

# Equality Screening Template for The Use and Hire of Library Premises Policy



**Date:** 9 December 2025

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## LNI Policy Screening Template

### Part 1. Policy Scoping

Information about the policy

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Name of the policy</b></p> <p>Use and Hire of Library Premises Policy</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?</b></p> <p>Revised Policy</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)</b></p> <p>The Policy aims to define the conditions that need to be met to facilitate the use and/or hire of library meeting rooms and/or other areas on library premises.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?</b><br/> <b>If so, explain how.</b><br/>         Libraries NI has:         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 51 libraries with dedicated meetings rooms</li> <li>• 96 public libraries</li> <li>• IT suites in libraries and</li> <li>• library spaces that can be used flexibly.</li> </ul> <p>Libraries are accessible and inclusive environments however in recognition of the sensitivities regarding religion and politics in the Northern Ireland context, meetings, events and activities which might compromise the perception of libraries as open and welcoming spaces for all will not be permitted, for example if the primary purpose of the meeting or event could be perceived as political or religious.</p> </p> |
| <p><b>Who initiated or wrote the policy?</b></p> <p>The policy was initiated by the Director of Library Services.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

### Who owns and who implements the policy?

The policy is owned by the Service Development Managers with Library Network Responsibility. The responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with all managers 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**\_\_\_\_\_**Partner Organisations**

## **Other policies with a bearing on this policy**

### **What are they?**

### **Who owns them?**

- Customer Feedback Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Legislation
- Filming Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Libraries NI Byelaws
- Libraries NI Equality Scheme
- Library Computers Conditions of Use Policy
- Media Handling Policy
- Partnership Policy
- Safe and Welcoming Libraries Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Religious belief</b>  | <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 2021 Census for Northern Ireland reported 42.31% Catholic, 36.98% Protestant, 17.39% no religion, 1.72% and 1.60% not stated.</p> <p>The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) 2024/25 reported 22% Catholic, 21% Protestant and 28% other or no religious background.</p> |
| <b>Political opinion</b> | <p>There is no available evidence of the political opinion of library users/non-users.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Racial group</b>      | <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 statistics determine that the percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) active members in 2023/24 was 3.79% of active members. 56.37% of active members classed themselves as white and 39.84% did not provide this information.</p>                                                                                     |
| <b>Age</b>               | <p>Public Library Standards 2021/22 shows that approximately 31% of children are active members of the library service. 22% of young people are active library members and approximately 11% of adults are active members.</p> <p>The 2021/22 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) states that adults aged 44 and under were more likely to have used the public library service (19%) than those aged 45</p>                                                                                                                                                           |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | <p>and over (12%).</p> <p>The 2023/24 Libraries NI statistics identifies there are 458,589 registered members, with 258,153 active members (56.29%). The percentage of active library members who are children (0-15) is 37.46%. 44.92 % of the active membership are adults (16 - 59) and 16.04% are Senior Citizen (60 and over). 1.58% of active users are uncategorised by age.</p>                                                                               |
| <b>Marital status</b>      | <p>Libraries NI does not collect data for this category.</p> <p>Continuous Household Survey (2024/25) indicates use of the public library service within the last year by people who are married / cohabitating as 24%, single 22%, Widowed 21% and separated / divorced 21%.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>  | <p>Libraries NI does not collect data for this category.</p> <p>The 2021 Census for Northern Ireland figures indicates that 2.09% of the population identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation. 90.04% identify as straight or heterosexual and 7.87% prefer not to say.</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Men women generally</b> | <p>Library statistics show that 52.18% of active members are female, and 32.98% of active members are male and 14.79% not disclosed</p> <p>The Continuous Household Survey 2024/25 reports that 23% of those surveyed have used the library service within the last year. 17% of males surveyed 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 7% of men.</p> |
| <b>Disability</b>          | <p>Continuous Household Survey 2024/25 indicates use of the public library service within the last year by people with disabilities (21%) and without disabilities (24%).</p> <p>1.13% of library users are registered as disabled (2,909) and 0.65% (1,690) disabled junior active members. Mobility is the form of disability most often cited by library members.</p>                                                                                              |
| <b>Dependants</b>          | <p>According to the Continuous Household Survey 2024/25 adults with dependent children (28%) are more likely to use the library service than adults with no dependents (19%).</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.

| <b>Section 75 category</b> | <b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Religious belief</b>    | 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                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Political opinion</b>   | 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.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Racial group</b>        | There is anecdotal evidence that people from some minority ethnic backgrounds do have different needs regarding not having English as a first or main language. Libraries NI provides reading collections in several languages other than English. The use of other available resources in libraries, such as Read and Write and Say Hi app support individuals and groups within this category. |
| <b>Age</b>                 | There is no evidence of any different identified needs, experiences or priorities for this category                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Marital status</b>      | 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                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>  | 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                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Men women</b>           | The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>generally</b>  | There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Disability</b> | The policy and associated procedures are applied fairly and consistently to all members of staff and public.<br>There is evidence that people with disabilities have different needs, in terms of accessing premises. Libraries NI continue to make library buildings accessible to all. |
| <b>Dependants</b> | The policy applies fairly and consistently to all members of staff and persons using Libraries NI services and facilities<br>There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for this category.                                                                   |

## Part 2. Screening questions

| <b>1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section 75 category</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>Details of policy impact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Level of impact? Minor/major/none</b> |
| <b>Religious belief</b>                                                                                                                          | In relation to this policy, meetings and events which might compromise the perception of libraries as open and welcoming spaces for all will not be permitted e.g. if the primary purpose of the meeting, event or activity could be perceived as promoting a particular religious belief.   | Minor                                    |
| <b>Political opinion</b>                                                                                                                         | In relation to this policy, meetings and events which might compromise the perception of libraries as open and welcoming spaces for all will not be permitted e.g. if the primary purpose of the meeting, event or activity could be perceived as promoting a particular political ideology. | Minor                                    |
| <b>Racial group</b>                                                                                                                              | This policy ensures Libraries NI provide a safe and welcoming environment, promoting a culture of respect and inclusion where customers, staff and partners are treated fairly.                                                                                                              | Minor                                    |
| <b>Age</b>                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | None                                     |
| <b>Marital status</b>                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | None                                     |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | None                                     |

|                            |  |      |
|----------------------------|--|------|
| <b>Men women generally</b> |  | None |
| <b>Disability</b>          |  | None |
| <b>Dependants</b>          |  | None |

| <b>2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?</b> |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section 75 category</b>                                                                                                       | <b>If yes, provide details</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>If no, provide reasons</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Religious belief</b>                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                  | In relation to this policy, meetings and events which might compromise the perception of libraries as open and welcoming spaces for all will not be permitted e.g. if the primary purpose of the meeting, event or activity could be perceived as promoting a particular religious belief.   |
| <b>Political opinion</b>                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                  | In relation to this policy, meetings and events which might compromise the perception of libraries as open and welcoming spaces for all will not be permitted e.g. if the primary purpose of the meeting, event or activity could be perceived as promoting a particular political ideology. |
| <b>Racial group</b>                                                                                                              | The policy provides opportunity of access to participate in community activity and social interaction promoting awareness of cultural diversity. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Age</b>                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                  | The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Marital status</b>                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                  | The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                            |  |                                                                             |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>  |  | The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category |
| <b>Men women generally</b> |  | The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category |
| <b>Disability</b>          |  | The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category |
| <b>Dependants</b>          |  | The policy does not impact on the equality of opportunity for this category |

| <b>3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?</b><br><b>Minor/major/none</b> |                                 |                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section 75 category</b>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Details of policy impact</b> | <b>Level of impact<br/>Minor/major/none</b> |
| <b>Religious belief</b>                                                                                                                                                              | N/A                             | None                                        |
| <b>Political opinion</b>                                                                                                                                                             | N/A                             | None                                        |
| <b>Racial group</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | N/A                             | None                                        |

| <b>4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?</b> |                                                                                                                |                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Section 75 category</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>If yes, provide details</b>                                                                                 | <b>If no, provide reasons</b> |
| <b>Religious belief</b>                                                                                                                            | The policy is mindful of the need to not undermine libraries as neutral, inclusive, shared and trusted spaces. |                               |
| <b>Political opinion</b>                                                                                                                           | The policy is mindful of the need to not undermine libraries as neutral, inclusive, shared and trusted spaces. |                               |
| <b>Racial group</b>                                                                                                                                | The policy is mindful of the need to not undermine libraries as neutral, inclusive, shared and trusted spaces. |                               |

|  |                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | <p>Libraries are neutral venues which may be used by communities as shared spaces to raise awareness and promote understanding of cultural differences.</p> |  |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## **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, religious or political beliefs, they may have hidden or obvious disabilities, they may be responsible for dependants. These were considered when the Policy was developed, however there is no evidence of significant impact.

### 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.

The policy has been 'screened out' with no requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment, as measures to mitigate potential adverse impacts and better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations have been considered.

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

No mitigation or alternative Policy is required.

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<br>(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)].*

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|  |
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## Part 5. Approval and authorisation

| Screened by:                   | Position/Job Title:          | Date:      |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Ciara Gault <i>Ciara Gault</i> | DHoS                         | 05/12/2025 |
| Bríd Steele <i>Bríd Steele</i> | SDM                          | 09/12/2025 |
| Approved by:                   |                              |            |
| <i>Alicia Adams</i>            | Director of Library Services | 25/03/2026 |

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.