



Equality Screening, Disability Duties and Human Rights Assessment Template

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[Guidance on completion of the template can be found on the Equality Commission website at S75 screening template 2010 \(web access checked 230920\) .docx](#)

Part 1. Policy scoping

1.1 Information about the policy

Name of the policy:

Claim Period related to the Day Care Foods Scheme

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revised

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

To optimise the claim period within the regulations in order to maximise efficiency whilst minimising disruption to service users.

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

If so, explain how.

The scheme relates to children under five years of age and their carers; however, the proposed change to the claim period is administrative in nature and is not expected to result in differential impacts across Section 75 categories.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Healthy Start Scheme and Day Care Food Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Health Improvement Policy Branch has policy responsibility for the Day Care Foods Scheme, however the scheme is implemented by the Business Services Organisation.

1.2 Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they (please delete as appropriate)

Legislative – Nursery milk is provided in other parts of the UK via The Welfare Foods Regulations 1996. In 2012, England and Wales consulted on the rising cost of the Nursery Milk Scheme, which invited views on the 2-year period for claiming reimbursements under the scheme. The legislation was amended in 2015 to reduce the claim period from 2 years to 6 months. ([The Welfare Food \(Amendment No.2\) Regulations 2015](#)).

The Nursery Milk Scheme in Northern Ireland operates under separate legislation but had maintained parity with Great Britain from its inception until 2015, when these legislative changes were introduced.

1.3 Main stakeholders affected

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

Service users – depending on the outcome of the consultation, those who claim reimbursement for milk and infant formula purchased under the Day Care Foods regulations, could have the available claim period reduced from 2 years to 6 months.

1.4 Other policies with a bearing on this policy

No impact on other policies

1.5 Available evidence

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative¹) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

The Business Services Organisation have provided internal data on the average claim period for current and past users of the scheme which suggests that only a small percentage of claimants would be affected by a reduction in the claim period.

Consideration has also been given to the [2012 GB Nursery Milk Scheme \(NMS\) consultation](#), and the subsequent reduction of the NMS claim period from 2 years to 6 months ([The Welfare Food \(Amendment No. 2\) Regulations 2015](#))

No disaggregated data is currently available across Section 75 categories; however, analysis of available administrative data has not identified any differential patterns in claim behaviour.

Religious belief evidence / information:

N/A

Political Opinion evidence / information:

N/A

Racial Group evidence / information:

N/A

Age evidence / information:

N/A

Marital Status evidence / information:

N/A

¹ * **Qualitative data** – refers to the experiences of individuals related in their own terms, and based on their own experiences and attitudes. Qualitative data is often used to complement quantitative data to determine why policies are successful or unsuccessful and the reasons for this.

Quantitative data - refers to numbers (that is, quantities), typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed either using descriptive statistics (which summarise patterns), or inferential statistics (which are used to infer from a sample about the wider population).

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

N/A

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

N/A

Disability evidence / information:

N/A

Dependants evidence / information:

N/A

1.6 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

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

2.1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? None

The policy relates to an administrative change to claim timelines, and no evidence has been identified to suggest differential impacts on this category.

Details of the likely policy impacts on Religious belief:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Political Opinion:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Racial Group:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Age:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Marital Status:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Sexual Orientation:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Men and Women:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Disability:

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on Dependents:

What is the level of impact? None

2.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? No

No specific opportunities to promote equality of opportunity have been identified as the policy change is administrative in nature and does not alter eligibility or access to the scheme.

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:

If No, provide reasons: No religious implications noted

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No political opinion implications noted

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No racial implications noted

Age - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No age implications noted

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No Martial Status implications noted

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No Sexual Orientation implications noted

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No Men and Women implications noted

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No disability implications noted

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: No dependent implications noted

2.3 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:

What is the level of impact? None. The policy is administrative in nature and does not impact on good relations between groups.

Details of the likely policy impacts on Political Opinion:

What is the level of impact? None. The policy is administrative in nature and does not impact on good relations between groups.

Details of the likely policy impacts on Racial Group:

What is the level of impact? None. The policy is administrative in nature and does not impact on good relations between groups.

2.4 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:

If No, provide reasons: Good relations implications are not directly relevant within Nursery Milk Claim Period.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: Good relations implications are not directly relevant within Nursery Milk Claim Period.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: Good relations implications are not directly relevant within Nursery Milk Claim Period.

2.5 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 impact. No evidence suggests differential impacts for individuals with multiple identities.

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

2.6 Was the original policy / decision changed in any way to address any adverse impacts identified either through the screening process or from consultation feedback. If so, please provide details.

The proposed change is to bring Northern Ireland into parity with England and Wales and reduce the administrative burden on government. Any issues raised by stakeholders during the consultation process will be given consideration before a final decision is made.

Part 3. Screening decision

3.1 Would you summarise the impact of the policy as; No Impact/ Minor Impact/ Major Impact?

Minor Impact

3.2 Do you consider that this policy/ decision needs to be subjected to a full equality impact assessment (EQIA)?

No

3.3 Please explain your reason.

This is an administrative change to the claim period for the Nursery Milk Scheme. Available evidence indicates that the majority of claimants already submit claims within 6 months. No differential impacts have been identified across Section 75 categories. On this basis, the policy is assessed as having a minor impact.

3.4 Mitigation

While the impact is assessed as minor, clear communication and guidance will be provided to claimants on the revised claim timelines to minimise the risk of missed claims and ensure continued accessibility.

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

No – this is a minor change to claiming from the Nursery Milk Scheme which most claimants adhere to currently.

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

3.5 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.

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations – **Rating** ____ (1-3)

Social need – **Rating** ____ (1-3)

Effect on people’s daily lives – **Rating** ____ (1-3)

Relevance to a public authority’s functions – **Rating** ____ (1-3)

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.

Part 4. Monitoring

Monitoring is an important part of policy development and implementation. Through monitoring it is possible to assess the impacts of the policy / decision both beneficial and adverse.

4.1 Please detail how you will monitor the effect of the policy / decision?

Continued monitoring during quarterly meetings with the body responsible for administering the scheme (Business Services Organisation)

4.2 What data will you collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy / decision?

Continued monitoring of the data of claims paid and claimed during quarterly meetings.

Please note: - *For the purposes of the annual progress report to the Equality Commission you may later be asked about the monitoring you have done in relation to this policy and whether that has identified any Equality issues.*

Part 5. Disability Duties

5.1 Does the policy/decision in any way promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and/or encourage their participation in public life?

No impact identified.

5.2 Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourage their participation in public life by making changes to the policy/decision or introducing additional measures?

No impact identified.

Part 6. Human Rights

6.1 Does the policy / decision affects anyone's Human Rights?

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 2 – Right to life: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 3 – Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 4 – Right to freedom from slavery, servitude & forced or compulsory labour: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 5 – Right to liberty & security of person: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 6 – Right to a fair & public trial within a reasonable time:

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 7 – Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 8 – Right to respect for private & family life, home and correspondence: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 9 – Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 10 – Right to freedom of expression: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 11 – Right to freedom of assembly & association: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 12 – Right to marry & found a family: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on 1st protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

Details of the likely policy impacts on 1st protocol Article 2 – Right of access to education: (insert text here)

What is the impact? Neutral

6.2 If you have identified a likely negative impact who is affected and how?

At this stage we would recommend that you consult with your line manager to determine whether to seek legal advice and to refer to Human Rights Guidance to consider:

- *whether there is a law which allows you to interfere with or restrict rights*
- *whether this interference or restriction is necessary and proportionate*
- *what action would be required to reduce the level of interference or restriction in order to comply with the Human Rights Act (1998).*

N/A

6.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy/decision.

N/A

Part 7 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Heather Armstrong	DP	12/6/2026
Approved by:		
Bryan Dooley	G7	17/06/2026
Copied to EHRU:		

The Screening Template is ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy (at least Grade 7), made easily accessible on the public authority’s website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO INFORM THE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION

(PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS NOT PART OF THE SCREENING TEMPLATE BUT MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED WITH THE SCREENING)

1. Please provide details of any measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups. Please include any use of the Equality Commissions guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

An extensive consultation will take place between June and August 2026 which will include Section 75 recipients, and all current claimants under the Day Care Foods Scheme. All NICS departments will be notified regarding the Consultation and the Education Authority have been contacted in order that they might share the consultation further with their stakeholders.

2. In developing this policy / decision were any changes made as a result of equality issues raised during :

- (a) pre-consultation / engagement;
- (b) formal consultation;
- (c) the screening process; and/or
- (d) monitoring / research findings.

If so, please provide a brief summary including how the issue was identified, what changes were made, and what will be the expected outcomes / impacts for those effected.

Consideration will be given to feedback from stakeholders in order to determine whether any changes are necessary.

3. Does this policy / decision include any measure(s) to improve access to services including the provision of information in accessible formats? If so, please provide a short summary.

N/A

Thank you for your co-operation.
Equality and Human Rights Unit.