that basis the Rural Proofing Bill has no differential impact.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>* <u>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions</u> (minor impacts)</p> <p>Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe clearly the mitigating actions and / or policy changes that will now be introduced • Explain how these actions will address the inequalities:
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Formal Record of Screening Decision (cont)

Screening assessment completed by (Staff Officer level or above) -

Name: Astrid Stuart

Grade: G7

Branch: Rural Proofing Branch

Date: 28 January 2015

Signature:



Screening decision approved by (must be Grade 3 or above) -

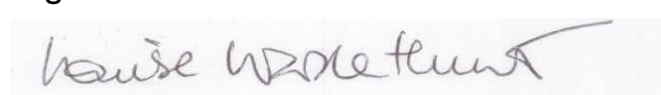
Name: Louise Warde Hunter

Grade: G3

Branch: Central Policy Group

Date: 28 January 2015

Signature:



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