

Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Screening Template

*****Completed Screening Templates are public documents and will be posted on the Trust's website*****

See [Guidance Notes](#) for further background information on the relevant legislation and for help in answering the questions on this template (follow the links).

(1) Information about the Policy/Proposal

(1.1) Name of the policy/proposal

Departmental restructure through the Management of Change process within the Communications Team, SEHSCT

(1.2) Is this a new, existing or revised policy/proposal?

New

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

The Communications Department has continued to respond flexibly to organisational need. However, a review of the current structure highlights several challenges that now warrant a formal departmental refresh.

Rationale for a Band 6 Post

Given the loss of the Band 3 and 0.75 Band 4 posts, the proposed creation of a **Band 6 Senior Communications Officer** role provides a more effective and sustainable solution by:

- Consolidating reduced lower-band capacity into a single, autonomous professional role
- Aligning grading with the complexity, responsibility and decision-making now required
- Providing advanced skills in content development, digital communications and stakeholder engagement
- Reducing inappropriate task drift to Band 7 and above
- Supporting management capacity and service resilience

Intended outcomes would include:

- Strengthened leadership and resilience at senior level



- Clear and sustainable career development pathway
- Improved succession planning
- A modernised structure aligned with digital and strategic needs
- Greater operational efficiency through improved line management

(1.4) Are there any Section 75 categories (see list in 3.1) which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy/proposal?

The proposal has been developed to meet the needs of all section 75 categories

(1.5) Who owns and who implements the policy/proposal - where does it originate, for example DHSSPS, HSCB?

South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

(1.6) Are there any factors that could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/proposal/decision? (Financial, legislative or other constraints?)

No – The Finance is in place due to the loss of a Band 3 post and .75 Band 4 post.

(1.7) Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy/proposal/decision could impact upon? (staff, service users, other public sector organisations, , trade unions, professional bodies, independent sector, voluntary and community groups etc)

Internal Stakeholders: Trust Staff & Trade Unions.

External Stakeholders: Service users



(1.8) Other policies with a bearing on this policy/proposal (for example regional policies) - what are they and who owns them?

- Human Rights Act
- SET Equality Scheme
- Rural Needs Act 2016
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Management of change framework
- Absence Management Policy



(2) Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories.

Details of evidence/information

In recent years, the demand placed on the Communications Department within the South Eastern Trust has evolved significantly. Expectations have shifted away from just traditional media-focused communications towards a digital-first, real-time approach, with increased emphasis on online engagement, rapid response, and continuous visibility across multiple platforms. Alongside this evolving demand, the department has experienced a reduction in staffing capacity at junior levels, specifically:

- The loss of one Band 3 post
- The loss of one 0.75 Band 4 post

While the department has adapted operationally to meet these demands, the current team structure and skills mix no longer fully reflects the service's strategic and digital requirements, nor best practice across comparable Health and Social Care Trusts.

The Communications Department is currently structured with:

- An 8c Head of Service
- A Band 8a Senior Communications Manager post and a Band 7 Communications Manager
- 4 Band 5 posts and a Band 2 Intern.

This structure lacks clear senior operational layering and appropriate deputising capacity

Please refer to MOC document for further information.

(3) Needs, experiences and priorities

(3.1) Taking into account the information above what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the Section 75 categories and for both service users and staff.

Category	Needs, experiences and priorities	
	Service users	Staff
Gender	Female 51.25% Male 48.75%	Due to the small number of staff potentially impacted by the proposal, Section 75 staff profile has not been noted in order to protect identity.
Age	0-15 20.56% 16 – 19 5.32% 20-29 12.28% 30-45 20.09% 46-59 20.07% 60+ 21.68%	
Religion	Protestant 50.52% Roman Catholic 27.90% Other 0.82% None 14.65% Not Known 6.11%	
Political Opinion	Not collected on 2021 census. Council voting patterns below are considered. Ards & North Down council area return a unionist majority Lisburn and Castlereagh council area return a unionist majority Newry, Mourne & Down council area return a nationalist majority It should be noted that half of Trust residents aged 85+ reside in Ards & North Down LGD (4,432, 49%), a quarter reside in Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD (2,348, 26%), and a fifth in Newry, Mourne & Down LGD (1,814, 20%).	
Marital Status	Single 31.7% Married 51.64% Divorced 6.01% Widowed 6.85% Separated 3.70% Other 0.1%	
Dependent Status	Households with dependent children - 33.38%	
Disability	Household with one or more persons with a	



	limiting long term illness 19.82%	
Ethnicity	Black African 0.1% Irish Traveller 0.04% Bangladeshi 0.06% Pakistani 0.04% Black Caribbean 0.03% Mixed Ethnic Group 0.35% Chinese 0.26 % White 98.50% Indian 0.25% Other 0.3 % Filipino 0.06% Evidence would appear to show that BAME groups are disproportionately affected by COVID-19	
Sexual Orientation	Estimated 10% of population is LGBT equates to estimated 168,527 of the NI population i.e. possibly one in 10 in terms of clientele/service user— data source Rainbow Project July 2008	



(3.2) Provide details of how you have involved stakeholders, views of colleagues, service users and staff etc when screening this policy/proposal.

I had a team meeting on the 29th of April 2026 to inform of this planned Restructure. Further meetings will take place in due course to explain the process.

Trade Unions: Caroline McGowan , HR Business Partner will discuss this with the Unions if required.

(4) Screening Questions

You now have to assess whether the impact of the policy/proposal is major, minor or none. You will need to make an informed judgement based on the information you have gathered.

(4.1) What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?			
Section 75 category	Details of policy/proposal impact		Level of impact? Minor/major/none
	Services Users	Staff	
Gender	Female 51.25% Male 48.75%	Due to the small number of staff potentially impacted by the proposal, Section 75 staff profile has not been noted in order to protect identity. The potentially impacted post is currently vacant'	None/None
Age	0-15 20.56% 16 – 19 5.32% 20-29 12.28% 30-45 20.09% 46-59 20.07% 60+ 21.68%		None/None
Religion	Protestant 50.52% Roman Catholic 27.90% Other 0.82% None 14.65% Not Known 6.11%		None/None
Political Opinion	Not collected on 2021 census. Council voting patterns below are considered. Both Ards & North Down/ Lisburn & Castlereagh council area return a unionist majority Newry, Mourne & Down council area return a nationalist majority It should be noted that half of Trust residents aged 85+ reside in Ards & North Down LGD (4,432, 49%), a quarter reside in Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD (2,348, 26%), and a fifth in Newry, Mourne & Down LGD (1,814, 20%).		None/None
Marital Status	Single 31.7% Married 51.64% Divorced 6.01% Widowed 6.85% Separated 3.70% Other 0.1%		None/None
Dependent Status	Households with dependent children - 33.38%		None/None

Disability	Household with one or more persons with a limiting long term illness 19.82%		None/None
Ethnicity	Black African Black African 0.1% Irish Traveller 0.04% Bangladeshi 0.06% Pakistani 0.04% Black Caribbean 0.03% Mixed Ethnic Group 0.35% Chinese 0.26 % White 98.50% Indian 0.25% Other 0.3 % Filipino 0.06%		None/None
Sexual Orientation	Estimated 10% of population is LGBT equates to estimated 168,527 of the NI population i.e. possibly one in 10 in terms of clientele/service user– data source Rainbow Project July 2008		None/None

(4.2) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?

Section 75 category	Please provide details
Gender	The Trust remains committed to embracing diversity, promoting good relations and challenging sectarianism and racism to ensure service users and staff enjoy equality of opportunity and access to health and social care in a welcoming and safe environment. The Trust has an ongoing strategy of staff training and engagement via e-learning or face to face if safe and appropriate to do so. Also see 7.4 for consideration and mitigation
Age	As above
Religion	As above
Political Opinion	As above
Marital Status	As above



Dependent Status	As above
Disability	As above
Ethnicity	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above

(4.3) To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

Good relations category	Details of policy/proposal impact	Level of impact Minor/major/none
Religious belief	The Trust is committed to ensuring that staff and patients have equality of access to services and feel welcome, comfortable and safe accessing all Trust facilities, irrespective of race, religion or political opinion.	The Trust has in place its Good Relations statement which is displayed on staff and service user notice boards.
Political opinion	As above	As above
Racial group	As above	As above

(4.4) Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	Please provide details
Religious belief	The Trust remains committed to embracing diversity, promoting good relations and challenging sectarianism and racism to ensure service users and staff enjoy equality of opportunity and access to health and social care in a welcoming and safe environment. The Trust has an ongoing strategy of staff training and awareness raising. Face to face training was stood down as part of the Trust COVID-19 response, however the e-learning module 'Making a Difference' is still available for staff and the Trust has recommenced face to face training where it is safe and appropriate to do so. The Trust now has a blended approach to delivery of training utilising a variety of delivery methods including virtual and remote technology. On the basis of the information available, there is nothing to indicate that these changes would engender any adverse impact in regard to the promotion of good relations.
Political opinion	As above
Racial group	As above and additionally: As indicated previously, it is important that the Trust continues to translate essential information. Trust staff are cognisant of the ethical reasons for ensuring that patients who are not proficient in English as a first or second competent language are provided access to services including access to the system in an appropriate language. Telephone interpreting or face-to-face interpreting for appointments facilitates effective and safe communication. The Trust is encouraging staff to continue accessing telephone interpreting services as appropriate. The promotion of Good Relations is an integral part of the Trust's commitment to improve the health and wellbeing of all our staff and in line with our Good Relations Statement, we strive to ensure that all staff irrespective of religion, race or political opinion feel safe, welcomed and comfortable in work.

(5) Consideration of Disability Duties

(5.1) How does the policy/proposal encourage disabled people to participate in public life and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

- The Trust is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all service users and staff in terms of disability and complies with all relevant Disability legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- The Trust Disability Action Plan 2024 – 2029 promotes these two duties. Additionally, the Trust has policies, procedures and strategies in place aimed at encouraging disabled people to participate in public life and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Consideration has been given to the profile of staff and/or service users affected by the proposal including those with a disability.
- The Trust will monitor feedback from stakeholders and in partnership with providers aim to address these issues in further phases.
- All staff must complete mandatory training on equality, human rights and good relations, which includes awareness of disability duties. As this is available online, staff are being encouraged to complete online if possible at this present time. Patient Experience and Domiciliary Care staff have received bespoke face-to-face training as it is more difficult for them to access the e-learning module.
- The Trust is aware of under reporting of disability within our Workforce. The Trust is aware of its responsibilities with regard to the DDA 1995 and will consider reasonable adjustments to support our staff to carry out their duties. These reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The solution will be based on risk assessment and staff needs in partnership with IT, our Occupational Health Team and the HRBP.

(6) Consideration of Human Rights

(6.1) Does the policy/proposal affect anyone's Human Rights?

Complete for each of the articles

Article	Positive impact	Negative impact = human right interfered with or restricted	Neutral impact
Article 2 – Right to life			X
Article 3 – Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment			X
Article 4 – Right to freedom from slavery,			X



servitude & forced or compulsory labour			
Article 5 – Right to liberty & security of person			X
Article 6 – Right to a fair & public trial within a reasonable time			X
Article 7 – Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law			X
Article 8 – Right to respect for private & family life, home and correspondence.			X
Article 9 – Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion			X
Article 10 – Right to freedom of expression			X
Article 11 – Right to freedom of assembly & association			X
Article 12 – Right to marry & found a family			X
Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights			X
1 st protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property			X
1 st protocol Article 2 – Right of access to education			X

Please note: If you have identified potential negative impact in relation to any of the Articles in the table above, speak to your line manager and/or Equality Unit. It may also be necessary to seek legal advice.

(6.2) Please outline any actions you will take to promote awareness of human rights and evidence that human rights have been taken into consideration in decision making processes.

The right to the highest attainable standard of health is to be realised progressively over time and the Trust as a public authority must use the maximum available resources to fulfil the right.

The Trust recognises that equality does not mean treating everyone the same but treating everyone according to their needs.

At this time the e-learning module on Equality, Diversity, Human Rights and Good Relations is promoted however face to face training programmes can and are facilitated if safe and appropriate to do so.

(7) Screening Decision

(7.1) Given the answers in Section 4, how would you categorise the impacts of this policy/proposal?

Major impact	
Minor impact	X
No impact	

(7.2) Do you consider the policy/proposal needs to be subjected to ongoing screening

Yes	X
No	

(7.3) Do you think the policy/proposal should be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?

Yes	
No	X

(7.4) Please give reasons for your decision and detail any mitigation considered.

The Trust is committed to its legal duties and the fundamental principles under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. As with any change, the Trust is committed to monitoring the efficacy of this proposal alongside outcomes, and the satisfaction of staff, parents, carers and clients. As an open and learning organisation, we remain determined to assess, learn, and change as necessary.

The Trust has carried out an Equality Screening of the proposal looking at both service users and staff and there may be a minor impact with regards to staff and the Trust will continue to monitor as the MOC is implemented.

The Equality Screening will be reviewed and updated as required as the implementation of the proposal is monitored, see Section 8.

Notwithstanding this, the Trust acknowledges the importance of a communication and engagement strategy to communicate these proposed changes. Information and communication can be provided in alternative formats and languages where a need is identified and also on request

(8) Monitoring

Please detail how you will monitor the effect of the policy/proposal for equality of opportunity and good relations, disability duties and human rights?

The effectiveness of the new structure will be reviewed:

- 3 months post-implementation
- 6 months post-implementation

Indicators of Success:

- Faster and more effective resolution of day-to-day operational issues
- Clear, reliable senior deputising arrangements
- Increased strategic visibility and representation at senior forums
- Improved long-term career development and staff retention within the department

Additional signs the change has been successful will include:

- Reduced reliance on Band 7/8 staff for routine operational delivery
- Improved workflow management and content turnaround
- Better alignment between staff grading and duties performed
- A more resilient and future-focused Communications Department structure

There will be one to one conversations with individual team members on a regular basis. .

Approved Lead :



Position:

ROISIN COULTER, CHIEF
EXECUTIVE

Date:

18.05.2026

Policy/proposal screened by:

Jane Loughrey / Denise Hopps

Please forward completed schedule to:

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