# A4 DAERA Logo process.png

Figure DAERA LOGO corporate branding

**Equality & Disability Duties**

**Screening Template**

# **Screening flowchart and template (taken from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for public authorities April 2010 *(Appendix 1)).***

**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. This section also includes two questions related to the Disability Duties.

**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 tointroducemeasures 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. Consideration of Human Rights** – please note this is not a Human Rights Screening form but rather a prompt that impacts on Human Rights should be considered.

**Part 6. Approval and authorisation** – verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

A screening flowchart is provided overleaf.

Policy Scoping

* + Policy
  + Available data

Screening Questions

* Apply screening questions
* Consider multiple identities

Screening Decision: None/Minor/Major

Mitigate

Publish Template

Re-consider screening

Publish Template

for information

Publish Template

EQIA

Monitor

**‘None’**

Screened out

**‘Major’**

Screened in for EQIA

**‘Minor’**

Screened out with mitigation

Concerns raised with evidence

Concerns raised with evidence re: screening decision

**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**

Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group Direction to Officers on Veterinary Public Health Programme Duties (The Directions Document). While this document is for internal use only, it is a compilation of the policies appropriate to all civil servants in Northern Ireland which is published. <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-handbook>

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**Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?**

Existing – The content of this guide was initially agreed between Trade Union Side (TUS) and Management Side (MS) and signed on 03 September 2012. The guide has subsequently been reviewed, with the latest version being agreed in October 2021.

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

Officers engaged in Veterinary Public Health Programme (VPHP) duties are bound by employment conditions set out in the NICS HR Handbook. However, the Handbook is largely focused on civil service employees with a normal working pattern of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. As independent private businesses, in this scenario where the Department provides essential Official Controls, the meat industry operating patterns determine working hours for VPHP officers with VSAHG managers having limited control over working times or patterns. There are arrangements in place where industry can vary these working times and notice is required to be given

In the past MS had developed various papers to try to bridge the gap between VPHP working times and patterns against normal NICS 9.00 am to 5.00 pm hours.

This Directions Document brings the various papers in to one central reference by way of providing clarity and promoting consistency of application of issues that may not be clearly addressed in the NICS HR Handbook.

Where ever possible this guidance will cross reference to the NICS HR Handbook and clarify as necessary.

The overall intention is to ensure that staff are treated fairly and equally with all managers applying the same standards and approach.

This document is for guidance purposes only and does not replace the NICS HR Handbook’s Terms and Conditions.

If managers are unclear or unable to find the necessary guidance in the NICS HR Handbook they should liaise with their Line Manager and as necessary contact HR Connect for advice.

The Directions Document notes that all veterinarians can expect to receive training for designation as Official Veterinarians (OVs) so that they are competent to cover OV duties and take on a resident OV posting. Furthermore, all veterinarians employed by DAERA (the Department) must expect to spend at least one term in a meat premises during their career. This is stipulated in the job Candidate Information Booklet upon the advertisement of any veterinary vacancies by the Department and referenced in the letter of offer upon prior to and requiring agreement before employment. A ‘term’ as noted above will be a **minimum of two years** with the option to elect to remain on meat hygiene duties for a further 12 months on completion of the two-year appointment period.

Annex B of The Directions Document outlines the selection process adopted by Veterinary Service Management with regards to veterinarians moving to VPHP.

It should be noted that this selection process as detailed in The Directions Document has been previously agreed following consultation by TUS and MS.

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**Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?**

**If so, explain how.**

No

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**Who initiated or wrote the policy?**

The Directions Document was originally established in consultation with TUS and Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group Management (VSM). This is noted in the Forward to the original document from 2012.

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**Who owns and who implements the policy?**

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group Management

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**Implementation factors**

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

No

**Main stakeholders affected**

**Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? (please delete as appropriate)**

Veterinarians

Veterinary Officers and Veterinary Inspectors employed within Veterinary Service Animal Health Group. (47.66 and 29.88 FTE respectively) to which there is a contractual obligation to provide a term of employment in a Meat Establishment working in the role of an Official Veterinarian.

The <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-ms-h12.xlsx> shows that there were 873 Veterinarians working in Northern Ireland across the wider profession in government and private sector employment during 2021.

Veterinary activities are recorded in the census across NI, showing a reasonably even spread, and highest in the mid Ulster council area.

The bar graph below demonstrates the relatively even distribution. It should be noted that the work activities of Veterinarians varies considerably across a range of activities: veterinary private practitioners work with a full range of species – farm, companion and exotics; vets work in government roles and also in support sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry.



Figure Table of data for breakdown of where Veterinarians work throughout Northern Ireland

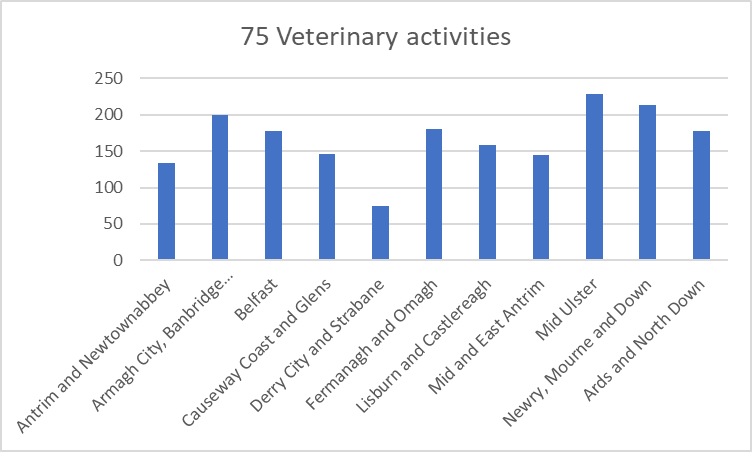


Figure Pictoral representation of the distribution of Veterinarians working in Northern Ireland per NISRA statistics

Further information has been considered in respect of statistical available information regarding the composition of the veterinary workforce within VSAHG [Article 55 - Gender Review 2019 (finance-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/FINAL%20Article%2055%20and%20Gender%20Review%202019_0.pdf) . The available data demonstrates a trend in DAERA employed veterinarians (at the time of the survey) which does not exist in the wider profession where new graduates from University level education are represented in a female to male proportion of 80:20. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/19-01-2023/sb265-higher-education-student-statistics/subjects#:~:text=Overall%2C%2057%25%20of%20students%20are,has%20increased%20in%202021%2F22>.

(“In veterinary sciences, psychology and subjects allied to medicine close to 4 in every 5 students are female and the proportion of students within each of these subject areas who are female has increased in 2021/22.”)

Despite this recent trend the recruitment into the Department remains skewed in applications from men to women (60:40)

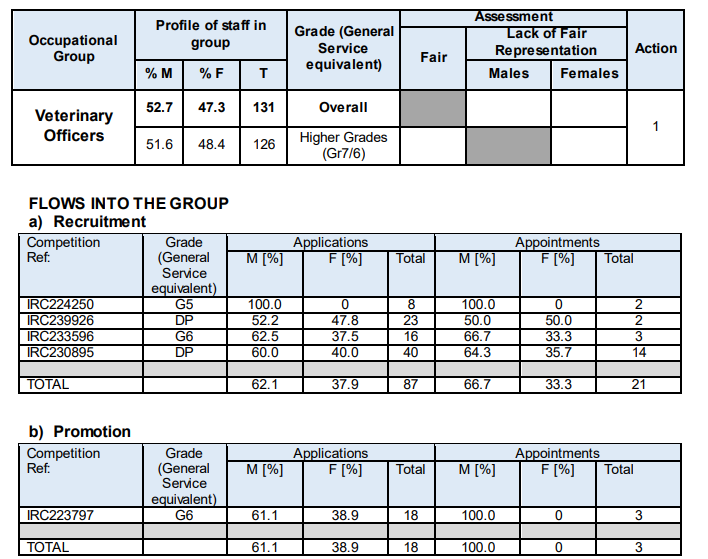


Figure Data extracted from the NISRA statistics detailing the proportion of Male and Female staff at different grades within the Veterinary Service Animal Health Group and demonstrating no evidence of a lack of fair assessment

However, the numbers of veterinarians involved in these activities in the role of Resident OV is very low (n=22) and the impact of this mandatory employment requirement is restricted to a small cohort of staff:



Figure Specific breakdown of Male to Female ratios in Veterinary Public Health Service demonstrating no evidence of the effects of discrimination on sex basis

Considering the make up of staff working in Veterinary Public Health Programme (VPHP), these proportions are represented in a similar way.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

NICS HR Handbook Terms and Conditions

**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](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/S75DataSignpostingGuide.pdf).

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

**Information**

* NICS HR Handbook Terms and Conditions
* Veterinary Inspector / Veterinary Official (Official Veterinarian (OV)) contract of employment
* Candidate Information booklet produced in collaboration with NICS HR on the advertisement of veterinary vacancies
* Signed agreement from TUS and MS on the contents of The Directions Document and the process to which veterinarians are selected for VPHP duties
* 2021 NISRA Census Data

**Northern Ireland Census Data 2021**

[2021 Census | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (nisra.gov.uk)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021-census)

Veterinarians

[census-2021-ms-h12.xlsx (live.com)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nisra.gov.uk%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fstatistics%2Fcensus-2021-ms-h12.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

Occupation = Veterinarian, Number = 873 (total in Northern Ireland)

Veterinary Activities are recorded in the census across NI, showing a reasonably even spread, and highest in the mid Ulster council area, and area which has the highest density of meat processing facilities.

Numbers of veterinarians involved in these activities in the role of Resident OV is very low (n=22) and the impact of this mandatory employment requirement is restricted to a small cohort of staff

**Gender Review of Veterinarians within NICS - Article 55 Report**

[Article 55 - Gender Review 2019 (finance-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/FINAL%20Article%2055%20and%20Gender%20Review%202019_0.pdf)

01/01/2019 Vets within NICS = 131. Male – 52.7%, Female 47.3%

**Religious belief** evidence/information:

01/01/2019 Vets within NICS = 131. Identifying as Protestant 50.5%, Roman Catholic 49.5%

**Current staff in VSAHG VPHP– breakdown of gender and work pattern**



Figure Figure included earlier represents a breakdown of the staff working at the Veterinary Inspector and Veterinary Officer grades in Veterinary Public Health Programme

As detailed above in the intended aims/outcomes section, The Directions Document applies to all veterinary staff regardless of their religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, whether they are a man or a woman, whether they have a disability or not and whether they have dependents or not. The Directions Document cross references to the NICS HR Handbook and it should be noted that it is for guidance purposes only and does not replace the NICS HR Handbook’s Terms and Conditions.

The overall intention is to ensure that staff are treated fairly and equally with all managers applying the same standards and approach.

All veterinary staff (excluding portal) are allocated to relevant cluster offices for supply purposes for VPHP duties based on their location. All veterinary staff (excluding portal) regardless of their needs, experience and priorities as detailed under the S75 categories are afforded the same opportunities with respect to serving time in a meat premises during their career.   
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**Political Opinion** evidence/information: as above  
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**Racial Group** evidence/information: as above  
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**Age** evidence/information: as above  
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**Marital Status** evidence/information: as above  
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**Sexual Orientation** evidence/information: as above  
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**Men & Women generally** evidence/information: as above  
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**Disability** evidence/information: as above  
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**Dependants** evidence/information: as above  
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**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***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular groups of a religious belief.  
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***Political Opinion***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular groups of a political belief.

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***Racial Group***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular racial groups.

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***Age***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular age groups.

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***Marital status***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular marital status.

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***Sexual orientation***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular sexual orientation.

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***Men and Women Generally***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular groups regarding men and women.

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***Disability***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular groups of people with disabilities. However, people with disabilities may not be eligible to undertake the duties of all available VPHP posts. Individuals are considered on a case-by-case basis, considering the employees needs and the requirements of the role to ascertain suitability. Where possible, VPHP will aim to provide reasonable adjustments.

Referrals and Interventions User Guide



Figure Embeded PDF document of the NICS policy in respect of referals to OHS assessment

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***Dependants***

None. In relation to this policy there are no specific needs, experiences or priorities for any particular groups regarding people with dependents.

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**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.

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**

1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

**In favour of ‘minor’ impact**

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of none**

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
2. 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*:**

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated. However, in respect of Good Relations, there may be a perception that due to changes in the demographic of the veterinary profession and previous concerns expressed by staff, a mitigation will be introduced to offset any potential for discrimination.

The measure will address concerns with the previous policy when the Cluster arrangements are activated to select an eligible member of staff to fill a vacant post (where there have been no willing volunteer). The measure will ensure that all potential OVs in a cluster are treated only on the basis of whether or not they have been required to serve a term of 2 years in VPHP. Previously the selection was based on the person who had most recently received authorisation from the Food Standards Agency. In pursuing this previous policy, there was a possibility of perception that more junior members of the Service were more likely for selection compared to older members of the Service.

**What is the level of impact?** Minor. Statistical analysis would demonstrate that of the staff in the VPHP Meat establishments only a few of the current staff are at the entry grade for the Service (Veterinary Inspector grade)

(Entrance to the Service at DP level (Veterinary Inspector) has been the entry grade to VSAHG since the implementation of the Veterinary Transition Operating Model “Change Process” VTOM. This was implemented from 2016)

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

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policy will have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policy is expected to have no impact on equality of opportunity for those affected and no differential impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated. As per above, employee suitability is considered on a case by case basis, with independent advice sought from the Occupational Health Service on the employees suitability for the role. Where possible, VPHP will aim to provide reasonable adjustments. It is accepted that owing to the nature of the workplace required in these posts, and requirements from legislation which specify the role of the OV, these posts may not be feasible for all staff. However should staff with a disability demonstrate interest in a post in VPHP, efforts would be made to find a viable alternative role in the subject area if possible.

**What is the level of impact?** None (after application of referrals and interventions policy),

NICS Referrals and Interventions guide:



Figure Embedded Northern Ireland Civil Service Policy in respect of Referrals to Occupational Health Service

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

The department does not have a policy providing consideration for staff personal circumstances based on Dependants. The department recognises the range of external pressures staff have and where there are specific concerns they can be provided consideration through the NICS Welfare policy. As a consequence of the assessment made previously on the potential for indirect impact on the Age protective characteristic, there could be impacts or the perception of impacts for people with Dependants. In addressing the potential for Age, these concerns will be mitigated.

<https://nics.service-now.com/kb?sys_kb_id=72c2d17c87c229d06deb2fc8cebb35f7&id=kb_article_view&sysparm_rank=2&sysparm_tsqueryId=27c78c9247c73918f0af57f1e26d4306>

NICS HR Policy 3.10 Alternative Working Patterns v5.1



Figure Embedded Northern Ireland Civil Service document of the Human Resource Policy in respect of ALternative Working

**What is the level of impact?** None.

1. **Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?** Yes~~/No~~ (please delete as appropriate)

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

***Religious Belief* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different religious belief, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category.

***Political Opinion* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different political opinion, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category.

***Racial Group* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different racial groups, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category.

***Age* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different age groups, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category.

***Marital Status* -** No

**If No, provide reasons**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different marital status, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category.

***Sexual Orientation* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different sexual orientation, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category.

***Men and Women generally* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards to men and women, and it is not envisaged that equality of opportunity will be affected for this equality category. The staff ratio for male and female demonstrates that there is no imbalance in this post, with the caveat that the number of staff in this role is only 21.

***Disability* -** Yes

**If No, provide reasons:**

While policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people with disability, these are neglecting the possibility that staff in this category may wish to undertake work in this area but feel inhibited. The work area is important and presents realistic opportunities for career progression. This screening has demonstrated that VPHP should proactively reach out to staff in the case that there is someone unknown who may have an interest in the field.

***Dependants* –** No impact.

**If No, provide reasons:**

The department does not have a policy on dependants. Staff are required to perform these duties to comply with terms and conditions of employment for a key business priority for the department.

1. **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*:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document will have no impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs. The policy content is aimed at all veterinary staff, regardless of religious belief. Veterinary staff show a 50.5%P, 49.5% RC – a balanced religious belief allocation.

No impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policies set out in The Directions Document will have no impact on good relations between people of different political opinions. The policy content is aimed at all veterinary staff. No impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

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

The policies set out in The Directions Document will have no impact on good relations between people of different racial groups. The policy content is aimed at all veterinary staff. No impacts on this Section 75 category are anticipated.

**What is the level of impact?** None

1. **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* -** No

**If No, provide reasons:**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different religious beliefs and consequently there is no opportunity to better promote good relations.

***Political Opinion* -** No

**If No, provide reasons**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different political opinions and consequently there is no opportunity to better promote good relations.

**Racial Group -** No

**If No, provide reasons**

The policies set out in The Directions Document are neutral as regards people of different racial groups and consequently there is no opportunity to better promote good relations.

**Additional considerations**

**Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, 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?  If so, please detail below.

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

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

Other than the categories mentioned Age and Disability, there is no evidence that there are any potential impacts from the policies set out in The Directions Document on people with multiple Section 75 identities.

DAERA also has legislative obligations to meet under the Disability Discrimination Order. Questions 5 – 6 relate to these.

Consideration of Disability Duties

1. **Does this proposed policy or decision provide an opportunity for DAERA to better *promote positive attitudes* towards disabled people?**

Yes a review of the The Directions Document presents an opportunity for DAERA to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. These will be addressed to ensure staff are made aware that opportunities will be considered to ensure staff with disabilities can get valuable experience in this area of work, if they are motivated to apply.

6. **Does this proposed policy or decision provide an opportunity to actively *increase the participation* by disabled people in public life?**

At present, the Directions Document does not provide an opportunity for DAERA to actively increase participation of disabled people in public life. The proposed review will address these concerns.

**Part 3. Screening decision** (Please delete as appropriate)

“Screened out” with mitigation

**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.**

To deliver this priority business area, staff are required to serve a term in VPHP. A policy is required to select staff where volunteers for the roles are not forthcoming. The policy is considered appropriate and will be enhanced and updated following this Equality Screening with mitigations for the two minor concerns noted which could have been an issue should the circumstance arise. There is no indication to date that there has been an issue previously.

No major impacts or opportunities were reported during the screening exercise. The policies set out in The Directions Document will not have any significant negative or differential impacts on people within the equality categories. Opportunities to review the policy in respect of perceived age and disabilities will be addressed in the next review of this policy. Following this a further Equality Screening will be considered.

As detailed above and considered as part of the evidence in making this informed decision, The Directions Document has been jointly agreed by Senior Management and Trade Unions.

The Directions Document does not replace the NICS HR Handbook’s Terms and Conditions. It should be noted that the overall intention is to ensure that staff are treated fairly and equally with all managers applying the same standards and approach.

VSAHG has in place the following mitigating actions:

* Consultation with Occupational Health Service on the suitability of a post for a person with disabilities has always been part of the process. In general concerns are not announced to the department either at the start of employment or at a subsequent time, but arise at the time when the selection for the individual is made. Individuals are considered on a case-by-case basis, considering the employee’s needs and the requirements of the role to ascertain suitability. Where possible, VPHP always aims to provide reasonable adjustments.

In addition, going forward VPHP will also proactively consider communication so that staff who may have visible or unapparent disabilities have the opportunity for career development within VPHP.

This will also consider roles that staff within the VPHP programme area may perform which could accommodate OHS concerns better and further reasonable adjustments.

**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?Yes / ~~No~~ (delete as appropriate)**

Yes

The directions document is a living document which is kept under regular review.

VPHP management are currently considering changes to the policy address perceived concerns and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

**If so, *give the reasons* to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.**

The policy may have a perceived impact on equality of opportunity While it is recognised that the operational hours for Food Businesses are outside those stipulated in the NICS Handbook, staff undertaking employment in DAERA Veterinary Service are aware of this when accepting their post.

The proposed change to the directions document is the random selection of employees for VPHP duties as opposed to the existing arrangement of selection of those most recently trained as Official Veterinarians.

**Timetabling and prioritising (NOT Applicable)**

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.

**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** | **Rating (1-3)** |
| --- | --- |
| Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations |  |
| Social need |  |
| Effect on people’s daily lives |  |
| Relevance to a public authority’s functions |  |
| **Total score** |  |

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.**

**Part 4. Monitoring**

Section 75 places a requirement on DAERA to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity. Please note the following excerpt from The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in relation to monitoring:

*A system must be established to monitor the impact of the policy in order to find out its effect on relevant groups. The results of ongoing monitoring must be reviewed on an annual basis. The public authority is required to publish the results of this monitoring. And they must be included in the public authorities´ annual review on progress to the Equality Commission. The Equality Scheme must specify how and where such monitoring information will be published. It is therefore essential that monitoring is carried out in a systematic manner and that the results are widely and openly published.*

*If the monitoring and analysis of results over a two year period show that the policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the public authority must ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups.*

Further advice on monitoring can be found at: [ECNI Monitoring Guidance for Public Authorities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75MonitoringGuidance2007.pdf?ext=.pdf)

Outline what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the impact of this policy or decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.

**Equality:**

Monitor the uptake of employees transferring into VPHP posts using the NICS Alternative Working Patterns Policy

The Directions Document has and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and any identified impacts on equality will be addressed.

VPHP will develop a survey for staff who are leaving the programme and consider relevant comments in respect to potential impact on Section 75.

**Good Relations:**

Liaison with staff through established management forum

Liaison with TUS to understand concerns of staff not communicated through management

Monitor staff retention rates within the Veterinary Public Health Programme

Consider opportunities to model roles to suit better alternative life style arrangements through the VSAHG programme of renewal.

The Directions Document has and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and any identified impacts on good relations will be addressed.

**Disability Duties:**

Monitor the uptake of employees transferring into VPHP posts using the NICS Adaptations Referrals and Interventions Policy.

The Directions Document has been and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and any identified impacts on disability duties will be addressed.

Most importantly opportunities to communicate to staff to encourage staff with disabilities to apply for alternative roles in VPHP which do not require work in approved establishments will be considered proactively.

**Part 5. Consideration of Human Rights**

1. **The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 brings the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law and it applies in N Ireland. Indicate below by deleting Yes/No as appropriate, any potential *adverse impacts* that the policy or decision may have in relation to human rights issues.**

See Annex A for brief synopsis on each of the Human Rights Articles & Protocols

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Right to Life | **Article 2** | No |
| Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment | **Article 3** | No |
| Prohibition of slavery and forced labour | **Article 4** | No |
| Right to liberty and security | **Article 5** | No |
| Right to a fair and public trial | **Article 6** | No |
| Right to no punishment without law | **Article 7** | No |
| Right to respect for private and family life, home  and correspondence | **Article 8** | No |
| Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion | **Article 9** | No |
| Right to freedom of expression | **Article 10** | No |
| Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association | **Article 11** | No |
| Right to marry and to found a family | **Article 12** | No |
| The prohibition of discrimination | **Article 14** | No |
| Protection of property and enjoyment of possessions | **Protocol 1 Article 1** | No |
| Right to education | **Protocol 1 Article 2** | No |
| Right to free and secret elections | **Protocol 1 Article 3** | No |

8. **Please explain any adverse impacts on human rights that you have identified**

None identified

9. **Please indicate any ways which you consider the policy positively promotes human rights**

The policy does not create opportunity to positively promote human rights

**Part 6 - Approval and authorisation**

# **Screening Checklist**

Before signing off this screening template please confirm that you have completed all the actions listed below.

I can confirm that all the actions listed below have been completed –

* I have explained any technical issues in plain English (easily understood by a 12 year old)
* I have used the most relevant, current & up to date data available
* I have added evidence and explained my assessments in full
* I have provided a brief note to justify my decision to ‘Screen In’ or ‘Screen Out’
* A copy of this screening template and the final decision has been sent to the Equality Unit for their consideration before it has been forwarded for sign-off

**Screening assessment completed by (Staff Officer level or above) -**

**Name:** Philip Kennedy **Grade:** 6

**Branch:** Veterinary Public Health DAERA **Date: 19/12/2023**

**Signature:**

**Screening decision approved by (must be Grade 3/Deputy Secretary or above) -**

**Name:** Robert J Huey **Grade:** Grade 3

**Branch:** VSAHG **Date: 16th January 2023**

**Signature:** please insert a scanned image of your signature



Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority’s website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

Please save the final signed version of the completed screening form in the CM container (AE2-19-11940) below as soon as possible after completion and forward the CM link to Equality Branch at [equality@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:equality@daera-ni.gov.uk). The screening template must be saved to the container in **HTML format** (not PDF) in order to comply with accessibility requirements. The screening form will be placed on the DAERA website and a link provided to the Department’s Section 75 consultees.



Figure For NICS use only, this is a link to the Official Document Storage Repository where all Equality Impact assessments are retained

For more information about equality screening, contact –

DAERA Equality Unit

Staff Engagement, Equality & Diversity Branch

Jubilee House

111 Ballykelly Road

LIMAVADY  
BT49 9HP

Email: [equality@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:equality@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Tel: 028 7744 2027



**Annex A**

**Synopsis of Human Rights Act Articles & Protocols**

***Article 2***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Right to life***

1. Everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this Article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:**E+W+S+N.I.**

(a) In defense of any person from unlawful violence;

(b) In order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;

(c) In action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.

***Article 3***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Prohibition of torture***

No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

***Article 4***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Prohibition of slavery and forced labour***

1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.**E+W+S+N.I.**
3. For the purpose of this Article the term “forced or compulsory labour” shall not include:**E+W+S+N.I.**

(a) Any work required to be done in the ordinary course of detention imposed according to the provisions of Article 5 of this Convention or during conditional release from such detention;

(b) Any service of a military character or, in case of conscientious objectors in countries where they are recognised, service exacted instead of compulsory military service;

(c) Any service exacted in case of an emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community;

(d) Any work or service which forms part of normal civic obligations.

***Article 5***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Right to liberty and security***

1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his liberty save in the following cases and in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law:**E+W+S+N.I.**

(a) The lawful detention of a person after conviction by a competent court;

(b) The lawful arrest or detention of a person for non-compliance with the lawful order of a court or in order to secure the fulfilment of any obligation prescribed by law;

(c) the lawful arrest or detention of a person effected for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority on reasonable suspicion of having committed an offence or when it is reasonably considered necessary to prevent his committing an offence or fleeing after having done so;

(d ) the detention of a minor by lawful order for the purpose of educational supervision or his lawful detention for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority;

(e) The lawful detention of persons for the prevention of the spreading of infectious diseases, of persons of unsound mind, alcoholics or drug addicts or vagrants;

(f) The lawful arrest or detention of a person to prevent his effecting an unauthorised entry into the country or of a person against whom action is being taken with a view to deportation or extradition.

1. Everyone who is arrested shall be informed promptly, in a language which he understands, of the reasons for his arrest and of any charge against him.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. Everyone arrested or detained in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(c) of this Article shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorised by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial. Release may be conditioned by guarantees to appear for trial.**E+W+S+N.I.**
3. Everyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings by which the lawfulness of his detention shall be decided speedily by a court and his release ordered if the detention is not lawful.**E+W+S+N.I.**
4. Everyone who has been the victim of arrest or detention in contravention of the provisions of this Article shall have an enforceable right to compensation.**E+W+S+N.I.**

***Article 6***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Right to a fair trial***

1. In the determination of his civil rights and obligations or of any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Judgment shall be pronounced publicly but the press and public may be excluded from all or part of the trial in the interest of morals, public order or national security in a democratic society, where the interests of juveniles or the protection of the private life of the parties so require, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.**E+W+S+N.I.**
3. Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:**E+W+S+N.I.**

(a) To be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him;

(b) To have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defense;

(c) To defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing or, if he has not sufficient means to pay for legal assistance, to be given it free when the interests of justice so require;

(d) To examine or have examined witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on his behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against him;

(e) To have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

***Article 7***

**E+W+S+N.I.*No punishment without law***

1. No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the criminal offence was committed.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. This Article shall not prejudice the trial and punishment of any person for any act or omission which, at the time when it was committed, was criminal according to the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations.**E+W+S+N.I.**

***Article 8***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Right to respect for private and family life***

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.**E+W+S+N.I.**

***Article 9***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Freedom of thought, conscience and religion***

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.**E+W+S+N.I.**

***Article 10***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Freedom of expression***

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.**E+W+S+N.I.**

***Article 11***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Freedom of assembly and association***

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.**E+W+S+N.I.**
2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This Article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the State.**E+W+S+N.I.**

***Article 12***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Right to marry***

Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family, according to the national laws governing the exercise of this right.

***Article 14***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Prohibition of discrimination***

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

**Protocol 1**

***Article 1***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Protection of property***

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

**Protocol 1**

***Article 2***

**E+W+S+N.I.*Right to education***

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

**Protocol 1**

***Article***

***3* E+W+S+N.I.*Right to free elections***

The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature