

Department of Health

**High Level Equality Screening Budget
2021/22**

Introduction

1. It is the Department's mission to improve the health and social well-being of the people of Northern Ireland and the Department has a statutory responsibility to promote an integrated system of health and social care designed to secure improvement in the physical and mental health of people in Northern Ireland, the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness, and the social wellbeing of the people in Northern Ireland.
2. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.
3. The main purpose of the Section 75 statutory equality duties is to bring equality considerations into mainstream policy-making processes, in order to eliminate or minimise any unintentional adverse consequences of policy decisions and to ensure that health and social care is accessible to the whole community. The Section 75 statutory duties are also the key means available to public authorities to address inequalities and demonstrate measurable positive impact on the lives of people experiencing inequalities.

Draft Budget Outcome 2021/22

4. The total proposed Resource Budget settlement for the Department of Health in 2021/22 is some **£6,451.9 million**. However if we take account of anticipated funding for NDNA Transformation and Confidence and Supply funding for Mental Health and Severe Deprivation which the Minister of Finance is hopeful will be reinstated to the Executive this would give a proposed budget settlement of **£6,597.6 million**, which is **£495.2 million** of additional funding in 2021/22 when compared with the 2020/21 baseline of **£6,102.4 million**.

5. In summary, the proposed additional funding of **£495.2 million** includes:
- **£52.1 million** for Agenda for Change (AfC) pay increase in 2021/22 (as previously committed to by the Executive);
 - **£49 million** for NDNA transformation;
 - **£11.7 million** previously funded from Confidence and Supply - **£10 million** for Mental Health and **£1.7 million** for Severe Deprivation;
 - **£380 million** for COVID/ Rebuild;
 - **£0.3 million** EU Exit;
 - **£2 million** EU Match Funding.
6. The main issue for the Department is that only **£52.1 million** of the Draft Budget settlement represents additional recurrent mainstream funding and this is specifically to cover the expected Agenda for Change (AfC) pay increase in 2021/22. Therefore the budget settlement will be very challenging to manage against our total funding requirements as we require a long term recurrent funding commitment to provide a basis for the sustainable rebuild of our health service
7. While the additional COVID and NDNA Transformation funding received is welcome it will not be without its challenges as the non-recurrent nature of the funding means there needs to be care taken about the amount of risk we take in deploying funding where this creates additional recurrent tails. The level of non-recurrent funding has now reached such a high level that it is vital that we guard against the assumption that additional funding will become available when needed.
8. The Department has produced a high level screening assessment of the potential equality impacts of its indicative budget allocation and any mitigating actions that can be taken as this represents a proportionate approach tailored to the timescale available.
9. Due to the strategic focus of the Budget and the subsequent Departmental level allocations, the equality impacts of individual policies, programmes and projects cannot be specifically considered within this document. These will be subject to

separate screening by the Department and its Arm's Length Bodies with full equality impact assessments completed as required.

Key equality challenges

10. The Department's Equality Scheme sets out how the Department proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties, including that the Department will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Duties are complied with and that effective internal arrangements are in place to ensure the effective compliance with the Duties and for monitoring and reviewing progress.
11. Under the Equality Scheme, the Department commits to develop an Equality Action Plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The initial Plan is informed by an audit of inequalities which gathers and analyses information across the Section 75 categories to identify the inequalities that exist for service users and those affected by the Department's policies.
12. The Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan for the next 5 years, was published 2 April 2019 and can be accessed on the DoH website (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/doh-equality>). The Plan will be subject to review with additional measures added, as appropriate, throughout the life of the plan.

Impact

13. The aim of the Department at a strategic level is to protect frontline services and maintain service provision as much as possible, and, through this minimise the impact on service delivery, patients and clients. It is, however, recognised that when more detailed proposals are identified further screening and consultation may be required.

14. The draft budget outcome for 2021/22 will not provide sufficient recurrent funding to maintain service provision and the Department will be required to rely on non-recurrent funding to cover our inescapable costs.
15. The reliance on non-recurrent funding and one year budgets is detrimental to the entire NI population and will impact all Section 75 groups as longer term solutions which might ultimately represent better value for money cannot be taken forward in this context.
16. The Department welcomes the anticipated Confidence and Supply funding and recognises the positive impact across all Section 75 groups. Out of the **£11.7 m** previously funded from Confidence and Supply allocation, **£10 million** is for Mental Health and this is being used to help address increasing pressures on Mental Health services. The remaining **£1.7 million** will continue to support the Early Years Development Fund and will be invested in the work of the Child Care Partnerships in the support of quality childcare across Northern Ireland.
17. The draft one year capital budget outcome for 2021/20 represents a 10% increase in the opening budget position from 2020/21 and whilst this is a positive outcome that will enable us to meet our existing contractual and inescapable priorities, this one year settlement limits our ability to commence projects that will continue beyond the current financial year.
18. Our ability to transform and rebuild our Health Service is directly linked to the level of capital resources available and whilst the planned capital programme is consistent with the desired direction of change, without additional funding and confirmation of a multi-year budget it will be several years before we can accelerate this change. This includes investment we would want to make in our acute hospitals, mental health, primary care, children's and adult learning disability and our emergency services.

Implications

19. The potential equality implications and high level mitigating actions relating to the draft budget outcome for 2021/22 are outlined at **Annex A**.
20. Further implications could be identified during full equality impact assessments on individual initiatives once budget allocations have been agreed and in light of any potential evidence gathered for example from consultation.
21. **Annex B** provided details in relation to Rural Needs Act Considerations and Children's Services Co-operation Act.

Conclusion

22. The indicative budget does not provide enough recurrent funding to enable the Department to maintain service provision and provide a basis for the sustainable rebuild of health services. The Department has raised its concerns with the Department of Finance (DoF) in this regard.
23. On the capital side the draft capital budget is a positive outcome that will enable us to meet our existing contractual and inescapable priorities, but our ability to commence new projects is limited by this one year settlement.
24. Difficult decisions will be required and it is likely that the Section 75 categories 'Race', 'Age' 'Gender' and 'Disability' will be most heavily impacted.
25. The Department will closely monitor the budgetary position and will give consideration to options to address pressures.
26. The Department is committed to working with DoF to secure the additional funding required to improve outcomes for the Northern Ireland population including those

Section 75 groups which may potentially be impacted by cost reductions. However, it should be recognised that this needs to be on a recurrent basis in order that service provision can be sustained into the 2022/23 financial year.

Annex A: High Level Screening Questions

Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?			
Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
Religious belief	At this time there is no evidence to indicate that the Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome would have a differential impact on persons of a different religious belief.	N/A	None
Political opinion	At this time there is no evidence to indicate that the Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome would have a differential impact on persons of a different political opinion.	N/A	None
Racial group	It is possible that the Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome budget outcome will have a differential impact on unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) arriving in NI due to a potential reduction in services. The numbers of UASC has been consistently growing in recent years, with inexplicable spikes occurring at certain points. The needs of some of these young people are significant and the system is struggling to meet their needs, including the basic need of accommodation.	Further work required to assess if any mitigating actions could be identified/ taken forward.	Major

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?

Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
Age	<p>It is possible that the Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome budget outcome will have a differential impact on all age groups via the realignment of some services. Possible areas of impact might include:</p> <p>MDTs, failure to roll out MDTs further in a reasonable timeframe will lead to inequality of access which will have impact on older people to a greater; should the budget position lead to removal of MDT services, the impact will more substantially felt here as well.</p> <p>Potential reductions in Palliative services will impact on older people;</p> <p>A reduction in funding for the No More Silos initiative would impact ability of GPs to conduct reviews of residential care;</p> <p>Elective service pressures will be felt by young and elderly as these would be the main users of these services;</p>	<p>Further work required to assess if any mitigating actions could be identified / taken forward.</p>	<p>Major</p>

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?

Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
	<p>Community services / care packages; Domiciliary care support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressures on services delivered to elderly due to aging population e.g. increased waiting lists; • Social care and nursing / residential care places; • Pressures on the children’s social care system and the risk of poorer outcomes in safeguarding and wellbeing terms for children in need (including in need of protection and looked after children). 		
Marital status	<p>At present there is no evidence to indicate that the Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome would have a differential impact on persons of a different marital status.</p>	N/A	None

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?

Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
Sexual orientation	<p>It is possible that the Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome budget outcome might have a differential impact on persons of a different sexual orientation. Possible areas of impact might include:</p> <p>Impact on Human Immunodeficiency Virus diagnosis</p> <p>Impact on Human Immunodeficiency Virus Tests</p> <p>Impact on people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus</p> <p>Inability to meet strategic direction and international Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS elimination strategy target</p> <p>Impact on costs as Pre-exposure Prophylaxis had been proven to be cost effective in both Quality adjusted life year.</p>	Further work required to assess if any mitigating actions could be identified/ taken forward.	Minor

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?

Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
<p>Gender (Men and women generally)</p>	<p>It is recognised that Health and Social Care workforce is mainly female and that the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service workforce is mainly male.</p> <p>Any reduction in the Workforce baseline, impacting on nursing training places, will have a detrimental impact on this category given the majority of the HSC workforce are women.</p> <p>In addition, some services such as maternity are gender specific.</p> <p>Any reduction in funding to the IRIS domestic violence scheme will impact on women more than men, as evidence indicates women are more likely to be the victims of domestic violence.</p>	<p>Further work required to assess if any mitigating actions could be identified/ taken forward.</p>	<p>Major</p>

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?

Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
Disability (with or without)	<p>It is possible that restrictions due to Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome will have a differential impact on persons with or without a disability via the realignment of some services. Possible areas of impact might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on elective care provision; • Impact on community services/ care packages; • Impact on day care provision; • Failure to resettle long stay mental health and learning disability patients; • Failure to roll out MDTs further in a reasonable timeframe will lead to inequality of access which will have impact people with disabilities to a greater; should the budget position lead to removal of MDT services, the impact will more substantially felt here as well; • Larger proportion of children with a disability in care compared to general population – continuing pressures for specialist placements and short break provision. 	Further work required to assess if any mitigating actions could be identified/ taken forward.	Major

What is the likely equality impact of this proposal for each of the Section 75 equality categories and what (if any) mitigating actions can be taken?

Section 75 category:	Details of potential impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Level of potential impact: (major/minor/none)
<p>Dependants (with or without)</p>	<p>It is possible that restrictions due to Draft 2021/22 Budget Outcome could have a differential impact on those with caring responsibilities via the realignment of some services. Possible areas of impact might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on respite care; • Impact on day care services; • Schemes provided to support families through voluntary sector due to potential reduction in programme funding from DoH; • Larger proportion of young people in care are parents compared to general population – potential pressures on specialist placements. 	<p>Further work required to assess if any mitigating actions could be identified / taken forward.</p>	<p>Minor</p>

Annex B: Rural Needs Act & Children's Services Co-operation Act

Rural Needs Act Considerations

1. The Department is committed to ensuring that it fulfils its rural proofing duties and ensures rural needs are appropriately taken into account. Once a final budget has been agreed spending areas will assess whether policies, strategies and plans that are to be taken forward have a differential impact on rural areas, and where appropriate, make adjustments to take account of particular rural circumstances.

Children's Services Co-operation Act

2. DoH and its ALBs are committed to the principles and requirements of the Children's Services Co-operation Act and have considerable experience of contributing to and leading partnerships to improve wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families.
3. The Department would highlight that if a children's authority (as defined by the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015) external to DoH was to require DoH or any of its ALBs to co-operate with that authority in the exercise of any of their children's functions defined in s.2 (4) as "any function which may contribute to the wellbeing of children and young persons", this may have considerable financial implications for DoH.
4. DoH will assess whether policies, strategies and plans that are to be taken forward impact the principles and requirements of the Children's Services Co-operation Act, and where appropriate, take account of those particular circumstances.