

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening

Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened

Name of the activity/policy/project

Business Support Programmes 2026-2027
Business Development Collaborative

Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?

A new programme for 2026-27

What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?

A key vision of the Business Solutions Programmes 2026-2027 is to develop Lisburn Castlereagh as a prime location for investment, encourage business start-up and nurture growth.

To achieve this the Business Solutions Team has designed and funded a comprehensive range of support programmes as well as working with various partners to improve the local economy by working to support innovation, entrepreneurship, R&D and investment.

There are a range of projects within this programme that include: SME Mentor Growth; Digi Growth; Digital Innovation Programme; Sales and Export, Bid 2 Win, Support network for Social Entrepreneurs, SERC plus the Business Entrepreneurs Network; Women in Business, Youth Enterprise and Princes Trust.

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

The programme is targeted at local businesses and individuals across the Council area. Many elements of the programme do not target any specific Section 75 group and is open to all eligible businesses or individuals. However, there are some elements that target identified groups, e.g., women, young people.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Economic Development Unit, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)

Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council own the programme. It is implemented by the Service Transformation Directorate's Economic Development Unit.

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

Yes

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon?

- Financial / Other:
- Fixed budget
- Reliant on match funding
- Staffing/resources
- Timeframes and funding regulations

Staff

The Business Solutions Team within the Economic Development Unit are responsible for delivering the programme on behalf of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Senior Management are also responsible for decision-making.

Service users & Delivery Partners

Users of the service are members of the business community within the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council area or individuals who wish to start a new business in the area.

Delivery Agents procured through the Tendering process.

Business Advisors/ mentors facilitating the programmes.

Stakeholders and partners, such as Social Enterprise NI.

Contract Delivery Partners to include Invest NI, SERC, InterTrade Ireland, Inspire, LEO, Princes Trust, other local authorities etc.

Other public sector organisations

Invest NI who have oversight of any EU funded Programme to ensure compliance.

Voluntary/community/trade unions

Business in the Community (BiTC), Social Enterprise NI

Other

Elected Members

Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
LCCC Corporate Plan 2024/2028	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Corporate plan and ambitions 2024/2028 - lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk
LCCC Community Plan 2017 – 2032	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/Community_Plan_2017-2032_EMAIL.pdf
3. LCCC Economic Development Action Plan 2018-2022	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
LCCC Equality Scheme and associated plans	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Equality/Section 75

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

In planning business support programmes, consideration is given to key government business and enterprise strategies and priorities as well as LCCC data.

NISRA report that in 2021, the Lisburn Castlereagh City Council area has 5,170 registered businesses registered for VAT and/or PAYE. Of these 22% are sole traders, 66% are small businesses with up to 9 employees, 10% are medium enterprises with 10-49 employees and 2% are large business with more than 49 staff.

Lisburn and Castlereagh has a population of 146,452 residents, of which 62% are of working age 16-64.

There is no publicly available data on the religious or racial background, political opinion, age, marital status or sexual orientation of business owners or entrepreneurs.

Funding requirements stipulate the conditions of participation on programmes, namely business location, size, turnover etc. However, programmes such as those focused on youth entrepreneurship or social enterprise do collate additional information on programme participants such as age, gender, disability.

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	NI Census 2021 data for the Lisburn and Castlereagh area: 58% Protestant (or other Christian) 27% Catholic 2% Other 13% None We do not have information on the religious background of businesses or individuals who may access this programme.
Political Opinion	Political party representation on LCCC from local government elections 2023 (40 Members): DUP – 14 UUP – 6 Alliance – 13 Sinn Féin – 4 SDLP – 2 Independent - 1 National identity is often used as an indicator of political opinion – unionist/nationalist. Analysis of Census 2021 data for LCCC showed: 41% identified as British 16% Irish 21% Northern Irish We do not have information on the political opinion of eligible business owners.
Racial Group	2021 Census suggests: 87% of the LCCC population were born in N Ireland. The same data indicates 3.9% of LCCC residents are non-white (slightly higher than NI average) and 96.1% were white (including Irish Traveller). The LCCC area has a small population of Syrian refugees and 3.36% of residents speak languages other than English as their first language. We do not have information on the racial background or nationality of eligible business owners.
Age	NISRA 2021 mid-year population estimates for LCCC area were: 0-14 years – 19%

	15-39 years – 30% 40-64 years – 33% 65+ years – 18% Applicants must be aged 18 or above in order to be eligible to apply for funding. We do not hold information on the age profile of eligible business owners or individuals.
Marital Status	We do not have information on the marital status of business owners but Census 2021 information for the LCCC area for people over the age of 16 for the LCCC area is as follows: • Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership) – 33% • Married – 52% • Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership) – 3% • Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved – 6% • Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership – 6%
Sexual Orientation	From Census 2021 Sexual orientation in LCCC shows: Straight or heterosexual -91% Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation - 2% Prefer not to say or not stated - 7% Generally, no information on sexual orientation of eligible business owners is available, but given that 5-10% of the general population may be LGB, it is likely that business owners will be.
Men & Women Generally	In general, women tend to be underrepresented as entrepreneurs/in business. https://www.nisra.gov.uk/labour-force-survey-women-northern-ireland-2020 The 2020 Labour Force Survey reports that just 8% of women in NI are Self Employed and 68% of women aged 16-64 were employed. The estimated population of LCCC local government district at 2021 was 146,002, of which 71,654 (49%) were male and 74,348 (51%) were female. There is no official statistic on the number of people in N Ireland who identify as Transgender or non-binary but referrals to advice services are increasing year on year which suggests a small but growing minority.

Disability	Census data 2021 suggests that 21.7% of the LCCC population have a long-term health problem or disability. This is a 3.4% increase on the Census 2011 figure. Given that over 20% of the population declared a disability, it is likely that some potential and successful applicant business owners and individuals may have a disability.
People with and without Dependants	2021 Census data: 14% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others. Number of dependent children None - 69% One - 12% Two- 13% Three or more - 6% There is no specific information available but eligible business owners will likely reflect the general population.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	No different needs identified
Political Opinion	No different needs identified
Racial Group	There could be potential barriers to accessing services for those who do not have English as a first language or who are new to the LCCC district. People from a minority ethnic background may face difficulties understanding the programme requirements. Documentation may need to be translated for someone who does not have English as a first language. In such cases additional help or support may be helpful.
Age	Some business support programmes, particularly those developed in tandem with Prince's Trust or Young Enterprise focus on youth entrepreneurship. This has been identified as a need to address growing levels of

	unemployment / economic activity within younger age groups.
Marital Status	No different needs identified
Sexual Orientation	No different needs identified
Men & Women Generally	As females have been identified as an underrepresented group in business, there is a need to increase female participation.
Disability	Potentially, there may be barriers to accessing services and specific needs which require consideration within the delivery of programmes to ensure access for all. Since the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, delivery of programmes is a hybrid of online and face to face engagements with business workshops and mentoring, and inclusion of subtitles on our video or webinar content. Location of activities should be accessible. Confidence building – promoting self-employment as an option.
People with and without Dependants	Consideration should be given to the fact that caring responsibilities may create barriers to participation in business support programmes. Flexible delivery, including timing and location of provision, may therefore be important to ensure accessibility for those with caring responsibilities.

Part 2. Screening questions

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor
Religious Belief	No differential impact identified.	None
Political Opinion	No differential impact identified.	None
Racial Group	No differential impact identified.	None
Age	All programmes are aimed at benefiting all users but Youth Unemployment is growing across	minor - positive

	LCCC. Working in collaboration with organisations including Prince's Trust will develop programmes aimed at Young People entering into the Labour Market with an interest in self-employment.	
Marital Status	No differential impact identified.	None
Sexual Orientation	No differential impact identified.	None
Men & Women Generally	All programmes are aimed at benefiting all users but Female participation has been identified as a targeted group with initiatives in place to increase % start-ups across some of our programmes. This is expected to have a positive impact with 40% female participation an aspiration. Planned interventions include partnership working with the Women in Business Network and Invest NI to promote and support women's participation in business start-up activity.	Minor - positive
Disability	No negative impact as adjustments will be made available to anyone who needs one	None
People with and without Dependents	No differential impact	None

* See Appendix 1 for details.

LCCC Programmes will be delivered with a view to benefitting all eligible businesses and/or individuals.

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

Equality of opportunity is already built into the Programmes of Support.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council provides an advisory service to potential participants under the programme. Participants are advised to contact the Business Solutions Team who will provide advice and guidance on recommended programmes of support based on the size, location, type of business.

All participants are treated equally and are advised to contact a member of the Business Solutions Team if they require advice regarding specific programmes or opportunities for support. Contact details are published on promotional material (telephone numbers and email address) to ensure equality of opportunity.

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Political Opinion		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Racial Group	A minor positive impact has been identified for racial groups. Evidence indicates potential barriers, such as language differences, lower awareness of support programmes, and under-representation in uptake of business support. To mitigate these barriers, the programme will utilise accessible communication formats, targeted outreach where appropriate, and engagement with community and voluntary sector networks to promote awareness and encourage participation across all racial groups.	No further opportunities identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Age	Continuation of promotion of programmes through a range	

	of mediums including social or web based media, plus printed media and materials.	
Marital Status		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Sexual Orientation		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Men & Women Generally	Targeted promotion of programmes through a range of mediums including social or web based media, plus printed media and materials	
Disability	Continuation of promotion of programmes through a range of mediums including social or web based media, plus printed media and materials. Provide reasonable adjustments where needed.	
People with and without Dependents	Continuation of promotion of programmes through a range of mediums including social or web based media, plus printed media and materials	

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025?

No

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

Yes – the Business Solutions Team could consult with target groups and ensure programmes are inclusive for those with disabilities, particularly those elements that are aimed at individuals.

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	These are programmes of support for businesses across Lisburn & Castlereagh. They are not relevant to promotion of good relations and no impact identified through this screening exercise.	None
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

*See Appendix 1 for details.

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

Good Relations Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		Business Collaboration programmes are focused on improving capability and facilitating growth of participating businesses and therefore do not directly promote good relations.
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

LCCC recognises that all individuals are not exclusive to just one designated group and “Multiple identity” has been given consideration within this screening exercise.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
- 2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
- 3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	
Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate	Section 75 considerations have been embedded in the delivery and strategic development of all Council Business Support programmes to date, as

mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	required by European funding and Invest NI compliance. No negative impacts have been identified during the screening process. Any positive impacts are relatively minor. Any issues re ensuring accessibility and equal participation in business support programmes can be addressed by the mitigations proposed for the programmes. It is therefore considered that the undertaking of an EQIA is not necessary at this time.
Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

The Economic Development team will offer mitigations to ensure that those who traditionally face barriers genuinely experience equality of opportunity. The focus is on ensuring that to programmes are available to all potential businesses / individuals and to ensure that no-one is unfairly disadvantaged. Translation and advisory support / assistance will be provided if required. We are already committed to providing support such as translation and advisory support. LCCC

will make reasonable adjustments for people with certain disabilities as required, thus addressing barriers to participation.

Mitigations include targeted promotion of programmes, providing information in other formats or with subtitles and by ensuring people are aware of the opportunities offered by the council's business support programmes and have no barriers to participation.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)

If the activity/policy has been '**screened in**' for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

Not Applicable.

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:

The Programme's projects will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the review of businesses and applications against programme eligibility criteria. We monitor customer feedback. We collect data in end of project evaluation which includes participant feedback.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

2023/ 2024 approval

2023/2024	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Patricia Mallon	Economic Development Manager	15/05/2023
Reviewed by: Liz Milligan	Equality Officer	7/11/2023
Approved by: Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development	27/11/2023

2024/ 2025 approval

2024/2025	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Patricia Mallon	Economic Development Manager	15/05/2024
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	10/07/2024
Approved by: Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development	10/07/2024

2025/ 2026 approval

2024/2025	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Patricia Mallon	Economic Development Manager	07/05/2025
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	20/05/2025
Approved by: Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development	20/05/2025

2026/ 2027 approval

2026/2027	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Patricia Mallon	Economic Development Manager	
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	14/04/26
Approved by: Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development	

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact:

- a) The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Minor impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

No impact (none)

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Updated Template @ Oct 2022