

Screening

Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Policy name	Safeguarding policy
Existing/Revised/New policy	New
What is the policy trying to achieve	The safeguarding policy for the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) aims to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals participating in the Commission's activities, particularly children and vulnerable adults. Its intended outcomes include: Establishing clear principles, processes, and governance arrangements to prevent harm to individuals interacting with the Commission. 1. Providing effective procedures for the referral of child and adult safeguarding concerns to relevant agencies. 2. Ensuring that the welfare and safety of children and adults are paramount in all Commission activities. 3. Promoting a trauma-informed and resiliency approach to safeguarding, taking into account the unique needs and circumstances of individuals affected by the Troubles/Conflict in Northern Ireland. 4. Implementing safeguarding roles and responsibilities across all levels of the Commission, from senior leadership to frontline staff and contractors. 5. Offering appropriate training to Commission staff to identify safeguarding concerns and understand the referral process. 6. Establishing mechanisms for safeguarding referrals, both for child and adult safeguarding concerns, and ensuring prompt action in urgent situations. 7. Maintaining confidentiality and information sharing protocols in compliance with legal

	frameworks, such as the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. 8. Providing tailored support and responses to individuals engaging with the Commission, including victims, witnesses, and members of the public, with a focus on compassion, sensitivity, and trauma-informed care. 9. Reviewing the policy annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in safeguarding individuals associated with the Commission. Overall, the policy aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all individuals engaging with the Commission's activities while fulfilling its statutory duties and legal obligations related to safeguarding.
Policy author	Head of Safeguarding
Policy owner	Head of Safeguarding

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

Age: Safeguarding policies protect both children and vulnerable adults, ensuring their safety and well-being regardless of their age.

Disability: Individuals with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect, and this policy aims to provide them with appropriate support and protection.

Implementation factors

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

The Commission must adhere to the following legislative and policy guidelines to ensure the effective implementation of this policy:

- [Northern Ireland Troubles \(Legacy and Reconciliation\) Act 2023](#) Section 4 of the Act establishes that the Commission 'must not do anything which would risk putting or would put the life or safety of any person at risk' and as a public authority, it has a legal duty of care to those who use its services. The Commission as a public authority is

also bound to act in a manner compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

- [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(2017\)](#) this policy provides an overarching framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sector.
- Human Rights Act 1998
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#) is the principal statute governing the care, upbringing, and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It affects all those who work and care for children, whether parents, paid carers, or volunteers
- [Adult Safeguarding, Prevention and Protection in Partnership Policy \(2015\)](#) is the policy which sets out safeguarding guidelines for all organisations working with, or providing services to, adults across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors.

Main stakeholders affected

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

Staff	Actual
People who use our service	Actual
Other public sector organisations: health and social care bodies, academic organisations etc.	Actual
Voluntary/community/trade unions: advocacy and children's rights groups	Actual
Other, please specify (including witnesses, eligible persons)	Actual

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Name	Who owns
Data Protection Policy	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Mental Capacity Policy	Commissioner for Investigations

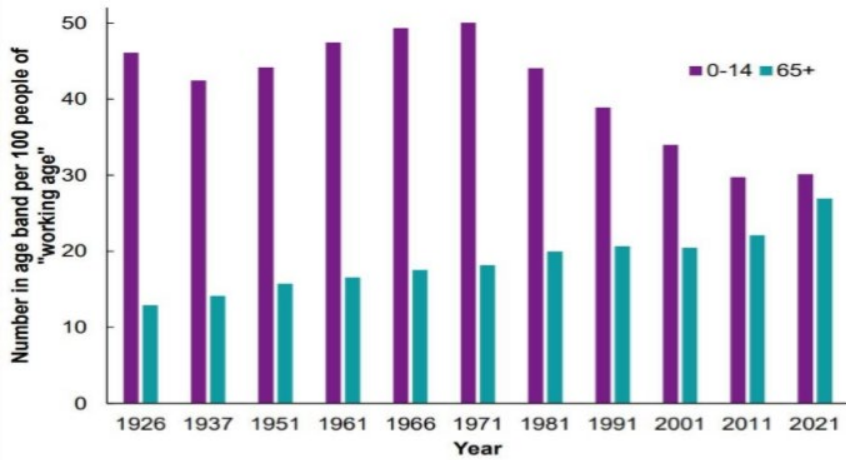
Informed Principles: how the Commission will explore and establish family relationships	ICRIR
Safeguarding Children (Under 18s) Policy	Head of Safeguarding

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	On Census Day 2021 just under one person in five (19.0%) either had 'no religion' (17.4%) or 'religion not stated' (1.6%). The equivalent percentages for the main religions were: Catholic (42.3%) Presbyterian Church in Ireland (16.6%) Church of Ireland (11.5%) Methodist (2.4%) Other Christian denominations (6.9%) Other non-Christian Religions (1.3%) Source: Census 2021 main statistics for settlements and wards in Northern Ireland Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (nisra.gov.uk)
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	Adult safeguarding: The Commission recognises that many people who are eligible to make a request for an investigation are likely to be older. In addition, the Census 2021, one person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long term health problem or disability,

	40% of which were aged 65 or more (185,300 people). Due to the intersection of age and disability, older individuals approaching the Commission are more likely to be living with a disability, which may in turn designate them as vulnerable adults. Child safeguarding: data from the Northern Ireland Census 2021 shows that there are 412,014 people under the age of 18 living in Northern Ireland, accounting for 21.65% of the total population. Census 2021- Age- Single Year Breakdown
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. In the Census 2021, one person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long term health problem or disability, 40% of which were aged 65 or more (185,300 people). In total, 1.44 million people (75.7%) indicated they did not have a limiting long-term health problem or disability. The number of people with a limiting long-term health problem or disability increased from the 2011 to 2021 Census. The increase, from 374,600 people in 2011 to 463,000 people in 2021 (an increase of 23.6%), will be driven partly by our ageing population.

	Census 2021 shows us that 34.7% of people had one or more long-term health conditions (659,800 people). The most prevalent conditions (whether solely or in combination with others) were 'Long-term pain or discomfort' (11.6% of people), 'Mobility or dexterity difficulty that limits basic physical activities' (10.9% of people) and 'Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing' (10.3% of people). For the first time Census 2021 included 'Autism or Asperger syndrome' as a listed health condition and 35,000 people were recorded with this condition. Of this, 19,000 children (or one child in twenty) had 'Autism or Asperger syndrome' recorded.
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	There is no indication that any of the proposed actions within the policy will disproportionately impact on the basis of religious belief.
Political Opinion	There is no indication that any of the proposed actions within the policy will disproportionately impact on the basis of political opinion.
Racial Group	There is no indication that any of the proposed actions within the policy will disproportionately impact on the basis of racial group.
Age	This policy recognises the different safeguarding mechanisms and legislation that apply to adult safeguarding and to the safeguarding of children, including issues around consent when making a referral to the appropriate agency.
Marital status	There is no indication that any of the proposed actions within the policy will disproportionately impact on the basis of marital status.
Sexual orientation	There is no indication that any of the proposed actions within the policy will disproportionately impact on the basis of sexual orientation.
Men and Women generally	It can be inferred that there may be more requests to the Commission from bereaved women, with the added consideration that women are more likely to have dependants under the age of 18.
Disability	This policy will impact on those individuals living with a disability. Where an individual is living with a disability and requires care and support due to needs arising from said disability, the Commission must be aware that engagement with the Commission increase the need for care and support, or trigger care and support needs not previously experienced. Where there are concerns around the mental capacity of an individual approaching the Commission, the Commission will act to

	assess mental capacity and put appropriate safeguards in place for these individuals.
Dependants	This policy may impact on those with dependants either where it be an adult looking after a child, an adult looking after an elderly parent or family member, or an adult caring for someone with a disability, where the dependant is subject to a safeguarding concern.

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**:

Assessment: Minor impact.

Rationale: The Commission recognises that this policy will impact on age due to the different NI Department of Health policies which set safeguarding expectations for both adults and children. The policy recognises that the issue of consent is a safeguarding factor as it relates to age, as consent may be needed when making a safeguarding referral for an adult but is never required when a child is being referred to the appropriate service.

Mitigation: The policy makes clear the difference in safeguarding expectations as applies to age and explains the safeguarding responsibilities all Commission staff have when dealing with different ages.

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: Minor impact.

Rationale: The policy sets out the threshold which justifies compulsory safeguarding intervention for children as ‘ill-treatment or the impairment of health and development.’ Given the prevalence of disabilities such as autism in children in Northern Ireland (see evidence above), appropriate consideration must be given to this factor when making a safeguarding referral for a child. The policy also highlights that adult safeguarding applies to adults who have “care or support needs”, giving examples of learning disabilities as conditions which may constitute a care or support need.

Mitigation: The policy sets out the process for making safeguarding referrals for both adults and children on the basis of disability. The policy also sets out the process for safeguarding when the mental capacity of a vulnerable adult is in question.

Level of Impact	Major	Minor	None
		x	

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

Assessment: Minor impact.

Rationale: Parents or carers of children or vulnerable adults may be affected by this policy if their dependant is the subject of a safeguarding referral.

Mitigation: The policy sets out the process for making safeguarding referrals for both adults and children on the basis of disability, neglect and harm.

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 opportunities identified.

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? Minor.

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:

None identified.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Yes, the policy on safeguarding may impact individuals with multiple identities within S75 categories, such as elderly people who may be living with a disability. The policy considers these intersections and ensures that the needs and requirements of these individuals are accommodated for as appropriate.

Part 3. Screening decision

Screening outcome: Screened Out

Decision: The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment for the policy on safeguarding children.

Mitigation

The Commission recognises the diverse policies which inform the Commission's obligation towards safeguarding adults and children. The Commission will provide training to all staff to ensure they are aware of their safeguarding obligations, will ensure staff are able to recognise behaviours which might lead to a safeguarding concern and will enable staff to refer a concern in the appropriate manner to the appropriate authority.

Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Operational Policy Assurance and Compliance

Date: 7 January 2026

Screened by: Operational Policy Assurance and Compliance

Date: 3 March 2026

Approved by: Head of Safeguarding

Date: 28 July 2026