

## Equality Screening [Equality Action Plan 2024-2027](#)

### Policy Scoping

Policy Title:

**Brief Description of Policy (please attach copy if available). Please state if it is a new, existing or amended policy.**

The Council's Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission on 25 March 2015. The Scheme included a commitment to conduct an Audit of Inequalities which would inform the development of an Equality Action Plan. An Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan were produced for the period 2020-2023 but are now due to be updated.

This Equality Action Plan 2024-2027 has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It also aligns with the Council's new corporate planning cycle.

As committed to in our Equality Scheme, it will go out to public consultation as a Draft Plan and will be amended accordingly as a result of any feedback received.

**Intended aims/outcomes. What is the policy trying to achieve?**

Actions that have been included in the Equality Action Plan cut across the majority of Council functions and inequalities are addressed by each section 75 group and include associated performance indicators and timescales to address the inequalities identified. The Council believes that the actions included in the plan are likely to have the biggest impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. The actions contained within the Equality Action Plan reflect four of the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. These are:

- Community Wellbeing
- Economic Growth
- Service Delivery
- Staff, Leadership and Resources

We will report annually to the Equality Commission on our progress in achieving these actions.

**Policy Framework**

Has the policy been developed in response to statutory requirements, legal advice or on the basis of any other professional advice? Does this affect the discretion available to The Council to amend the policy?

This Equality Action Plan 2024-2027 has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

This plan has been developed to address some of the equality issues identified in the Audit of Inequalities which are relevant to our functions. The Equality Commission recommended that Equality Schemes are accompanied by an Action Plan in order to improve outcomes for the section 75 groups.

This plan, in form and content, must conform to the guidelines contained within the Commission's guide for public authorities. There is discretion in relation to the actions that are included within the plan so long as they comply with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

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

The Plan will benefit a range of section 75 categories.

**Who initiated or wrote the policy (if The Council decision, please state). Who is responsible for implementing the policy?**

<b>Who initiated or wrote the policy?</b>	Mary Hanna, Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager
<b>Who is responsible for implementation?</b>	The Council

**Are there any factors which might contribute to or detract from the implementation of the policy (e.g. financial, legislative, other)?**

Lack of resources (financial and human) would negatively impact on achieving the actions within the plan.

**Main stakeholders in relation to the policy**

Please list main stakeholders affected by the policy (e.g. staff, customers, other statutory bodies, community or voluntary sector, private sector)

Section 75 groups, elected members, staff, customers, Equality Commission.

**Are there any other policies with a bearing on this policy? If so, please identify them and how they impact on this policy.**

Equality Scheme  
Disability Action Plan 2024-2027

## Available Evidence

The Council should ensure that its screening decisions are informed by relevant data. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories. For up to date [S75 Borough Statistics](#)

### During the 12 week consultation the following engagement took place

- The consultation was shared with our section 75 stakeholders as well as those within the age, community planning and sports development sectors.
- It was also placed on the consultation hub and its availability widely advertised via social media.
- Online consultations were offered on 28 February at 11am and 10 April at 7pm. No one attended the meeting on 28 February but the chairperson of the Loughbrickland 60+ Luncheon Club attended the meeting on the 10 April and we received valuable feedback as a result of this engagement.
- We received one response to the Equality Action Plan questionnaire via the consultation hub
- We received an additional 17 written responses from the Loughbrickland 60+ Luncheon Club.

Section 75 category	Evidence
Religious belief	<p>Census 2021 a population of 218,656 residents in ACBCBC, when asked what their current religion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41.7% identified as belonging to Protestant or other Christian religion</li> <li>• 41% identified Catholic and</li> <li>• 14.7% identified no religion and</li> <li>• 1.1% other religion.</li> </ul>
Political opinion	<p>There tends to be a generally accepted link between religious community background and political opinion in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>In terms of elected representatives, members of ACBCBC (May 2023 elections) belong to a range of parties across the political spectrum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Unionist Party – 13</li> <li>• Ulster Unionist Party – 6</li> <li>• Sinn Fein – 15</li> <li>• Social Democratic and Labour Party – 1</li> <li>• Alliance – 4</li> <li>• Independent – 1</li> <li>• TUV – 1</li> </ul> <p>Turnout for the elections in 2023 was 56.34% of the borough.</p>
Racial group	<p>Census 2021 results identified approximately 3.3% of the borough population from a minority ethnic grouping with 8.6% of the population born outside of the UK and 6.8% don't have English as their main language. The most</p>

	<p>prevalent languages spoken in ABC, outside of English are Polish (1.7%) and Lithuanian (1.2%). The main ethnic minority groups identified in the census were Mixed, Black African and Chinese.</p> <p>One response to the monitoring questionnaire identified as white</p>
Age	<p>2021 Census results on age of Borough citizens identified.</p> <p>0-15 years 22.1%,  16 – 24 years 10%,  25 – 49 years 32.9%  50 – 64 years 19%  65 and over 16%</p> <p>This represented a 26.7% increase in the 65+ age group and a 25.62% increase in the 50-64yr age group since the last census in 2011.</p> <p>17 responses were from the Loughbrickland 60+ Luncheon Group. The other response to this question on the monitoring questionnaire identified as aged 45-54 years</p>
Marital status	<p>The 2021 Census provides information on the marital and civil partnership status of those aged 16 and over. Almost half of residents aged 16+ in the borough were married (49.0%).</p> <p>One response to the monitoring questionnaire identified as married/in a civil partnership</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The question on sexual orientation was new for the 2021 Census and was asked of all people aged 16 and over. However, while completing the census is a legal obligation, there was no statutory penalty for those people who failed to provide an answer to the question on sexual orientation. The results from the question on sexual orientation are presented in Table 7. Just 1.5% of the population aged 16 and over in the borough identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) while 90.5% identified as straight or heterosexual and 8% did not provide an answer to the question.</p> <p>One response to the monitoring questionnaire identified as heterosexual</p>
Men and women generally	<p>2021 Census data – male 49.5% -- Female 50.5%</p> <p>The Family Resource Survey 2020-2021 noted that most age groups had a higher proportion of females than males reporting a disability. The exceptions were younger age groups (ages 14 and younger).</p>

	Of the 17 responses to the gender question on the monitoring questionnaire 82% were female and 18% were male
Disability	<p>2021 Census results identified 22.3% of Borough citizens as having a limiting long term health problem or disability, affecting 36,488 households. Of those citizens in the Borough with a limiting long term health problem or disability, 56.8% are in the 65+ age group.</p> <p>One response to the monitoring questionnaire identified as not having a disability</p>
Dependants	<p>The 2021 Census showed that 32% or 27,192 households in the borough contained dependent children. Results from the 2021 Census also show that 12% of the borough's population aged 5 years old and over (or 24,741 individuals) provided unpaid care. Of those who provided unpaid support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46% provided 1 – 19 hours per week</li> <li>• 24% provided 20 – 49 hours per week</li> <li>• 30% provided 50+ hours per week.</li> </ul> <p>Benefit statistics from the Department for Communities show that at November 2022 there were 8,120 claimants, or 4.8% of 16 and over population, claiming Carer's Allowance in the borough.</p>

### Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information gathered above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories in relation to this particular policy/decision?

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Needs, experiences and priorities</b>
Religious belief	Actions in relation to health inequalities, flags and emblems and the Peace Plus local community action plan have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities.
Political opinion	Actions in relation to health inequalities and flags and emblems and the peace plus local community action plan have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities.
Racial group	Actions in relation to health inequalities, flags and emblems, peace plus local community action plan, labour market partnership and accessible communication have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities. The plan needs to be promoted widely, including to those who do not have English as a first language. The plan will be made available in alternative formats on request.
Age	Actions in relation to mental health and wellbeing, workplace health and wellbeing, sports programmes, the age friendly action plan and the labour market partnership have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities. Older people may not find it as easy to access information or to understand how the Equality Action Plan

	is intended to benefit them. We will engage with the Age Sector Partnership to engage and communicate this plan with them.
Marital status	No different needs, experiences or priorities identified
Sexual orientation	Fair access to employment and services for all section 75 categories is highlighted in the Equality and Diversity training offered to all staff
Men and women generally	Actions in relation to mental health and wellbeing, workplace health and wellbeing, male health programmes, sporting programmes and the labour market partnership have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities.
Disability	Actions in relation to mental health and wellbeing, labour market partnership and accessible communication have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities.
Dependants	Actions in relation to workplace health and wellbeing and sporting programmes have highlighted different needs, experiences and priorities. Those who are carers may find it more challenging in terms of finding time to engage with this consultation.

### Screening Questions

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

Category	Policy Impact	Level of impact (Major/minor/none)
Religious belief	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor - positive
Political opinion	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor - positive
Racial group	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor - positive
Age	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor - positive
Marital status	No differential impact identified	None
Sexual orientation	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor-positive

Men and women generally	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor-positive
Disability	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor-positive
Dependants	The actions identified in the Plan will have a positive impact on this category	Minor - positive

**2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?**

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Political opinion	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Racial group	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Age	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Marital status	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Sexual orientation	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	

Men and women generally	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Disability	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	
Dependants	The Equality Action Plan's key purpose is to promote equality of opportunity for those within the section 75 categories	

**3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?**

Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact (major/minor/none)
Religious belief	Positive	minor
Political opinion	Positive	minor
Racial group	Positive	minor

**4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief	Actions are identified in the plan	
Political opinion	Actions are identified in the plan	
Racial group	Actions are identified in the plan	

**Multiple Identity**

Generally speaking, people fall into more than one Section 75 category (for example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; young lesbian, gay and bisexual people). Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant s75 categories concerned.

As identified above, a range of section 75 categories will benefit from the Council's equality action plan and many of those benefitting may fall into a number of categories.
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**Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006**

Is there an opportunity for the policy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?



Actions included in the plan will provide opportunities to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

Is there an opportunity for the policy to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

Actions in the plan will provide opportunities to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

### Screening Decision

#### **A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY**

Please identify reasons for this below

#### **B: MINOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AS IMPACT CAN BE ELIMINATED OR MITIGATED**

Where the impact is likely to be minor, you should consider if the policy can be mitigated, or an alternative policy introduced. If so, an EQIA may not be considered necessary. You must indicate the reasons for this decision below, together with details of measures to mitigate the adverse impact or the alternative policy proposed.

Equality screening of the draft Equality Action Plan has concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not necessary. This is because the draft plan is actively intended to promote equality of opportunity for the section 75 categories and should only have positive impacts. No negative impacts have been identified for any equality category.

However, efforts will be made to ensure that the outworking of the Plan is monitored so that we can assess the effectiveness of the actions proposed.

The plan needs to be promoted widely, including to those who do not have English as a first language and to those who face other barriers in accessing information about Council provision or barriers to participation. It can be made available in alternative formats on request.

Support was given to our proposed actions with all of the actions receiving 71% to 94% support.

Following the completion of the business plan for 2024/25 during the consultation period the first action under the Service Delivery priority which relates to section 75 monitoring has been amended to align more closely with the action included in the business plan.

## C: MAJOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA REQUIRED

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

### **Timetabling and Prioritising**

**If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment**, 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.

#### **Policy Criterion**

#### **Rating (1-3)**

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations

Social need

Effect on people's daily lives

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 Council in timetabling its EQIAs.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? If yes, please give details.

### **Monitoring**

Effective monitoring will help the authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy. It is recommended that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced to mitigate adverse impact, monitoring be undertaken on a broader basis to identify any impact (positive or adverse).

Further information on monitoring is available in the Equality Commission's guidance on monitoring ([www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)).

Identify how the impact of the policy is to be monitored

This is a draft Equality Action Plan. It will be updated as necessary following the consultation. An annual equality progress report will be prepared on an annual basis and submitted to The Equality Commission.

## Approval and Authorisation

A copy of the screening form for each policy screened should be signed off by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The screening recommendation should be reported to the relevant Committee/The Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Mary Hanna	Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager	22/05/2024
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date
Martina McNulty	Head of Department: Strategy and Performance	22/05/2024

**A copy of the completed screening form should be signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The completed screening form should be attached to the relevant Committee paper when the policy is submitted for approval.**

**Following approval by Council please forward a copy of the completed approved policy and screening form to:**

**[Equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:Equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk) The policy and completed screening form will be made available on the Council's website.**

# Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Equality Action Plan 2024-2027

## SECTION 1

Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough The Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Equality Action Plan 2024 - 2027

1C Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to:

Developing a

Adopting a

Implementing a

Revising a Plan

Designing a Public Service

Delivering a Public Service

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above

Equality Action Plan 2024 - 2027

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

This Equality Action Plan 2024-2027 has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It also aligns with the Council's new corporate planning cycle.

Actions that have been included in the Equality Action Plan cut across the majority of Council functions and inequalities are addressed by each section 75 group and include associated performance indicators and timescales to address the inequalities identified. The Council believes that the actions included in the plan are likely to have the biggest impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. The actions contained within the Equality Action Plan reflect four of the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. These are:

- Community Wellbeing
- Economic Growth
- Service Delivery
- Staff, Leadership and Resources

We will report annually to the Equality Commission on our progress in achieving these actions.

**1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition)

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below)

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable

**Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used**

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

**SECTION 2**

**Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

**2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?**

Yes



No



If response is No go to 2E

**2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

People living in rural areas may encounter difficulties in accessing consultation events in urban areas.

**2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.**

Accessible transport.

Timing of meetings to allow for travel to meet needs of those who have care support needs or provide care support needs for disabled dependants.

**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

- Rural Businesses
- Rural Tourism
- Rural Housing
- Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas
- Education or Training in Rural Areas
- Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas
- Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas
- Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas
- Poverty in Rural Areas
- Deprivation in Rural Areas
- Rural Crime or Community Safety
- Rural Development
- Agri-Environment
- Other (Please state)

**If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.**

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

**SECTION 3****Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes  No  If response is No go to 3E

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

**During the 12 week consultation the following engagement took place**

- The consultation was shared with our section 75 stakeholders which included rural stakeholders as well as those within the age, community planning and sports development sectors.
- It was also placed on the consultation hub and its availability widely advertised via social media.
- Online consultations were offered on 28 February at 11am and 10 April at 7pm. No one attended the meeting on 28 February but the chairperson of the Loughbrickland 60+ Luncheon Club attended the meeting on the 10 April and we received valuable feedback as a result of this engagement.
- We received one response to the Equality Action Plan questionnaire via the consultation hub
- We received 17 written responses from the Loughbrickland 60+ Luncheon Club.

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

People living in rural areas may encounter difficulties in accessing consultation events in urban areas.

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

**SECTION 4**  
**Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

We engaged with rural stakeholders as part of this consultation

**SECTION 5**  
**Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes  No  If response is No go to 5C

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

We involved those living in rural areas during the consultation process to ensure that our plan has fully considered the needs of the rural community. There were comments on Community Transport affecting disabled people living in rural areas and these will be shared with the Community Planning Team.

If the response to Section 5A was YES go to 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.



**SECTION 6**

**Documenting and Recording**

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained, and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:

Position:

Department / Directorate:

Signature: Mary Hanna

Date: 22/05/2024

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Position:

Department / Directorate:

Signature: Martina McNulty

Date: 22/05/2024