

Equality Screening for Opening Hours Policy

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Equality Screening Template

Part 1: Policy Scoping

Information about the policy

Name of the policy: Opening Hours Policy
Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? Revised Policy
What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes) The purpose of the policy sets out Libraries NI's approach to static library opening hours. Opening hours in the context of this policy means staffed opening hours; it does not include the 'Out of Hours' service. Libraries NI will ensure that within the constraints imposed by available resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a consistent inclusive approach to determining opening hours is applied using a range of criteria and factors. These include a minimum number of sustainable hours per library band/category, the community in which the library is located, historic, known and anticipated usage and the availability of the Out of Hours Service• account will be taken of libraries serving areas of substantial social need, this includes designated rural libraries and/or libraries serving a specific demographic i.e. specialist, students/study, children, new communities• opening hours will relate to the historic levels of use of a library• the allocated hours in every library will meet the needs of customers and will allow a minimum range of programmes to be delivered in line with Libraries NI's priorities• library opening hours will be affordable• library opening hours will be sustainable i.e. ad hoc closures due to staffing shortages should be avoided other than in exceptional circumstances.
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how. The purpose of the policy is to provide a range of opening hours which suits different customer groups.
Who initiated or wrote the policy? The policy was initiated and written by the Director of Library Services.
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:

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

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- What are they?
- Who owns them?

Library Byelaws
Customer Feedback Policy
Equality Scheme
Freedom of Information Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Partnership Policy
Safeguarding Policy

The above policies are owned and implemented by Libraries NI

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>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.</p> <p>The Continuous Household Survey 2022/23 reports that 41% of those surveyed were Catholic, 43% were Protestant, 13% were other or no religion, and 2% chose not to answer.</p>
Political opinion	There is no available evidence of the political opinion of library users/non users.
Racial group	<p>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.</p> <p>In relation to ethnicity, Libraries NI 2023/24 statistics show that the percentage of White active users was recorded as 56.4%, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other ethnic groups active members was 3.4%. The total number of active members who did not record this information was 39.9%.</p> <p>The 2021 Northern Ireland Census records 96.55% of the population as White, other ethnic groups 3.45%.</p>
Age	<p>Active membership statistics shows that the number of children (0 – 16) who are active members is 34%, this is higher proportionally than the NI population which records 19.2% under the age of 16 as measured by the 2021 Census.</p> <p>The number of adult active members over 60 years is 16.3% of library members, the census shows that 23.1% of the NI population are older than 60 years.</p> <p>The Continuous Household Survey 2020/21 reported that 25% of people aged over 45 were likely to use the library service, 33% of people under 45 were likely to use the library service.</p>
Marital status	Libraries NI does not collect data for this category. However, the 2021 Census reports 38% of the NI population are single, 45.6% are married, 0.2% are in a civil partnership and 6% are divorced or in a legally dissolved partnership.
Sexual orientation	Libraries NI does not collect data for this category.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Men women generally	<p>The number of males recorded as active library members for 2023/24 is 32.9%, the number of females registered is 52.2%, not recorded accounts for 14.8%. The 2021 Northern Ireland Census records the male population as 49.19%, the female population as 50.81%.</p> <p>The findings of the Continuous Household Survey report into library use 2020/21 found that 33% of women and 22% of men used the library service.</p>
Disability	<p>The percentage of active users registered as disabled is 1.8%. The NI Census 2021 records the number of residents with a long term health problem or disability as 44.8%.</p>
Dependants	<p>Libraries NI does not collect data for this category.</p> <p>The number of households with dependent children 0 – 18 measured by 2021 Northern Ireland Census is 12.14%.</p> <p>The Continuous Household Survey 2020/21 reports 33% of adults with dependants were likely to use the library service, while 23% of those with no dependents reported they use the service.</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. There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category.
Age	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. From the public consultation on the Review of Opening Hours, it is clear that younger people (school children) require access to libraries outside the school times, people of working age prefer access outside working times and older people prefer accessing libraries during the day.
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. Some users with disabilities require access at specific times, related to for example public transport.
Dependants	The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities. From the public consultation on the Review of Opening Hours, it is clear that some people with dependents (e.g. parents) require access to libraries outside the school times.

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		None
Age	The range of opening hours addresses any impact of opening hours.	Minor
Marital status		None
Sexual orientation		None
Men women generally		None
Disability	A range of morning, afternoon, evening and weekend opening hours are offered to accommodate users with disabilities.	Minor
Dependants	Working parents and carers with dependants are considered and a range of opening hours outside normal office hours are offered.	Minor

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		The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category.
Age	A range of morning, afternoon, evening and weekend opening hours are offered to accommodate working users.	
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	A range of morning, afternoon, evening and weekend opening hours are offered to accommodate users with disabilities.	
Dependants	Working parents and carers with dependants are considered and a range of opening hours outside normal office hours are offered.	

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 opening hours.
Political opinion		No, the scope of the policy does not offer opportunities to better promote good relations as it is only relevant to opening hours.
Racial group		No, the scope of the policy does not offer opportunities to better promote good relations as it is only relevant to opening hours.

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 public libraries 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 provides mitigations for those customers who would be impacted by a standard set of opening hours without a range of opening hours.

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:

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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)].

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Part 5. Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title:	Date:
Michael Lynn	Service Development Manager	1/10/2024
Approved by:		
	Director of Library Services	15/10/24

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.