

TEO 'EQIA Screening – of Covid Recovery Plan'

Summary of ECNI comments (following meeting 9 September 2021)

1. Development of Plan to date: limited consultation on Final Draft Plan (24 June- 2 July); TEO feedback letter/report (6 July) advises that there will be further consideration of S75 and that 61% (overall N:42) of consultees are of view that equality priority areas/interventions are missing from the Plan. Plan published with Ministerial Foreword (2 August). Draft screening forwarded to ECNI (30 August).
2. Section 75 duties and developing policies: required to follow TEO equality scheme arrangements (refer to Chapter 4 in particular) and pay due regard/regard when developing/reviewing policies. Refer to Brown principles – complying with the public sector duties, e.g. decision maker must be aware that obliged to comply with duties, duties fulfilled before/at the time of decision making and not after, continuing nature of the duties. See [Public Sector Equality and Disability Duties-Short Guide.pdf](#) (page 3).
3. Timeliness of screening and capacity to impact on Plan (given point 1). Core issue - the screening follows the published Plan and appears to be informed by the published Plan, rather than the screening considering potential equality/good relations impacts/ opportunities of a draft policy so that alternative policies and mitigations may be identified in the published Plan. No reference is made in the published Plan to the S75 duties or how due/regard has been paid.
4. The 'EQIA Screening' document (forwarded on 31 August) is a screening document and not an EQIA. The terminology used in TEO equality scheme should be used.
5. Given the above points (1-3) it is difficult to evaluate the quality of information that is included in the screening. The information seems to be largely taken from the Plan (policy informing the screening rather than other way round). Inequalities are identified (as in the Plan) and actions (strategies/policies) are identified in the Plan to address these inequalities e.g. strategies relating to domestic abuse, mental health.
6. Information is included on a number of Section 75 groups that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic and the screening recognises that inequalities have deepened, including:
 - women : in terms of jobs and increase in domestic abuse during pandemic;
 - young people : loss of jobs/unemployment, loss of education;

- BAME (Roma highlighted in particular in NI) : in terms of health, socioeconomic impacts;
 - older people : mental and physical health;
 - disabled people : access to poorer mental health, loss of medical treatment,
 - carers : have received less help during pandemic, closure of day care centres, etc. and also having to balance more responsibilities, e.g. homeschooling
7. Assessments - states '*benefits everyone and everyone treated equally*'. No impacts are determined for any of the S75 groups nor is it determined that there are any opportunities to promote equality of opportunity or good relations for any Section 75 groups. The screening concludes that all Section 75 groups will be '*positively impacted*' by the Plan.
 8. Screening decision – the Plan is screened out without mitigation. No monitoring arrangements are in place.
 9. The strategies/policies included in the Plan would appear to have all been previously identified, (as distinct from this Plan). The evidence/information in the screening should be reviewed to ensure it focuses across the S75 groups and enables potential identification of further areas (strategies/policies) to those included in the Plan and informs ongoing prioritization.
 10. TEO responsibility would appear to include developing the overall Plan identifying actions, priorities and cumulative impacts/opportunities as well as reporting on/evaluating the Plan. TEO should be able to demonstrate the application of the duties to these aspects of the Plan. In addition, Government Departments have S75 responsibilities for developing and implementing the relevant strategies/policies. It is important that roles and responsibilities are set out and adhered to so that consultees know how they may engage and impact on the Plan.
 11. [S75 duties Coronavirus.pdf](#)

9 September 2021