

Equality Screening Template for Digital Inclusion Policy



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Equality Screening Template

Part 1: Policy Scoping

Information about the policy

Name of the policy: Digital Inclusion Policy
Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? Revised Policy
What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes) The purpose of this policy is to outline Libraries NI's approach to promoting digital inclusion through its services and facilities. Digital inclusion can be defined as the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of information and communication technologies. This involves knowing how to use a range of technology to find information, solve problems and complete tasks. Digital skills include the skills of how to get online while digital literacy involves using the skills to complete tasks online. Today's society requires people to be digital citizens in order to communicate, carry out every day transactions and to access information. However, many people lack the skills, confidence or access to ICT needed to be a digital citizen. Libraries provide digital support in both accessing information and communicating online. Libraries have a critical role to play in helping promote greater equality of access to and capability in using information. Public libraries complement and reinforce formal education. Staff have the skills to understand customer's needs and help them to navigate through and make sense of the myriad of resources that are available.
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how. The policy treats all persons using the library service equally
Who initiated or wrote the policy? The policy was initiated by the Director of Library Services and was drafted by the Service Development Manager with responsibility for Online Services and Service Support.
Who owns and who implements the policy? The policy is owned by the Director of Library Services, responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with all staff within the organisation.

Implementation Factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? If yes, are they:

x	Financial
	Legislative
	Other, please specify: _____

Main Stakeholders Affected

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

	Staff
x	Service Users
	Other Public Sector Organisations
x	Voluntary/Community/Trade Unions
	Other, please specify: _____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- What are they?
- Who owns them?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's and Young People's Service Policy • Heritage Policy • Information and Learning Services Policy • Library Computers Conditions of Use Policy and Guidelines • Partnership Policy • Reading and Reader Development Policy <p>The above policies are owned and implemented by Libraries NI</p>

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	Libraries NI does not gather evidence of religious belief. As the policy applies to and impacts on all section 75 categories in a fair and consistent manner, no qualitative and quantitative evidence has been gathered to inform this policy in relation to religious belief. The Continuous Household Survey reports that 42% of those surveyed who used the library were Catholic, 44% were Protestant, 13% were other or no religion, and 1% chose not to answer.
Political opinion	There is no available evidence of the political opinion of library users/non users.
Racial group	Libraries NI provides the option for members on joining to indicate "to which ethnic group do they belong?". Groups listed are in line with those used in the Northern Ireland Census. In relation to ethnicity these show that the percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) active members in 2017/18 was higher than in the 2011 Census (3.93% BME active members compared to 1.79% in Census). White members (96.07%) was less than the Census percentage (98.21%)
Age	<p>Active membership demonstrates that the number of children who are active members (33.7% of library members are under the age of 16), higher proportionally than in the NI population (20.8%) whilst the number of adults over 65 years (19% of library members) is more than the 16.8% in the NI population who are older than 65 years.</p> <p>The average age of library users is 40.79 years, the average male member is 40.12 years, and the average female age is 41.42 years old.</p>
Marital status	Libraries NI does not collect data for this category. However, the 2018/19 Continuous Household Survey indicates that 25% of married people, 25% of single people, 20% of widowed people and 24% of separated or divorced people said they had used a library in the previous year
Sexual orientation	Libraries NI does not collect data for this category

<p>Men women generally</p>	<p>Library statistics show that 62.54% of active members are female, and 37.46% of active members are male.</p> <p>The Continuous Household Survey reports that 22% of males have used the library service within the last year compared to 28% of females. 14% of women use the library service more than once a month compared to 9% of men.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Continuous Household Survey (2018/19) indicates recent use by people with disabilities (22%) and without disabilities (26%). 0.53% of library users are registered as disabled (5,089), of these 919 are active members. Mobility is the form of disability most often cited by library members.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>According the Continuous Household Survey adults (aged 16 -44) with dependent children (33%) are more likely to use the library service than adults with no dependents (24%). Adults over the age of 44 with dependent children are no more likely to use the service than those without dependents.</p>

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 for each of the section 75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category
Political opinion	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category
Racial group	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. People from different racial groups may benefit from this policy as they can access online services through the library.
Age	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. Older people may benefit from accessing services that promote digital inclusion, particularly in relation to accessing online services.
Marital status	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category
Sexual orientation	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category
Men women generally	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category
Disability	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. People with disabilities may benefit from this policy in relation to accessing information online, people with disabilities may have different needs and may require additional support.
Dependants	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category

Part 2. 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?		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Minor/major/none
Religious belief		None
Political opinion		None
Racial group	Minor impact of provision of digital inclusion support in English, however translation software could be used to mitigate this.	Minor
Age	The provision of support positively impacts older people when they use online services.	Minor
Marital status		None
Sexual orientation		None
Men women generally		None
Disability	The provision of support positively impacts on people with disabilities using online services.	Minor
Dependants		None

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

Section 75 category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category
Political opinion		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category
Racial group		Reachdeck is available for users who do not have English as their first language, this allows these users to access online information and helps promote digital inclusion
Age		Libraries provide information and assistance to promote digital inclusion, they also deliver a number of activities that promote digital inclusion from a range of staff
Marital status		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category
Sexual orientation		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category
Men women generally		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category
Disability		Library buildings are designed to facilitate disabled users, libraries provide information that can assist disabled users to access services and so promote digital inclusion
Dependants		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category

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		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact Minor/major/none
Religious belief	N/A	None
Political opinion	N/A	None
Racial group	N/A	None

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Section 75 category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		No, the scope of the policy does not offer opportunities to better promote good relations as it is only relevant to promoting digital inclusion
Political opinion		No, the scope of the policy does not offer opportunities to better promote good relations as it is only relevant to promoting digital inclusion
Racial group		No, the scope of the policy does not offer opportunities to better promote good relations as it is only relevant to promoting digital inclusion

Additional Considerations

Multiple identity

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

Children and adults who use Libraries NI buildings and attend events in Libraries NI premises may have multiple identities: they may be from a different ethnic background, they may have hidden or obvious disabilities, they may be responsible for dependants. These were considered when the policy was developed to allow access to all users to digital services across the library network.

Part 3. Screening Decision

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

The policy does not have an adverse impact on any of the Section 75 categories. It has a positive impact on all users and those wishing to avail of public libraries.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

The policy is available in print format in all branches for those with no access to ICT equipment such as older people, there is software available on library computers to provide access to the policy in different languages and for people with disabilities such as visual impairment.

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

N/A

Mitigation

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

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

N/A

Timetabling and Prioritising

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.

Priority criterion	Rating (1 - 3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	

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 in timetabling. Details of the 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

[Specify details of how the policy will be monitored for effectiveness/impact. See the Commission's Monitoring Guidance For Use By Public Authorities (July, 2007)].

Part 5. Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title:	Date:
 Michael Lynn	Service Development Manager	9/2/2022
 Kirsty McClelland	Service Development Manager	9/2/2022
Approved by:		
 D Mitchell	Director of Business Support	22.04.2022

Note: A copy of the Screening template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.