

POLICY SCREENING FORM

Background

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the College is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- **between persons 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 College is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Screening

The screening procedure should lead to one of two conclusions:

- The policy being screened does not have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and therefore does not require an EQIA
- The policy being screened has (or is likely to have) a significant impact on equality of opportunity and may require an EQIA.

Scoping the Policy

Title of Policy:	Squatters Policy (v4) - May 24
Policy Aim:	The aims and objectives of our Squatters Policy is to provide procedural guidance for staff to ensure we prevent, monitor and take the appropriate action, when necessary against those who are not legal occupants within our homes.
Policy Ref:	COMM022
Brief Description:	Newington Housing Association is committed to providing housing for those who have been assessed as being in greatest need. While providing for those in greatest need, Newington Housing aims to maximise the use of its stock by allocating accommodation in line with the Allocations Policy. In order to achieve prevention of squatting is essential.

Who defines or defined the policy?

The Association's Board of Management, CEO, Heads of Departments and staff have defined the policy.

Who implements the policy?

Newington Housing Association will implement this policy.

Is the policy applied uniformly throughout the organisation? *If NO, what are the consequences*

Yes

Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy?

The main stakeholders are identified as NHA, illegal occupants, PSNI and NI Courts Service.

What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the aim or implementation of the policy?

None

How do we interface with other bodies in relation to implementation of this policy?

Via liaison with statutory bodies and external agencies.

Which other policies are related to this policy?

The main department directly related to this policy lies within our Communities Directorate and would align/complement our other internal policies such as allocations, abandoned tenancies, tenancy fraud, rent collections and arrears prevention, etc.

What data is currently available to facilitate the screening of this policy?

None

Answering the Four Screening Questions

The four questions ask for evidence in relation to the Section 75 dimensions. You should not think of the “don’t know” column in the form as the easy option to respond to any of the questions. In cases where you don’t know and you don’t have data, you will need to make a judgement based on experience as to whether the policy you are screening may have an impact on any of the nine dimensions. If your judgement is that the policy may have a differential adverse impact in relation to any of the Section 75 dimensions (i.e. it affects some groups differently and less favourably than other groups), you should seek to obtain evidence. You should note that evidence can be qualitative – i.e. drawn from the experience of individuals from their perspective - as well as quantitative. Officers must give consideration to steps that they could reasonably be expected to take to obtain evidence and thereby inform their decision-making. Such steps could include meeting with a representative group or selective consultation.

Where there is little or no evidence, and common sense indicates that a differential impact may be expected, you should discuss this with the Equality Officer.

1. Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?

	Yes	No	Not known
Religious belief		x	
Political opinion		x	
Racial group		x	
Age		x	
Marital status		x	
Sexual orientation		x	
Gender		x	
Disability		x	
Dependancy		x	

Please comment: Application data is funneled through the NIHE waiting list system.

2. Do different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

	Yes	No	Not known
Religious belief		x	
Political opinion		x	
Racial group		x	

Age		x	
Marital status		x	
Sexual orientation		x	
Gender		x	
Disability		x	
Dependency		x	

Please comment:

N/A

3. Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of this type create problems that are specific to them?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		x
Political opinion		x
Racial group		x
Age		x
Marital status		x
Sexual orientation		x
Gender		x
Disability		x
Dependency		x

Please comment:

N/A – Only a procedural process for the recording of information and data relating to the letting of properties to new tenants.

4. In relation to implementing this policy, is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the policy or by working with others in Government or in the larger community?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5. With reference to Questions 1 to 4 please summarise how you believe the policy may impact on the organisation's obligation to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.

We do not believe the policy impacts on the organisation's obligation to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.

6. What data do you believe will be required to ensure effective monitoring of the policy following implementation?

Internal data system information held within our Housing management software and reporting via various Committees.

7. In the context of Question 3 are there any relevant groups which you believe should be consulted at this time? Please specify

There are no relevant groups which we believe should be consulted at this time.

8. Any other comments on the policy and/or screening exercise?

No

9. On the basis of answers to Questions 1 to 4 above (and in particular positive answers), do you recommend that the policy should be subjected to a full impact assessment?

Yes

No

Please elaborate

No – Only a procedural process for the recording and responding to instances of illegal occupation/squatting within our properties.

Newington Housing Association Policy Screening Outcome

Is this a new policy?

No

If yes, confirm the date on which the policy was screened in relation to opportunity of equality & promotion of good relations?

(Not applicable)

If this is a review of an existing policy – have there been significant changes.

No significant changes have been made to the previous version.

If yes, confirm the date on which the policy was screened in relation to opportunity of equality & promotion of good relations?

28th May 2024

N.B. If an EQIA is recommended, please continue and complete an EQIA. If an EQIA is not recommended, please sign and date this form and ensure that the reason for not recommending is made clear.

Policy Screening Decision

The policy that has screened does not have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and therefore does not require an EQIA.

Screened by: Margaret Duffy Date: 28/05/2024

Approved by: Jacqui Gilmore Date: 28/05/2024
