

Equality Screening Template – Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act 1998

Policy title: RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY SUPPORT SCHEME OPTIONS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Policy screened out **without** mitigation or an alternative policy adopted

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Content

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 assess the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

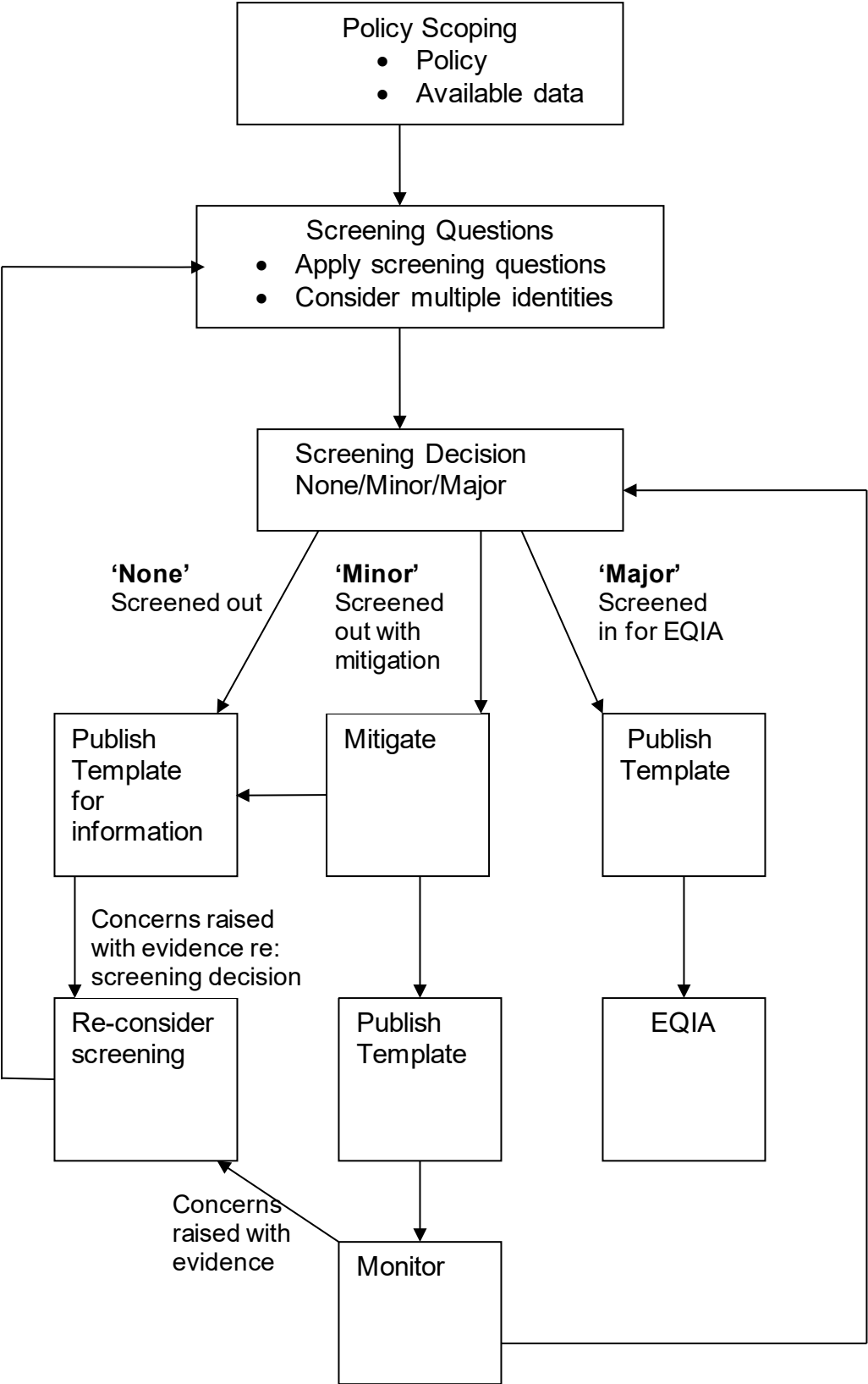
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

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.

Flowchart for the equality screening process and decision.



Part 1. Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Name of the Policy

Renewable Energy Support Scheme Design Considerations for Northern Ireland.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

New - consulting on options for a renewable electricity support scheme was one of the policies included in the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022 agreed by the Minister and published in January 2022.

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

The Renewable Energy Support Scheme Options for Northern Ireland sets out the key considerations the Department for the Economy is considering during the design stages of a renewable electricity support scheme for Northern Ireland. This includes options to define the principles underpinning the support scheme, as well as more granular aspects of the scheme design, such as subsidy structure, allocation process, and funding approach.

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

It is expected that the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland will benefit all of the population in Northern Ireland including all Section 75 categories.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has published a report on the impact of global warming at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. They made it clear that by limiting warming to 1.5° we may be able to mitigate some of the effects on health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth.

Through a move to cleaner sources of electricity, carbon emissions will be reduced along with energy costs, helping to tackle fuel poverty as well as reducing associated health problems.

A Renewable Electricity Support Scheme will accelerate Northern Ireland's journey towards net zero bringing on board large scale renewable generation to decarbonise local electricity production.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The [Path to Net Zero Energy Strategy](#) (the Energy Strategy) was published on 16th December 2021. It sets out an ambitious pathway to a decarbonised, affordable energy

future for everyone within Northern Ireland, one that ends price volatility associated with fossil fuels and ensures that more of the money we spend on energy stays in the local economy, helping to create opportunities for jobs and wealth creation.

The vision of the Energy Strategy sets out how we will achieve net zero carbon and affordable energy, in line with UK Government commitments, by 2050. It identified a new target of 70% of all energy consumed in NI to come from renewable sources. This target has since increased to 80% through the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

The [Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022](#) was published in January, outlining 22 commitments for the year. The action plan included an action to consult on a renewable electricity support scheme in 2022 (Action Plan 12). Such a scheme is essential to deliver on the NI Executive's Energy Strategy targets and ensure NI can effectively attract investors to benefit from green growth opportunities.

Action Plan 12 will also contribute to both the [NI Executive Draft Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2016-2021](#) and 'New Decade, New Approach', as well as the wider departmental strategy of [Economy 2030: Draft Industrial Strategy](#) and the [10X Economy - An Economic Vision for a Decade of Innovation](#).

DfE has examined and analysed the objectives of several support schemes across Europe, their overall design, and finally the relative success in reaching their targets. A public consultation drafted by DfE to set out, and seek input on, the key considerations the Department for the Economy is planning on considering during the design stages of a renewable electricity support scheme for Northern Ireland will issue during January 2023.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

DfE is responsible for the development and implementation of a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme.

Implementation factors

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

Legislative – It is likely that legislation will be necessary to implement a renewable electricity support scheme for Northern Ireland.

Once policy direction is confirmed, further screening will be necessary on any planned policy coming from the proposed consultation.

Main stakeholders affected

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

- Renewable energy developers
- Electricity networks (SONI/NIEN)

- Energy supply chain sector
- Utility Regulator
- BEIS
- DfI
- Environmental NGOs
- All those that work in, or live close to, sites for generation of renewable electricity

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

The UK Government recently published the Net Zero Strategy¹ and Energy White Paper.² Whilst energy policy is largely devolved in NI, some relevant areas remain reserved matters.

The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme will also need to be observant of products, services and schemes that will enable a broad range of non-energy strategies, frameworks, and policies, which will support and reflect the ambitions of the new Energy Strategy, including:

- Programme for Government, TEO
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, SIB
- Energy Management Strategy, DfE/SIB
- Vision for a 10X Economy, DfE
- Skills Strategy, DfE
- Circular Economy Strategic Framework, DfE
- Green Growth Strategy, DAERA
- Environment Strategy, DAERA
- Fuel Poverty Strategy, DfC

Available evidence

Throughout the development of the Path to Net Zero Energy Strategy and the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme Options for Northern Ireland, DfE has worked closely with a broad cross-section of business, consumers, environmental NGOs, government, and the energy industry.

The first stage of the strategy development was a Call for Evidence published in December 2019, which closed on 3rd April 2020. This process also involved thematic workshops, stakeholder engagement and collaboration across government. A report on the Call for Evidence along with all the individual responses was published on 30 June 2020.³ Throughout the policy process the Department worked collaboratively with over 70 organisations represented on five working groups, established specific industry consultation groups, issued

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1026655/net-zero-strategy.pdf

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945899/2012_16_BEIS_EWP_Command_Paper_Accessible.pdf

³ [Energy Strategy - Call for Evidence | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

a monthly e-bulletin to over 600 stakeholders and established a cross governmental stakeholder group to align cross cutting policies.

The second stage was the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation Paper⁴, launched on 31 March and closed on 02 July 2021. The Department carried out virtual, public stakeholder events as well as consumer focus groups and an online business survey.⁵ This commitment to collaboration is reflected in the high level of responses (283) to the policy options consultation resulting in stakeholders' feedback and views on policy proposals being reflected in Northern Ireland's new Energy Strategy.⁶

In summer 2021 DfE commissioned the Energy, Power and Intelligent Control Research Cluster and the Bryden Centre at Queen's University Belfast with the review and assessment of the suitability of possible support scheme options to incentivise renewable investment in Northern Ireland for power generation. This research complemented other work already underway as part of Northern Ireland's new Energy Strategy and contributed to its development as evidence base. The Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022 was published in January, outlining 22 commitments for this year. The action plan includes an action to consult on a renewable electricity support scheme in 2022 (Action Plan 12), for delivery in 2023. Such a scheme is essential to deliver on the NI Executive's Energy Strategy targets and ensure NI can effectively attract investors to benefit from green growth opportunities.

Since the publication of the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022, the Department for the Economy and BEIS officials have been working together to consider options for a support scheme for Northern Ireland. During 2022, DfE commissioned Cornwall Insight with a piece of research to set out the evidence base to inform the drafting of the consultation on design considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland.

Religious belief evidence / information:

The 2021 Census found that 43.5% of the population in Northern Ireland came from a Protestant background and 45.7% from a Catholic background. The Equality Commission's Fair Employment Monitoring Report No. 31⁷ indicates that 50.2% of the (monitored) workforce are from a Protestant background and 49.8% from a Roman Catholic background.

Political Opinion evidence / information:

In 2020, 35% of respondents to a NI Life & Times Survey⁸ considered themselves to be unionist, 19% nationalist and 42% neither.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the policy development for the Path to Net Zero Energy Strategy and the support scheme was a key

⁴ [Consultation on policy options for the new Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

⁵ [Energy Strategy business and consumer virtual insight and awareness consultation | Consumer Council](#)

⁶ [Energy Strategy for NI](#)

⁷ [Fair Employment Monitoring Report No.31 \(equalityni.org\)](#)

⁸ [NI Life and Times Survey - 2020 : UNINATID \(ark.ac.uk\)](#)

element of that. Although information on individuals was not collected based on political opinion, no responses identified political opinion as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

Racial Group evidence / information:

The 2021 Census reported that 96.55% of the total NI population was white.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy and, although information on individuals was not collected based on racial group, no responses identified racial grouping as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

Age evidence / information:

The Northern Ireland population continues to age. The 2021 Census⁹ shows:

- 0-14 years 19.20%
- 15-39 31.2%
- 40-64 32.40%
- 65+ 17.2%

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Path to Net Zero energy strategy and the support scheme consultation development, including representatives of older people.

Marital Status evidence / information:

The 2011 Census contains information in relation to the marital and civil partnership status of the population within Northern Ireland:



⁹ [Census 2021- main statistics demography tables age and sex](#)

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy but information on individuals was not collected based on marital status and no responses identified marital as a factor in differing impacts of the strategy or specific policies such as the support scheme policy.

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy but information on individuals was not collected based on sexual orientation and no responses identified sexual orientation as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy or specific policies such as the support scheme policy.

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

NISRA population statistics for 2020 show that 50.7% are female with 49.3% male¹⁰. By 2031, projections are that the male/female balance will be 50/50 with that balance persisting to 2051.

The NISRA Labour Force Survey states that in 2020, of those aged 16-64 who were employed, 52% (432,000) were male¹¹ compared to 48% of women (392,000). There are differences between the public and private sector. The public sector has a large majority of females within its composition (65%) whereas just under half (45%) of the private sector workforce is female. NISRA states that the 2020 population of Northern Ireland is made up of 961,400 females and 934,200¹² males, however our future workforce balance is estimated to be slightly male dominated as the current population split for ages 0-15 is 192,844 female with 203,081 male, a difference of 2.6%.

DAERA leads on the Just Transition within the Green Growth Strategy. QUB has published an independent think piece on “Mapping a Just Transition”¹³ for Northern Ireland. This was grant funded by DfE.

¹⁰ [Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2020 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/annual-report-2020)

¹¹ [Labour Force Survey Annual Summary 2020 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/labour-force-survey-annual-summary-2020)

¹² [NI Population 2020.jpg \(2481x1749\) \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/population-2020)

¹³ <https://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/SECA/News/MappingaJustEnergyTransitioninNorthernIreland.html>

Research carried out by DfE Skills Division into jobs advertised by the energy sector has identified that communications and customer service are the most sought after jobs although we do not know how many women or men are in these jobs.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Energy Strategy policy options consultation. Information on whether participants were women or men was not collected as part of this exercise.

Disability evidence / information:

The latest date from NISRA in 2018 report that 21.7% of the adult NI population are disabled.¹⁴

One of eight consumer focus groups conducted during the Path to Net Zero options consultation phase comprised people with disabilities. There were no discernible differences reported between the views expressed by people with disabilities or long-term illness and other focus group participants.

In addition, a large number of stakeholders participated in the other evidence gathering aspects of the policy options consultation document, covering a wide range of interests from many backgrounds. Information on individuals with or without disabilities was not collected as part of this exercise.

Dependants evidence / information:

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Path to Net Zero energy strategy options consultation phase, which included renewable electricity support scheme policy.

Needs, experiences, and priorities

Considering 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?

Religious belief

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their religious belief.

Political Opinion

No differential impact has been identified in respect of a renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their political opinion.

¹⁴ [August 2018 NI Wellbeing Report.pdf\(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

Racial Group

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their racial group.

Age

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their age.

Marital status

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their marital status.

Sexual orientation

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their sexual orientation.

Men and Women Generally

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of whether they are man or woman.

Disability

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their disability status.

Dependants

No differential impact has been identified in respect of renewable electricity support scheme policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or

priorities. The renewable electricity support scheme and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of whether they have dependents.

Part 2. Screening questions

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?

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

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

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

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

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

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

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

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

The renewable electricity support scheme will have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? Yes/No

Religious Belief –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Political Opinion –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Racial Group –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Age –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Marital Status –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Sexual Orientation –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Men and Women generally –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Disability –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Dependants –

No. The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

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

Religious Belief –

The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct good relations impact.

Political Opinion –

The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct good relations impact.

Racial Group –

The renewable electricity support scheme has no direct good relations impact.

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).

No.

Part 3. Screening decision

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

The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme Options is screened out without mitigation or alternative policy adopted. It is expected that the Scheme will benefit all of the population in Northern Ireland including all Section 75 categories.

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.

No adverse impact on equality of opportunity has been identified for any of the Section 75 categories.

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

Not applicable

Mitigation

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

Not applicable.

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Monitoring for any potential impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories, will be carried out once a full policy proposal is ready, ahead of implementation.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Niccoló De Francesco
Position/Job Title: Deputy Principal
Business Area/ Branch: Renewable Electricity Team
Date: 18 January 2023

Approved by: Zoë Crowe
Position/Job Title: Grade 7
Business Area/Branch: Renewable Electricity Team
Date: 19 January 2023