



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Mánnystrie o tha Laa

DOJ Section 75

EQUALITY SCREENING FORM

Title of Policy: Legal Aid - A Revised Framework for the Assessment of Legal Aid Costs Subject to Taxation

Date: 26 October 2026

The Legal Background – Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department is required **to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity**:

- between person of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and,
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the Department is also required to:

- **have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group; and**
- **meet legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order.**

Introduction

Part 1. Policy scoping – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the

likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Part 4. Monitoring – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

Part 5. Approval and authorisation – verify the public authority's approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step-by-step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy:

Taxation legal aid rate

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

New policy

What is it trying to achieve? (Intended aims/outcomes)

The Department is consulting on proposals in relation to remuneration for solicitors and barristers in legally aided cases subject to taxation. The proposed revised arrangements will change:

- how fees are set;
- how some bills are submitted; and
- how bills are assessed.

In developing proposals, the Department has recognised existing arrangements for the determination of other legal aid fees have the benefit of offering transparency and being tried, tested and familiar to practitioners, and the public and scrutiny bodies alike. It is therefore proposed that hourly rates and fees be similarly set for solicitors and barristers acting in civil proceedings in the High Court, and for civil and criminal proceedings in the Court of Appeal. As with other fees, the new hourly rates will be specified in secondary legislation subject to the usual statutory and public consultative processes, economic appraisal, statutory impact assessments and Assembly scrutiny.

The new arrangements will retain the independent adjudicative function of the Taxing Master, albeit with some changes to how that function is exercised as the Master will be required to apply the hourly rates and fees specified by the Department to enable greater budgetary control, transparency and oversight.

**Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?
If so, explain how.**

Ensuring Fair, proportionate remuneration that brings about greater transparency, accountability and budgetary control is critical to the continued availability of quality legal advice to ensure justice is served and will benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons with protected characteristics under s.75.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Enabling Access to Justice Division, Department of Justice.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Enabling Access to Justice Division, Department of Justice.

Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they (please delete as appropriate)

Legislative

Any proposals will require legislation to take effect, subject to the necessary Assembly procedures.

Main stakeholders affected

Legal representatives will be paid legal aid rates which will be lower than those paid in privately funded cases. Barristers will be required to provide a time and line assessment of work completed during legal aid proceedings to be scrutinised and verified by the Taxing Master, rather than applying for a brief fee to cover all work done.

Legal Services Agency

Taxing Master and staff in their office

NI Courts and Tribunal Service

Service Users

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?
- who owns them?

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

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 evidence / information:

Legal Profession: Respondents to Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession¹ include: 49% Roman Catholic, 16% Presbyterian, 9% Church of Ireland, 1% Methodist, 2% Agnostic, 4% Other, 15% no have religious belief, and 4% who preferred not to say.

A similar breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department. However, the 2021 Census² shows the breakdown of the general population as 42.3% Catholic, 37.4% Protestant and 20.3% Other/No Religion/Not Stated. Within the Legal Professionals portion of the community these proportions are 57.6% Catholic, 36.2% Protestant and 6.2% Other/No Religion although this is not broken down by solicitor/barrister.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by religious belief.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Political Opinion evidence / information:

Legal Profession: Respondents to Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession include: 52% Irish, 36% Northern Irish, 30% British, 1% Other and 1% Prefer not to say.

A similar breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department. The 2021 Census³ shows the breakdown of the general population as 31.86% British only, 29.13% Irish only,

¹ [diversityandequality200922poc.pdf](#)

² [Census 2021 guidance note on use of religion question outputs](#)

³ [census-2021-ms-b15.xlsx](#)

19.78% Northern Irish only, 0.62% British and Irish only, 7.95% British and Northern Irish only, 1.76% Irish and Northern Irish only, 1.47% British, Irish and Northern Irish only and 7.43% Other.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by political opinion.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Racial Group evidence / information:

Legal Profession: Respondents to Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession include: 98% White. A similar breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department.

The 2021 Census⁴ shows the breakdown of the general population as 96.55% White, 0.14% Irish Traveller, 0.08% Roma, 0.52% Indian, 0.50 Chinese, 0.23% Filipino, Pakistani 0.08%, 0.10% Arab, Other Asian 0.28%, 0.42% Black African, 0.16% Black Other, 0.76% Mixed and Other Ethnicities 0.19%.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by racial group.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Age evidence / information:

Legal Profession: Evidence provided in Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession⁵ shows that nearly 40% of those on the Roll in 2022 were first admitted to practice after 2000.

A summary of the survey findings shows that younger members of the Law Society Northern Ireland and those working outside of private practice are more likely to be working in Belfast. Whereas half of the solicitors practicing outside of Belfast are over the age of 45 (52%), nearly 62% of those practicing in Belfast are under 45 years old. The age profile of sole practitioners is substantially older than other roles. The Law Society of Northern Ireland suggests that the aging

⁴ [census-2021-ms-b01.xlsx](#)

⁵ [diversityandequality200922poc.pdf](#)

working population of solicitors may have implications on access to justice for local communities. A similar breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department.

The 2021 Census shows the broad breakdown of the general population as 0-14 19%, 15-39 31%, 40-64 32% and 65+ 17%.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by age.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Marital Status evidence / information:

Legal Profession: Marital Status is not covered by the Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession. A breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department.

The 2021 Census shows that 38.07% Single, 45.59% Married, 0.18% Civil Partnership, 3.78% Separated, 6.02% Divorced and 6.36% Widowed/surviving partner from Civil partnership.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by marital status.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

Legal Profession: Respondents to Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession include: 95% Straight/Heterosexual, 2% Gay or Lesbian, 1% Bisexual and 1% Prefer not to say. A breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department.

In the 2021 Census shows the breakdown of the general population as 90.04% Straight or Heterosexual, 1.17% Gay or Lesbian, 0.75% Bisexual, 0.17% Other sexual orientation, 4.58% Prefer not to say, and 3.30% not stated.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not

include s.75 data on assisted persons by sexual orientation.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

Legal Practitioners: Evidence provided in Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession shows that the profession is relatively balanced in terms of gender with 52% Female and 48% Male. The survey goes on to highlight that there is still a lack of advancement for women, who make up the majority of working solicitors with 58% of Partners and Directors being male. There is also a lack of support for women in the private sector of the profession. The survey indicated this may be linked to:

- Lack of maternity and return to work support.
- Lack of flexible working and other support for those with young children.
- Lack of reward compared to male counterparts.
- Preferential treatment of male counterparts, including promotion opportunities.

The Bar of Northern Ireland have 828 Barristers registered to practice in Northern Ireland on their directory. 525 or 63% are male and 303 or 37% are female.

The 2021 Census shows the breakdown of the general population as 50.81% Female and 49.19% Male.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI⁶ show that during 2023/24, the legal aid grant rate for males (48.8 grants per 1,000 population) was almost three times that of females (18.5 per 1,000 population). Despite displaying similar grant rates for civil cases (10.6 and 10.0 respectively), males were over four times more likely to be the recipient of legal aid in criminal cases (38.2 v 8.5).

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Disability evidence / information:

Legal Practitioners: Evidence provided in Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland

⁶ [Legal Aid in Northern Ireland: Annual Statistics to March 2024 published today | Department of Justice](#)

Solicitor Profession shows that under 1 in 20 (4%) of respondents to the survey considered themselves to have a disability according to the definition in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 while almost 1 in 5 respondents had some form of long-term health condition, with mental health and respiratory conditions being the most prevalent.

Of those respondents who stated they consider themselves to have a disability, 4% worked within the private sector, 8% within the public sector and 3% in other sectors. Only 3% of respondents who considered themselves to have a disability were partners or directors.

A breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department.

The 2021 Census shows the breakdown of the general population as 24.33% having a long-term health problem or disability.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by disability.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

Dependants' evidence / information:

Legal Practitioners: Evidence provided in Diversity and Equality Study of the Northern Ireland Solicitor Profession shows that 3 in 5 respondents to the survey had dependants, predominantly children (45%). 2 in 5 respondents to the survey were the primary carer for children and these respondents were much more likely to be working in the public sector, working part-time and female. 22% of respondents stated that they give care to others with long term health conditions. These care givers were much more likely to be working in the public sector, considerably more likely to be female and are largely aged 45 and over. The proposed changes to the remuneration process and rates for taxed cases will not impact on solicitors in the public sector.

A breakdown in relation to the Criminal Bar is not available to the Department.

The 2021 Census shows the breakdown of the general population as 53.15% No children in household, 16.17% No dependent children in household, 12.14% one dependent child 0-18, 11.9% two dependent children 0-18 and 6.65% three or more dependent children.

Assisted Persons: The Legal Aid Annual Statistics to March 2024 released by LSANI do not include s.75 data on assisted persons by dependents.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will adversely impact on this section 75 category.

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:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Political Opinion:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Racial Group:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Age:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern

Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Marital status:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Sexual orientation:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Men and Women Generally:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Disability:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Dependants:

This Remuneration Order, made under Articles 12(3) and 47 of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, seeks to ensure that remuneration is fair and proportionate. It supports enhanced transparency, accountability and effective budgetary control, which are essential to sustaining the availability of high-quality legal advice and ensuring access to justice. The measures introduced are expected to benefit both legal practitioners and assisted persons, including those with protected characteristics under Section 75.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are detailed below.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would

be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;

- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are

concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;

- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

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

Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers

providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None (Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None
(Underline as appropriate)

2. **Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?** Yes/No

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: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Political Opinion - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Racial Group - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Age - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Marital Status - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Sexual Orientation - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Men and Women generally - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on

any group within this section 75 category.

Disability - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

Dependants - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons: Will impact on all equally.

There is no evidence to indicate that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any group within this section 75 category.

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**:

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

This will have no adverse impact on this section 75 category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None
(Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

This will have no adverse impact on this section 75 category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None
(Underline as appropriate)

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

This policy relates to the remuneration of practising solicitors and barristers providing legal aid services. The authorisation of expenditure under legislation is available to legal practitioners providing access to legal aid regardless of s.75 status.

This will have no adverse impact on this section 75 category.

What is the level of impact? Minor / Major / None
(Underline as appropriate)

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:

Religious Belief - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons:
Will impact on all equally.

Political Opinion - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons:
Will impact on all equally.

Racial Group - If yes, provide details: If No, provide reasons:
Will impact on all equally.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

People can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

- None.

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

- None.

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

- The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- The policy will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

- N/A

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

- N/A

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

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

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

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.

- N/A

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 [Author pick 1, 2 or 3 if a full EQIA is to take place]

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 the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's 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.

- N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Further advice on monitoring can be found at: [ECNI Monitoring Guidance for Public Authorities](#)

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Neil McCullough
Position/Job Title: SO
Date: 21/09/2026

Approved by: Steven Allison
Position/Job Title: G5
Date: 12/10/2026