



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

## **Equality Screening, Disability Duties and Human Rights Assessment Template**

### **A Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland**

- Part 1 – Policy scoping
- Part 2 – Screening questions
- Part 3 – Screening decision
- Part 4 – Monitoring
- Part 5 – Disability Duties
- Part 6 – Human Rights
- Part 7 – Approval and Authorisation

## Part 1 - Policy scoping

### 1.1 Information about the policy / decision

#### 1.1.1 What is the name of the policy / decision?

A safeguarding policy for children and young people.

#### 1.1.2 Is this an existing, revised or a new policy / decision?

A review and update of an existing policy to reflect changes in structure and legislation.

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

The aims of the policy are to:

- Embed a culture which recognises the child's or young person's fundamental right to be nurtured, protected and empowered;
- As far as possible, prevent harm occurring by increasing public awareness of harm and its effects;
- Promote early identification of needs and/or risk to children and young people who may require assistance;
- Promote early intervention to ensure families, children and young people receive help and support at an early point to prevent their situations deteriorating;
- Establish clearly defined processes of reporting risk of harm toward children which are well-understood and put in place;
- Ensure responses to risks of harm are proportionate, timely, professional, legal and ethical;
- Ensure effective and co-ordinated multi-agency responses are provided to the threat and/or occurrence of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect of children and young people; and
- Promote continuous learning and improvement by identifying and applying learning and assessing the effectiveness of its application.

#### 1.1.4 If there are any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy, please explain how.

The policy is applicable for the benefit of all children and young people in terms of promoting their welfare and ensuring they are safeguarded as effectively as possible. The policy will also benefit professionals and practitioners across a range of sectors education, health and social care, policing etc, by contextualising the roles, duties and responsibilities of agencies, organisations, professionals and the community in co-operating to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in NI.

The policy acknowledges that children and young people from minority ethnic communities, those with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people may be more vulnerable to harm. The policy advocates for practitioners to be aware of evidence or indicators of harm, or of risks of harm, in these circumstances.

**1.1.5 Who initiated or wrote the policy?**

The DHSSPS led the work to update and review the policy with input from other government departments and stakeholders as required.

**1.1.6 Who owns and who implements the policy?**

This is a cross-departmental policy which has impact across the public, community, voluntary and independent sector.

Each organisation will be responsible for the application and implementation of the policy within their organisation, agencies and arms length bodies.

From a health and social care perspective the policy will be implemented by the HSC Board, and the HSC Trust Children’s Services Teams in cooperation with others as appropriate.

**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

Financial

Legislative

Other

**Please explain:**  
Following the publication of the final and approved policy document there will be a requirement to update procedures across government departments, their agencies and arms, length bodies and on a regional basis for NI. This may present resource implications for some organisations and specifically for the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, who have already stated they do not have sufficient resources to develop regional multi-agency operational procedures as an outcome from the development of this policy. If resources are not provided this could potentially impact on the delivery of the intended aims and outcome from the policy.

**1.3 Main stakeholders affected**

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

Staff

Service users

The policy will impact primarily on children and young people ‘in need’, or those at risk of significant harm. It will impact volunteers and professionals

Other public sector organisations

who work with children and young people and their families across a number of sectors including health and social care, education, justice and charitable and voluntary sector organisations.

Voluntary/community/trade unions

Other, please specify

Communities and all organisations that have contact with children and young people. Individuals providing a service to children or young people will also be impacted.

#### 1.4 Other policies with a bearing on this policy / decision. If any:

Policy	Owner(s) of the policy
See Appendix 1	

#### 1.5 Available evidence

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	<p>Children's social care statistics for child referrals Northern Ireland for 2012/13 are available for the number of referral episodes after initial assessment for children and young people broken down by religion group where religion belief was made known:</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Ethnic Group</th><th>Referral Episodes</th><th>Percentage of Total</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Roman Catholic</td><td>5,226</td><td>22%</td></tr><tr><td>Presbyterian</td><td>744</td><td>3%</td></tr><tr><td>Church of Ireland</td><td>554</td><td>2%</td></tr><tr><td>Methodist</td><td>50</td><td>0%</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>3,246</td><td>14%</td></tr><tr><td>None</td><td>781</td><td>3%</td></tr><tr><td>Refused / Unknown</td><td>12,984</td><td>55%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Ethnic Group	Referral Episodes	Percentage of Total	Roman Catholic	5,226	22%	Presbyterian	744	3%	Church of Ireland	554	2%	Methodist	50	0%	Other	3,246	14%	None	781	3%	Refused / Unknown	12,984	55%
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Political opinion	None																								
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Age	<p>The policy applies to children and young people in Northern Ireland under the age of 18.</p> <p>The estimated numbers of the population of Northern Ireland as given in the 2011 census: 1,810,900, of whom 430,080 were aged under 18 equating to 24% of the Northern Ireland population</p> <p>During the year 2012/13 there was 29,055 referrals to HSC Trust Children's Services. The referral statistics are available broken down by age band as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Band</th> <th>Referrals</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-4</td> <td>9,117</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-11</td> <td>10,185</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12-15</td> <td>6,534</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16-18</td> <td>3,219</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>At 31 March 2014, 1,914 children were listed on the Child Protection Register in Northern Ireland.</p>	Age Band	Referrals	Percentage	0-4	9,117	31%	5-11	10,185	35%	12-15	6,534	22%	16-18	3,219	11%									
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Marital status	None																								
Sexual orientation	None																								

Gender (Men and women generally)	<p>During the year 2012/13 there was 29,055 referrals to HSC Trust Children's Services. The referral statistics are available broken down by gender for children and young people as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Number</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Boys</td> <td>14,955</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Girls</td> <td>14,100</td> <td>49%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Number	Percentage	Boys	14,955	51%	Girls	14,100	49%									
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Boys	14,955	51%																	
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Disability (with or without)	<p>Children's social care statistics for child referrals Northern Ireland for 2012/13 are available for children and young people with a disability as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Disability</th> <th>Referrals</th> <th>Percentage of Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sensory Vision</td> <td>115</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sensory Hearing</td> <td>106</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical</td> <td>233</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Learning</td> <td>470</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental Health</td> <td>46</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Disability	Referrals	Percentage of Total	Sensory Vision	115	12%	Sensory Hearing	106	11%	Physical	233	24%	Learning	470	48%	Mental Health	46	5%
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Dependants (with or without)	None																		

\*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).

### 1.6 Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information recorded in 1.1 to 1.5, 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
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Religious belief	Nothing specific identified or evidenced
Political opinion	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.
Racial group	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.
Age	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.
Marital status	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.
Sexual orientation	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.
Gender (Men and women generally)	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.
Disability (with or without)	<p>Children with disabilities are defined within the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 as 'children in need'. There is evidence to indicate that children and young people with disability can be more vulnerable to harm because they may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find it difficult to tell others what is happening;</li> <li>• Have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid;</li> <li>• Lack knowledge about sex or sexuality;</li> <li>• Receive intimate personal care which may both increase the risk of physical abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries;</li> <li>• Have fewer outside contacts;</li> <li>• Be more compliant;</li> <li>• Sometimes be assumed to lack credibility as witnesses;</li> <li>• Be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation.</li> </ul>
Dependants (with or without)	Nothing specific identified or evidenced.

## 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? (minor/major/none)		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people of different religious belief.	None
Political opinion	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people of different political opinion.	None
Racial group	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people from different racial groups.	None
Age	The aim of the policy is to enable organisations and individuals to work together to promote the welfare of children and young people and ensure they are safeguarded as effectively as possible.	None
Marital status	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people with different marital status. In terms of 'Forced Marriage' the policy highlights the requirement for practitioners to be aware of the DFP published guidance to ensure that the protections offered through the Forced Marriage [Civil Protection] Act 2007 are widely available in Northern Ireland	None



Sexual orientation	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people with different sexual orientation.	None
Gender (Men and women generally)	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people of different gender.	None
Disability (with or without)	As stated above children and young people with disabilities may be more vulnerable to risk of harm which may impair their ability to access the support and services. However the policy itself will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people with disabilities.	None
Dependants (with or without)	The policy will have no differential impact in respect of equality of opportunity for children and young people with or without dependants. It does however highlight that children and young who have caring responsibilities for parents can be affected by these responsibilities which can impact on their safety and wellbeing and affect their education and physical and emotional development.	None

2.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?		
Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding who are of different religious belief in order to promote equality of opportunity.
Political opinion		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding who are of different political opinion in order to promote equality of opportunity.
Racial group		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding who are from different racial groups in order to promote equality of opportunity.
Age	<b>Yes</b> – the policy aim is to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people (aged under 18) in need of safeguarding. The achievement of this aim will provide opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for these children and young people	
Marital status		<b>No</b> – the aim of the policy is to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people regardless of their marital status.

Sexual orientation		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding with different sexual orientation in order to promote equality of opportunity.
Gender (Men and women generally)		<b>No</b> – the aim of the policy is to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people regardless of their gender.
Disability (with or without)	<b>Yes</b> – the aim of the policy is to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of <b>all</b> children and young people in need of safeguarding irrespective of disability. That said, the policy highlights that children and young people with disabilities may be more vulnerable to risk of harm which may impair their ability to access the support and services.	
Dependants (with or without)	<b>Yes</b> – the aim of the policy is to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in need of safeguarding regardless of whether or not they have dependants. The policy highlights that children and young people with caring responsibilities for parents with disabilities may be more vulnerable to risk of harm which may impair their wellbeing and physical and emotional development.	

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? (minor/major/none)		
Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief		None
Political opinion		None
Racial group		None

2.4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding who are of different religious belief in order to promote good relations.
Political opinion		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding who are of different political opinion in order to promote good relations.
Racial group		<b>No</b> - it is not possible to identify children and young people in need of safeguarding from different racial groups in order to promote good relations.

## 2.5 Additional considerations

### Multiple Identity

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities (e.g. minority ethnic people with a disability, women with a disability, young protestant men, young lesbian, gay or bisexual persons). Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

There is no data available on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. The policy applies to all children and young people in need of safeguarding and to professionals and practitioners in education, health and social care, policing and justice.

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.

Not applicable at this stage

### Part 3. Screening decision

3.1 How would you summarise the impact of the policy / decision?

No impact

Minor impact

Major impact

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Consider mitigation (3.4 – 3.5)

3.2 Do you consider that this policy / decision needs to be subjected to a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?

Yes - screened in

No - screened out

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.3 Please explain your reason for making your decision at 3.2.

There is no evidence of any adverse or substantial differential impact on any of the Section 75 groups from this safeguarding policy for children and young people. Consideration of section 75 groups within the policy ensures any individual safeguarding needs are recognised and addressed.

### Mitigation

If you have concluded at 3.1 and 3.2 that the likely impact is '**minor**' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, you must consider mitigation (or scope for further mitigation if some is already included as per 2.6) to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

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

Yes

No

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.5 If you responded "**Yes**", please give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

## 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?

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland is responsible for co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on its Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The Safeguarding Board must prepare and an annual report containing such information as prescribed by the DHSSPS. The DHSSPS must lay a copy of the report before the NI Assembly.

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

Health and Social Care Trusts collect and record data on Children's Social Care Statistics including such areas as:

- Children in Need;
- Child Protection;
- Looked After Children;
- Residential Homes and Day Care provision for aged under 12.

**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

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

## Part 6. Human Rights

6.1 Please complete the table below to indicate whether the policy / decision affects anyone's Human Rights?

Article	Positive Impact	Negative Impact (human right interfered with or restricted)	Neutral Impact
Article 2 – Right to life	✓		
Article 3 – Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	✓		
Article 4 – Right to freedom from slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour	✓		
Article 5 – Right to liberty and security of person			✓
Article 6 – Right to a fair and public trial within a reasonable time	✓		
Article 7 – Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law and no punishment without law.	✓		
Article 8 – Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.	✓		
Article 9 – Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion			✓
Article 10 – Right to freedom of expression			✓
Article 11 – Right to freedom of assembly and association			✓
Article 12 – Right to marry and found a family			✓
Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights	✓		



1 <sup>st</sup> protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property			✓
1 <sup>st</sup> protocol Article 2 – Right of access to education	✓		

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

No negative impact identified.

6.3 *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).*

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.

The policy stipulates that children and young people have a fundamental right to live in safety and be protected from harm. The duties and responsibilities of everyone who works with children and young people to ensure children and young people's welfare is promoted and they are adequately safeguarded are outlined. In particular the policy sets out the duty of statutory organisations working with children and young people to ensure their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

## Part 7 Approval and authorisation

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Date</b>
Screened completed by	Bernie Redmond	DP	10.02.15
Approved by <sup>1</sup>	Elaine Colgan	G7	25.02.15
Forwarded to E&HR Unit <sup>2</sup>	Bernie Redmond	DP	06.08.15

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> The Screening Template should be approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy this would normally be at least Grade 7.

<sup>2</sup> When the Equality and Human Rights Unit receive a copy of the final screening it will be placed on the Department's website and will be accessible to the public from that point on. In addition, consultees who elect to receive it, will be issued with a quarterly listing all screenings completed during each three month period.