



Screening

Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Policy name	Designation of an ICRIR officer to have the powers and privileges of a constable.
Existing/Revised/New policy	New.
What is the policy trying to achieve?	The Commissioner for Investigations can designate an ICRIR officer as a person having the powers and privileges of a constable. Only the Commissioner for Investigations can exercise this power. It cannot be delegated. The following powers can be designated singly or in multiples, in part or in full, for a fixed period of time of up to two (now three) years and for a general or specific purpose: • powers and privileges of a constable (England and Wales) • powers and privileges of a constable (Northern Ireland) • powers and privileges of a constable (Scotland) ICRIR officers identified as suitable to seek designation must demonstrate they meet set criteria defined in the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023. Senior officers will be responsible for making recommendations on designation. Line managers will make a recommendation to their Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) on the officer's capability and suitability for designation. The SIO will then make a formal recommendation to the Commissioner for Investigations. If an officer is designated with powers, a formal notification will be sent which is bespoke to the jurisdiction in which powers are to be exercised. The

	officer will be required to sign this to agree to adhere to the terms within it. A powers card will then be issued. The conduct of designated officers will require them to adhere to the ICRIR Code of Conduct and to reflect the Code of Ethics in the jurisdiction in which they are designated. Serious complaints will be referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct, Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland or Police Investigations and Review Commission, appropriate to where the conduct took place. Any ICRIR officer seeking a powers designation must, in accordance with the statutory requirements, be assessed as: (a) being capable of effectively exercising those powers. (b) having received adequate training in respect of the exercise of those powers; and (c) otherwise being a suitable person to exercise those powers. When considering a powers designation the Commissioner for Investigations will rely on information provided by: • The individual's line manager • The ICRIR Security Adviser. The above list is not exhaustive, and the Commissioner for Investigations may seek and rely upon any other information they reasonably believe will assist with their decision making. All ICRIR officers have an ongoing responsibility to bring to the attention of their line manager any matter which they believe may undermine their suitability and capability for designation, or the designation of any other Commission officer.
Policy author	The Establishment Programme Team, under the direction of the Commissioner for Investigations
Policy owner	Commissioner for Investigations

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

This policy may be found to be more favourable to men as the majority of ICRIR officers working in the remit of investigations and information recovery have been found to be male. This is based on analysis carried out for other police forces in Northern Ireland and rest of the UK as the ICRIR Accountability Update: 1 September 2024-31 March 2025, whilst stating that the Commission's gender breakdown was 54% female / 46% male, did not provide gender statistics for those working in its investigation teams.

For the PSNI, as of April 1, 2023, 32.23% of full-time regular police officers in Northern Ireland were women. Male police officers accounted for 67.77% of that total.

Source: <https://www.psnipolice.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/our-publication-scheme/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/workforce>

In England and Wales in 2023, there were 73,300 male police constables and 42,621 female police constables.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/303981/number-of-police-officers-in-england-and-wales-gender-rank/#:~:text=Number%20of%20police%20officers%20in,2023%2C%20by%20rank%20and%20gender&text=In%20England%20and%20Wales%20in,ranks%20having%20progressivel y%20fewer%20personnel>.

In Scotland, there are almost twice as many male police officers (11,064) as there are female police officers (5,549).

Source: <https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/news/article/analysis-shows-the-inequalities-within-police-scotlands-ranks#:~:text=There%20are%20almost%20twice%20as,fallen%20by%2054%20since%202021>.

However, the designation of powers policy is purely procedural in that respect as the Commissioner for Investigations can only designate an officer where they are employed by the Commission. Due process and screening of recruitment and employment policies has already been undertaken which is outside the remit for this screening of the Designation of Powers policy.

Implementation factors

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

The main factors that would detract from this policy is where due process is not followed. This would be cases where an ICRIR officer has either not been assessed satisfactorily or had failed to meet one of the requirements of:

- (a) being capable of effectively exercising those powers.
- (b) having received adequate training in respect of the exercise of those powers; and
- (c) otherwise, being a suitable person to exercise those powers, yet is still designated with the powers of a constable.

There is a need therefore for the Commission to provide, on a regular basis to ensure equality of opportunity, access to the required training. Where resources or other factors impact the provision of this training, there may be a subsequent impact on the designation process. Training has therefore been made accessible to all who require it to enable them to comply with the requirements of the policy.

However, the policy includes robust mitigations and checks to prevent this occurring. All officers undertake thorough, mandatory induction training which adheres to standards and principles set out in legislation, and any officer seeking to have designated powers must complete an Assessment of Capability and Suitability Form, which is then rigorously checked for compliance against external professional standards,

Main stakeholders affected

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

Staff: Information Recovery Team, Assistant Commissioners for Investigations, Commissioner for Investigations, Human Resources, Security Team.	Actual
People who use our service	Potential
Other public sector organisations: Independent Office for Police Conduct, Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland or Police Investigations and Review Commission.	Potential
Voluntary/community/trade unions	n/a
Other, please specify	n/a

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

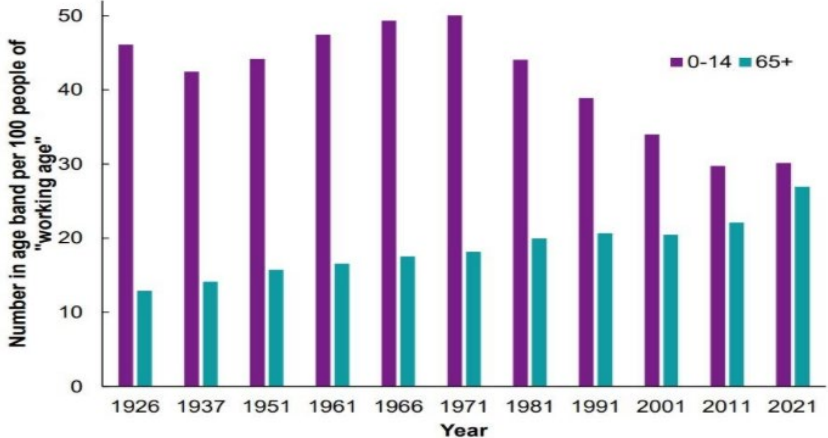
Name	Who owns
Code of conduct	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Declaration and Management of Outside Interests	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Conduct and Discipline	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Raising a concern	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Recruitment Principles	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Learning and Development Policy	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

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	As per the 2021 Census, the population breakdown in Northern Ireland was as follows: • Catholic: 42.31% • Protestant and other Christian: 40.76% • Other religions: 1.31% • No religion/not stated: 16.87%
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. British only: 31.86% • Irish only: 29.13% • Northern Irish only: 19.78% • Other identities (Polish, Lithuanian, etc.): 7.43%
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.

Age	Northern Ireland's workforce generally reflects an aging population, with approximately 18% of the population being over 65 and about 20% under 15. In the public sector, the average age of employees is typically between 35–55. Age-related issues in employment could include older employees facing challenges in adapting to new technologies or younger employees feeling underrepresented in leadership roles. Surveys from sources like the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) show concerns about intergenerational fairness and age-based discrimination in the workplace, including opportunities for younger workers to access training and promotions, and challenges older workers may face when adapting to evolving work practices.
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 ICRIR Accountability Update: 1 September 2024-31 March 2025 states that the Commission's gender breakdown was 54% female / 46% male. This is not broken down further by team. As at 31 March 2025, 43 staff work in the Information Recovery (IR) team of the Investigations directorate. As previously stated above, the recruitment and employment policies are outside the scope of this policy, and this policy only relates to the pool of staff already employed as part of the Investigation team. The accountability update does not provide the gender breakdown details of those working on investigations, only their experience in conducting criminal investigations.
Disability	According to the NISRA, around 21% of Northern Ireland's population lives with a disability. This percentage increases with age. Within the ICRIR workforce approximately 15% have declared 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 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 provides equal access to the designation process for this group.
Political Opinion	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this group.

Racial Group	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this group.
Age	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this group.
Marital status	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this group.
Sexual orientation	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this group.
Men and Women generally	There is, based on the above details, an impact on women leading to a need to monitor the recruitment, employment and designation of female Information Recovery officers so that mitigating actions can be promptly put in place if required. However, the policy provides equal access to the designation process.
Disability	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this group.
Dependants	The policy provides equal access to the designation process for this 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. This policy is a process where the Commissioner for Investigations can only designate an officer where they are employed by the Commission. Due process and screening of recruitment and employment policies have already been undertaken which is outside the remit for the screening of the Designation of Powers policy. Therefore, the limitations of scope of this policy means that there is no opportunity to promote equality of opportunity.

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: None available.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details: None available

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details: None available

Age - If Yes, provide details: None available

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details: None available

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details: None available

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details: None available

Disability - If Yes, provide details: None available

Dependants - If Yes, provide details: None available

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?**

No, the policy will apply equally to all and there are no opportunities to promote good relations between people of the different S75 categories.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

It is recognised that this policy may impact on people with multiple identities. The Commission acknowledges that individuals with multiple identities may experience unique impacts. We will ensure that these are fully considered, and accommodations are made where necessary.

Part 3. Screening decision

Screening outcome: Screened out

Decision: The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment.

Mitigation

The Commission will continue to monitor the impact of the policy particularly as new staff are arriving in post and ICRIR officers are designated by the Commissioner for Investigations. There are already robust mitigations in place for this policy in terms of accountability and governance with checks being independently verified by Security Advisors and there being an opportunity to appeal a designation decision.

Also, this policy is further mitigated in that serious complaints in the use of the designated powers will be referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct, Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland or Police Investigations and Review Commission, appropriate to where the conduct took place.

Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Operational Policy Assurance and Compliance
Date: September 2024

Screened by: Operational Policy Assurance and Compliance
Date: 8 April 2026

Approved by: Commissioner for Investigations
Date: 1 May 2026