

Screening

Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Policy name	Conflicts of Interest in Investigations Policy
Existing/Revised/New policy	New.
What is the policy trying to achieve?	The Conflicts of Interest Policy sets out guidelines and safeguards for all operational staff at the Commission regarding actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interests. It sets out steps by which operation staff will: • identify actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interests • take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest • seek advice if uncertain whether a conflict of interest exists • report any conflicts of interest when they become aware of them • cooperate in the management and resolution of conflicts of interest • report any change in circumstances relating to conflicts of interest
Policy author	Establishment Programme Team
Policy owner	Commissioner for Investigations

Are there any S75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.

Yes. The policy could potentially impact on political opinion and religious belief, as the Conflict of Interest process is aimed at mitigating and alleviating concerns around bias and impartiality in investigations, and at building confidence in the work of the Commission.

Implementation factors

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

The following legal considerations will contribute to the intended aim of the policy:

Human Rights Act 1998: The policy must comply with Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR, as enshrined in UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998. The Commission must take account of the clear and constant line of decisions of the Strasbourg Court which establish the need for an effective investigation where individuals were killed by the use of force. To be effective, the investigation must be independent from those implicated in the events. Such independence has two elements:

- there must be a lack of hierarchical or institutional connection between the investigators and those implicated in the events and
- the investigation must have practical independence.

Compliance with Article 2 and 3 mandates that the persons and bodies responsible for the investigation are sufficiently independent of the persons and structures who may be responsible for the death or inhuman or degrading treatment which is the subject of the investigation. The investigation must be structured in such a way that the Commission is able to demonstrate that it is an independent investigation.

Main stakeholders affected

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

Staff: all operational staff employed by the Commission.	Actual
People who use our service:	Potential
Other public sector organisations:	n/a
Voluntary/community/trade unions:	n/a
Other, please specify	n/a

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

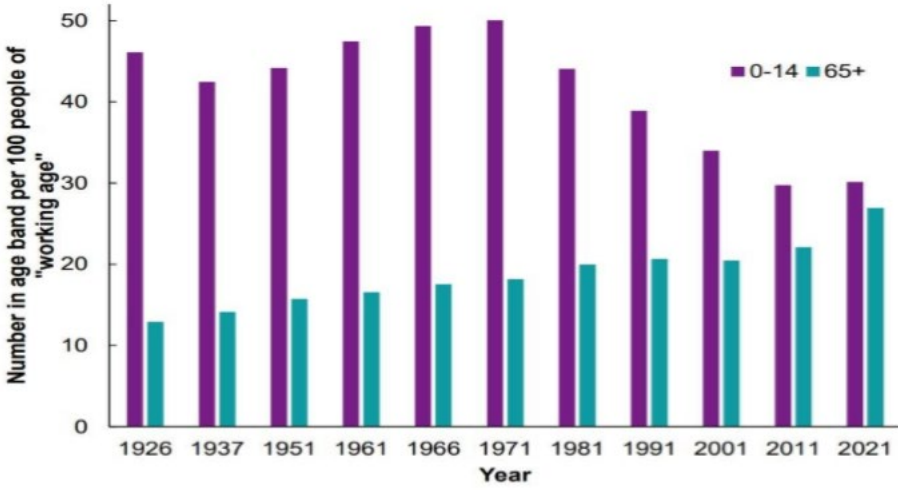
Name	Who Owns
Raising a Concern Policy	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Code of Conduct	Board
Equality and Diversity Policy	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Investigations Policy	Commissioner for Investigations
Handling a Request Policy	Commissioner for Investigations

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.

Religious Belief	Northern Ireland is traditionally split between those identifying as Protestant (around 42%) and Catholic (about 41%), with increasing numbers identifying as having no religion or other religions.
Political Opinion	The political landscape in Northern Ireland is unique, with political opinions often aligning with religious or national identity. Political affiliations in Northern Ireland often correlate with religious and national identity, with Unionists (typically Protestant) and Nationalists (typically Catholic) making up the largest groups. However, no precise statistics on political opinions are routinely collected due to sensitivities surrounding this information.
Racial Group	Around 98% of Northern Ireland's population identifies as white, with 2% belonging to minority ethnic groups (e.g., Black, Asian, Mixed). The 2021 Census data also revealed growth in the minority ethnic population. Within the time period in which the deaths and serious harm which the ICRIR can investigate occurred, the percentage of the population which identifies as white was even higher.
Age	ICRIR has the remit to investigate deaths and serious injuries related to the Troubles/Conflict in the period between 1 January 1966 and 10 April 1998 which caused serious physical or mental harm. A victim or survivor can request that the Commission investigates an incident involving a serious injury to them.

	A close family member of the deceased can ask the Commission to investigate an incident involving a death. Given the time period in which these deaths or serious crimes occurred, Requesting Individuals are likely to be older than the general population.
Marital Status	The most recent Northern Ireland Census shows a declining trend in marriage rates, with more people opting for civil partnerships or remaining single. Northern Ireland Census 2021 data shows a decline in marriage rates, with 42% of adults married, 11% divorced, and an increasing number of people opting for civil partnerships or remaining single.
Sexual Orientation	Sexual orientation data indicates around 2% of the population identifies as LGB (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual) based on NISRA's Continuous Household Survey.
Men and Women Generally	The Northern Ireland Census 2021 produced the following demographic breakdown for Northern Ireland: • Female 50.81% • Male 49.19% Census 2021 main statistics demography tables – age and sex
Disability	According to the NISRA, around 21% of Northern Ireland's population lives with a disability. This percentage increases with age. Requesting Individuals who have themselves suffered serious harm as a result of a serious injury related to the Troubles / Conflict will be more likely than the general public to be living with a disability.

Dependants	 Source: Census 2021 population and household estimates for Northern Ireland: Statistical bulletin (nisra.gov.uk) Census 2021 shows that there were 365,200 children (aged 0 to 14) or 19% of the population. While the population grows, household sizes continue to fall - the average household size has fallen from 2.54 in 2011 to 2.44 in 2021.
Gender Reassignment (required under Equality Act 2010):	Data on individuals who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment is scarce due to privacy concerns. However, estimates suggest that around 1% of the UK population identifies as transgender or non-binary. (Not required for section 75 but it is required under the Equality Act)

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Specify details of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious belief	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
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Political Opinion	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Racial Group	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Age	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Marital status	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Sexual orientation	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Men and Women generally	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Disability	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.
Dependants	The policy is technical in nature and does not engage this s75 equality group.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Details of the likely policy impacts on **religious belief**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Groups**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **age**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **disability**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**:

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
			x

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

No. The Policy is technical in nature and focuses on the process of identifying and managing conflicts of interest. Due to this, there is no opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within the s75 equality categories.

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide details:

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

Age - If Yes, provide details:

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

3. **To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Please provide details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

What is the level of impact? None.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

What is the level of impact? None.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

What is the level of impact? None.

4. **Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

No. The Policy is technical in nature and focuses on the process of identifying and managing conflicts of interest. It does not provide any opportunities to promote good relations between the s75 groups above.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

The Commission recognise that staff, at whom this policy is directed, may belong to one or more than one of the s75 equality groups. However, this policy is technical in nature and specifically focused on the process by which staff can recognise and flag conflicts of interest. As such, it does not impact on any s75 equality groups.

Part 3. Screening decision

Screening outcome: Screened out

Decision: The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment for the policy on Operational Policy: Conflicts of Interest in Investigations.

Mitigation

The policy primarily focuses on ensuring the independence and integrity of investigations by providing guidelines by which staff can identify and manage conflicts of interest. The policy itself provides mitigation against possible accusations of impartiality as it provides clear guidelines on how to identify and flag potential and perceived conflicts of interest.

Approval and authorisation

Screened by: EDI Consultant

Date: 11 April 2024

Screened by: Operational Policy Assurance and Compliance

Date: 8 April 2026

Approved by: Commissioner for Investigations

Date: 1 May 2026