

YCNIS75 POLICY SCREENING FORM

Background

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Youth Council for Northern Ireland ('the Council') 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 Council 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: YCNI Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007

Brief Description:

Every three years the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (the Council) is required to produce a strategic plan. This document outlines the broad programme for defining and achieving the Council's objectives during this time, and including how the Council will continue to meet its statutory functions:

- to advise the Department of Education, Education and Library Boards and other bodies on the development of the youth service;
- to encourage cross-community activity by the youth service;
- to encourage the provision of facilities for the youth service and facilities which are especially beneficial to young persons;
- to encourage and assist the co-ordination and efficient use of the resources of the youth service;
- to assist the effective provision of administrative services by the voluntary headquarter organisations;
- to advise on the training of part-time and full-time youth workers;
- to encourage the development of European/International opportunities for young people and those who work with them.

These core functions have not changed since 1989 and hence each new Strategic Plan aspires to build on previous plans in addressing these functions, at the same time being responsive to changes in the external environment through the development of new themes.

The Plan itself was developed through a widespread process of consultation that began in 2003 and continued through to 2004. This consultation included all our key stakeholders and involved both face-to-face meetings and other indirect techniques to engage with groups and in particular those representing young people.

Internally, the plan was developed by a working group comprising Council members and officers and culminated in the publication of a report that addressed the following five questions – who are we? where are we now? where do we want to be? how do we get there? how are we doing?

Included in the Strategic Plan are the Council's Mission, Vision and Values:

Mission: To champion the well-being, rights and participation of young people:

- (i) by supporting the development of effective youth policies and quality youth work practice; and
- (ii) by facilitating meaningful collaboration between youth organisations and all sectors with responsibility for young people.

Vision: The Youth Council's vision of the future is one where:

- all children and young people are valued in their own right and have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society;
- the educational and developmental role of youth work is valued, effectively resourced and implemented by a sufficient number of appropriately trained and supported youth workers; and
- the Youth Council is recognised by government, the youth sector and others, as the key agency advocating for youth work and influencing policy impacting on young people.

Values: The work of the Youth Council is underpinned by the following values, which the Council will actively apply to all areas of its work:

Young Person Focused - Council believes all young people are citizens in their own right and are of equal value. Their rights should be promoted and protected. They should be treated with respect and encouraged to make their own decisions and choices. In all its decisions and activities, the Council will consider what the impact on the lives of young people will be and actively promote their participation in decisions that affect their lives.

Equity, Diversity & Interdependence - The Council is fully committed to the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence and will apply them in all aspects of its work, including:

- The allocation of resources
- Action to address inequality and to promote inclusion
- Work to develop learning about different identity groups, to strengthen existing relationships or bridge divisions between the various groups that exist within our youth population

Excellence - Council believes in the importance of quality in meeting the needs of the Council's stakeholders and young people generally. The Council will strive for the highest standards and continuous improvement in all its activities, regularly consulting its stakeholders and promoting the quality of the support, development and delivery of youth work.

Partnership - The Council believes that the needs of young people can only be fully met by effective interagency and inter-sectoral working. The Council will actively promote and facilitate this in all of the core aspects of its work

The Strategic Plan can be downloaded from the Council's website:

http://www.ycni.org/downloads/corporate/strategic_plan04-74_new.pdf

Alternatively, paper copies are available on request from our offices, or it is available in alternative formats where necessary.

Policy Aim:

Operating within existing statutes and available resources, the Strategic Plan aims to improve the outcomes for the youth sector through realising the Council's mission and vision, and operating according to our stated values.

The Strategic Plan goes on to highlight the following six core aims:

Core Aim 1 - Promoting Participation of Young People

Ensure the promotion of the participation of young people in the development of policies and practice that affect their lives.

Core Aim 2 - Shaping Youth Work Policies and Strategies

Ensure effective collaboration in developing, implementing and reviewing youth work strategy and policies.

Core Aim 3 - Promoting Youth Work and the Rights of Young People

Promote youth work, the youth service (statutory, voluntary and community) and the aspirations, rights and needs of young people with relevant external bodies.

Core Aim 4 - Peace-Building, Inclusion and Active Citizenship

Promote and develop the contribution of youth work to active citizenship, peace-building, understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Core Aim 5 - Developing Youth Work Practice

Promote and develop youth work by building on local, national and international best practice.

Core Aim 6 - Supporting and Resourcing Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations

Ensure regional voluntary youth organisations receive appropriate support in the delivery of efficient and effective youth work, through the provision of information, advice, training and financial and other resources.

Who defines or defined the policy?

Further to the relevant statutes that underpin the work of the Council, a management statement describes the relationship between the Council and its parent government department, the Department of Education. This statement requires the Council to prepare a three year strategic plan and to consult widely during the development of this plan. The Strategic Plan itself is then 'signed off' by the Department of Education before implementation.

Who implements the policy?

All those who engage with the Council and its work will be involved in implementation. This includes Council members, staff, strategic partners in the community and voluntary sectors, and young people in general.

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?

As above - all those who engage with the Council and its work including Council members, staff, strategic partners in the community and voluntary sectors, and young people in general.

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

The Strategic Plan is developed within the confines of a projected budget, and the allocation of funds from within that budget is designed to ensure that our stated mission, vision and values are addressed. Changes to this budget or to the legislation may detract from the aim of the policy but may be outside the control of the Council. Equally, structural changes within the youth sector may impact on our capacity to meet the aspirations as laid out in the Strategic Plan.

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

The Council operates according to a core value that places effective inter-agency and inter-sectoral working as a priority. Through funding and other forms of support, the Council aspires to interact with a wide range of partners across the youth sector in delivering on its Strategic Plan.

Which other policies are related to this policy?

All our policies are directly related to the Strategic Plan.

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

The consultation process attached to the drafting of the Plan, together with reviews of the work of the Council, were used to inform the new Strategic Plan. For example, the following were consulted during 2003-4: RVYO's in receipt of grant aid, the five Education and Library Boards, Department of Education for Northern Ireland, the Arts Council, the Sports Council, Health Promotion Agency and OFMDFM Children's and Young People's Unit.

Screening the Policy

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	✓		
Political opinion	✓		
Racial group	✓		
Age	✓		
Marital status	✓		
Sexual orientation	✓		
Gender	✓		
Disability	✓		
Dependency	✓		

Please comment: Available research, both in-house and external, would suggest that each of these categories will reflect in participation or uptake of activities associated with our work across this sector. Rather than reflecting on these inequities, the Council actively aims to remedy these disadvantages in terms of the nine Section 75 categories. For example, a number of initiatives are directly targeted towards under-represented groups (see Core Aim 4, p.14, the Council specifically prioritises ‘the involvement of excluded and traditionally under-represented groups in youth work provision’).

Through relevant statutes and the Statement of Management, the Department of Education defines the age range that shall within our compass, i.e. 4 – 25. However, within this age band we endeavour to be responsive to particular needs of different age cohorts, and to respond to under-representation should it be identified.

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

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

Please comment:

See 1. above. We acknowledge and celebrate the differences between each Section 75 category through our work, and the Strategic Plan deliberately sets out how we will promote active citizenship, peace-building, understanding of diversity and inclusion through Core Aim 4.

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		✓
Political opinion		✓
Racial group		✓
Age		✓
Marital status		✓
Sexual orientation		✓
Gender		✓
Disability		✓
Dependency		✓

Please comment:

Extensive consultations during the preparation of the Strategic Plan did not raise any suggestions that implementation of the plan would be problematic to any of the individuals or groups etc. attached to Section 75 categories

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

Please elaborate:

We are confident that through the successful implementation of the plan that we will have furthered equality of opportunity and good relations across the youth sector in Northern

Ireland. These principles are enshrined in the Strategic Plan and were addressed directly during the consultation that led to the formulation of the plan.

5a. 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.

The Strategic Plan 2004-7 helps to actively promote equality of opportunity in the youth sector.

5b. 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 positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life.

Strategic Plan 2004-7 helps to actively promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, particularly young people with disabilities and encourage their participation in public life. Current initiatives which are directly targeted towards under-represented groups provide a key vehicle for this.

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

Under Supporting Aim 2 (p.20), we commit to gathering valid and reliable research that is relevant to the work of the Council and the youth service. These data will help ensure monitoring of the policy, and, where practicable, we will ensure that this research accommodates Section 75 considerations.

Furthermore, under each core and supporting aim, throughout the plan we commit to a wide range of performance indicators that will enable us to determine progress towards our goals.

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

No.

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

Screening of this policy has indicated that through its implementation we aspire to actively promote equality of opportunity and good relations. On review of the plan during 2007, we will reflect on progress made towards our stated goals and including Section 75 obligations, and will ensure that the new plan will reflect these considerations. We are aware that the Strategic Plan 2004-7 has not given consideration to the allocation of our funds between various functions and this will be remedied when drawing up the plan for 2009-12.