

Screening

Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Policy name	S14 Policy Summary
Existing/Revised/New policy	New (Summary of Policy)
What is the policy trying to achieve	The policy sets out the Commission's powers and responsibilities when issuing a notice under 14 of the Northern Ireland Troubles Act 2023. S14 of the Act gives the Commission the power to issue a notice to a person to: a. Attend at a time and place (stated in the notice) to provide information, produce any documents or any other things in their possession or control³. b. Provide evidence in the form of a written statement, provide any documents or any other things in their possession or control within a reasonable period to the Commission. What is considered reasonable is decided by the Commissioner for Investigations. The policy sets out how the Commission should approach using their s14 powers, how it should enforce non-compliance with a s14 notice and how it should monitor and review its use of the power.
Policy author	Data and Information Security 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 following s75 categories might be expected to benefit from the s14 policy, and in the following ways:

Disability: The policy ensures that individuals with disabilities are considered when issuing Section 14 notices, with provisions for reasonable accommodations if an individual is required to attend at a time and place to provide information.

Age: Due to the intersectionality of age and disability in Northern Ireland, the policy ensures that the needs of older individuals are considered when issuing Section 14 notices, with provisions for reasonable accommodations if an individual is required to attend at a time and place to provide information.

Religion: The Commission will adhere to the principles of fairness and transparency in issuing and enforcing Section 14 notices. If a person is required to attend at a place and time to provide information, the Commission will ensure that this is in a neutral venue and that it has carefully considered potential s4 implications before issuing a s14 notice, such as a potential risk to life if an individual from a community of a certain religious belief is found to have provided information to the Commission.

Political opinion: The Commission will adhere to the principles of fairness and transparency in issuing and enforcing Section 14 notices. If a person is required to attend at a place and time to provide information, the Commission will ensure that this is in a neutral venue and that it has carefully considered potential s4 implications before issuing a s14 notice, such as a potential risk to life if an individual from a community of a certain political opinion is found to have provided information to the Commission.

Dependants: The Commission will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with dependants where they are required to attend at a time and place to provide information.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? Yes. Where the Commission requires an individual to attend at a time and place to provide information, a lack of suitable venues appropriate to the needs of the individual could detract from the aim of the policy. The Commission must also ensure that any issue of a section 14 notice does not pose a risk to life or to national security, as defined by s4 of the Northern Ireland Troubles Act 2023.

The policy provides for the application of discretion in the issuing of s14 notices; if too rigid an approach is taken, then this may lead to a lack of co-operation by cohorts of witnesses and potential legal action.

Main stakeholders affected

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

Staff: staff responsible for issuing s14 notice, Commissioner for Investigations, GCD in provision of legal advice, admin staff tasked with monitoring compliance and sanctions	Actual
People who use our service: individuals subject to s14 notices	Potential (Commission has yet to issue a s14 notice)
Other public sector organisations: Relevant Authorities responsible for assessing s4 claims	Potential (Commission has yet to issue a s14 notice)
Voluntary/community/trade unions: victim support organisations, professional associations for retired members of state organisations.	Potential (organisations supporting individuals who are the subject of s14 notices)
Other, please specify: legal representatives of individuals subject to s14 notices.	Potential (Commission has yet to issue a s14 notice)

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

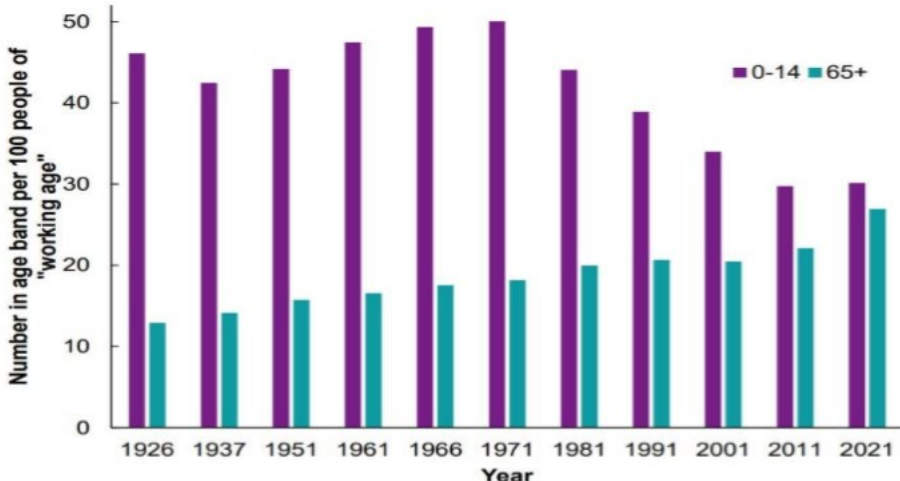
Name	Who owns
Witness Pathway	Commissioner for Investigations
Charter of Commitment for Witnesses	Commissioner for Investigations
Data Protection Policy	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

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.

Please note policy written before any staff employed so no internal information available.

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	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. 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	 The chart displays the number of people in two age bands (0-14 and 65+) per 100 people of 'working age' (15-64) across various years. The 0-14 age band (purple bars) shows a general decline from approximately 46 in 1926 to 30 in 2021. The 65+ age band (teal bars) shows a general increase from approximately 13 in 1926 to 27 in 2021. <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>0-14</th><th>65+</th></tr><tr><td>1926</td><td>46</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>1937</td><td>43</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>1951</td><td>44</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>1961</td><td>47</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>1966</td><td>49</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>1971</td><td>50</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>1981</td><td>44</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>1991</td><td>39</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>2001</td><td>34</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>2011</td><td>30</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>30</td><td>27</td></tr></table>	Year	0-14	65+	1926	46	13	1937	43	14	1951	44	16	1961	47	17	1966	49	18	1971	50	19	1981	44	20	1991	39	21	2001	34	21	2011	30	22	2021	30	27
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2021	30	27																																			

	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 need for the Commission to ensure s14 meetings take place in a neutral venue, and that s4 implications, such as harm to an individual due to their engagement with the Commission from their community where engagement with state agencies has historically been viewed negatively, have been carefully considered.
Political Opinion	The need for the Commission to ensure s14 meetings take place in a neutral venue, and that s4 implications, such as harm to an individual due to their engagement with the Commission from their community where engagement with state agencies has historically been viewed negatively, have been carefully considered.
Racial Group	Neutral impact; policy applies regardless of race.

Age	Older individuals may need assurance that a nominated time and place in a s14 notice is accessible to them and that potential travel is minimised.
Marital status	Neutral impact; policy applies regardless of marital status.
Sexual orientation	Neutral impact; policy applies regardless of sexual orientation.
Men and Women generally	Neutral impact; policy applies regardless of gender.
Disability	Individuals living with a disability may need assurance that the nominated time and place in a s14 notice is accessible to them and that potential travel is minimised.
Dependants	Individuals living with a dependant may need assurance that the nominated time and place in a s14 notice is accessible to them and that potential travel is minimised. Individuals with a child dependant may also need assurance that a nominated time and place will take into consideration any potential childcare arrangements that may be needed.

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**:

Assessment: The policy might impact on individuals with different religious beliefs.

Rationale: There may be an impact on this group due to the need for the Commission to provide a neutral venue on the issue of a s14 notice to allay any s4 concerns.

Mitigations: The Commission can source appropriate, neutral venues to conduct s14 meetings.

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
		x	

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

Assessment: The policy might impact on individuals with different political opinions.

Rationale: There may be an impact on this group due to the need for the Commission to provide a neutral venue on the issue of a s14 notice to allay any s4 concerns.

Mitigations: The Commission can source appropriate, neutral venues to conduct s14 meetings.

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**:

Assessment: The policy might impact on older individuals served with a s14 notice.

Rationale: Older individuals may not have the means or ability to travel to more distant venues to conduct a s14 meeting.

Mitigations: The Commission should try, where possible, to find a suitable venue close to the individual to mitigate the need for longer journeys.

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**:

Assessment: The policy might impact on individuals with a disability who have been served with a s14 notice.

Rationale: Individuals living with a disability may need reasonable adjustments to be put in place to ensure they can access any venue where they are required to attend.

Mitigations: The Commission should ensure that suitable venues are chosen which accommodate any required reasonable adjustments these individuals may have.

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
		x	

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

Assessment: The policy might impact on individuals with young dependants who have been served with a s14 notice.

Rationale: Individuals with young dependants may have childcare considerations which may impede their ability to appear at a specified place and time to hand over information.

Mitigations: The Commission should ensure, that suitable venues are chosen which accommodate any childcare needs these individuals may have.

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? Yes.**

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: The Commission will ensure that all communications related to Section 14 notices are provided in formats that are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including alternative formats such as braille, large print, or audio recordings

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.

The policy's direct impact on intergroup relations may be limited

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:

Yes, there are opportunities to promote good relations by ensuring transparency, fairness, and sensitivity in the implementation of Section 14 notices. This includes providing clear information about the policy and considering the potential impact on different groups when issuing notices.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Yes, the policy on Section 14 could potentially impact individuals with multiple identities within S75 categories. For example, individuals who hold certain political opinions and are living with a disability may face unique challenges when dealing with Section 14 notices. Their interactions with the policy may be influenced by various factors related to their multiple identities, such as perceptions of fairness, trust in the process, and potential concerns about discrimination or bias.

Part 3. Screening decision

Screening outcome: Screened out

Decision: The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment for Section 14 Policy Summary

Mitigation

The Commission should ensure that the use of Section 14 notices is conducted in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with Section 75 of the Equalities Act, and that reasonable adjustments, s4 risks, and considerations around rigid implementation of the policy have been considered.

Approval and authorisation

Screened by: EDI Consultant

Date: 5 March 2024

Screened by: Operational Policy Assurance and Compliance

Date: 22 April 2026

Approved by: Commissioner for Investigations

Date: 1 May 2026