Northern Ireland Executive

Programme for Government

Delivery Plan: Indicators 19 and 28

This is a live document which will develop and evolve throughout the engagement process. Please check back regularly for updates.

Indicators:

% population living in absolute and relative poverty (before housing costs)

Self-efficacy

These indicators are a primary indicator for:

Outcome 3: We have a more equal society

Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential

Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need

Outcome 10: We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society

The SRO is: Dr Denis McMahon, Deputy Secretary, Social Inclusion Group, Department for Communities

If you have any comments on how to improve the plan to turn the curve please contact: communications@communities-ni.gov.uk

15/11/2016

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Section 1: Approach to Indicators

Rationale for grouping of indicators within action plan

1.1   This action plan deals with two of the indicators that have been selected as part of the Programme for Government. They are:

- **Indicator 19:** Reduce Poverty
- **Indicator 28:** Increase the confidence and capabilities of people and communities

1.2   The reason for grouping these indicators together is that they are fundamentally linked. Where poverty exists, communities and individuals can suffer from a loss of confidence. When people live in deprived areas or poverty prevents them from fully interacting with their communities they will miss opportunities to develop their skills and capabilities. This can lead to a vicious cycle, preventing them from undertaking the actions that would allow them to escape from poverty.

Theory of change

1.3   The theory of change utilised here is based on tackling the root causes of poverty and social exclusion by:

(a)   building people's confidence and capability in order to improve individual life opportunities, educational and health outcomes;

(b)   recognising communities as the assets that they are and working with them to create a supportive environment for people;

(c)   using population-level interventions that can address poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion while also producing widespread benefits.

1.4   The capability approach which we are using recognises there is more to poverty (or wealth) than money alone. Promoting Capability is about ensuring everyone has the opportunity to "be or do" what they are capable of. An individual's talent and skills, cultural, legal and environmental factors are equally important in this context alongside income and wealth, not least

because these factors underpin wealth. This broader definition recognises that while material need must be addressed, the fundamental issues associated with poverty cannot be solved by additional financial resources alone. The key point is that poverty can only be tackled by intervening to help people transform their lives.

1.5   This approach will help people to focus on their opportunities, strengths and what they can achieve with some support (i.e. their assets). It will help raise confidence and assist people to actively change their circumstances.

Effects of Poverty

1.6   Although poverty can simply be considered a measure of one's income, the effects of poverty are more far reaching than this and have the potential to impact on many areas of an individual's life. The differences poverty can make to potential outcomes can be striking, especially in key areas such as education and health.
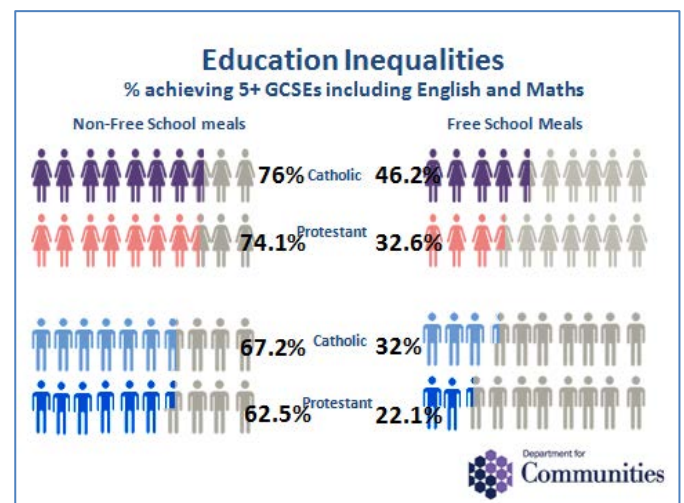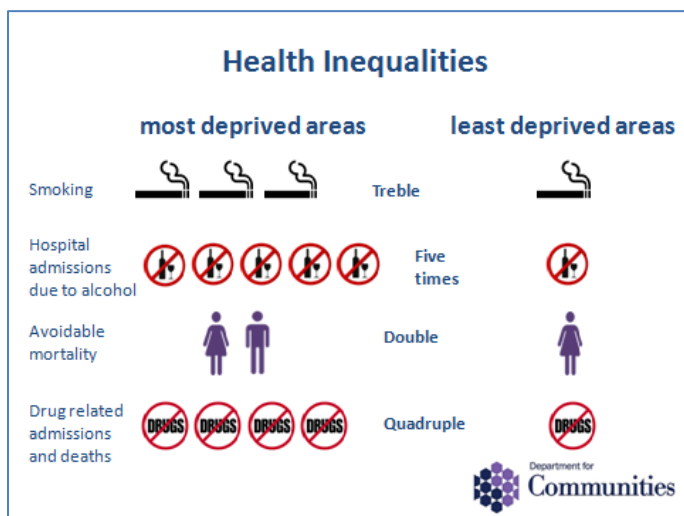
Section 2: Baseline Position - Indicator 19: Reduce poverty

- **Lead measure 1: % of population living in (absolute) poverty (BHC)**
- **Lead measure 2: % of population living in (relative) poverty (BHC)**

<u>**Current Status:**</u>

2.1   An individual is considered to be in absolute poverty if they are living in a household with an equivalised income below 60% of the (inflation adjusted) UK median income in 2010-11. An individual is considered to be in relative poverty if they are living in a household with an equivalised income below 60% of UK median income in the year in question.

2.2   Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show the current position and trends in absolute and relative poverty respectively. They also project ahead on the basis of existing trends and identify the scale of change required to turn the curves of absolute and relative poverty. This analysis concludes that in order to achieve a statistically significant change, a movement of some 4 percentage points would be required. In other words, some 76,000 people would need to be helped out of poverty.

Figure 1:   Turning the Curve of Absolute Poverty to achieve a statistically significant change
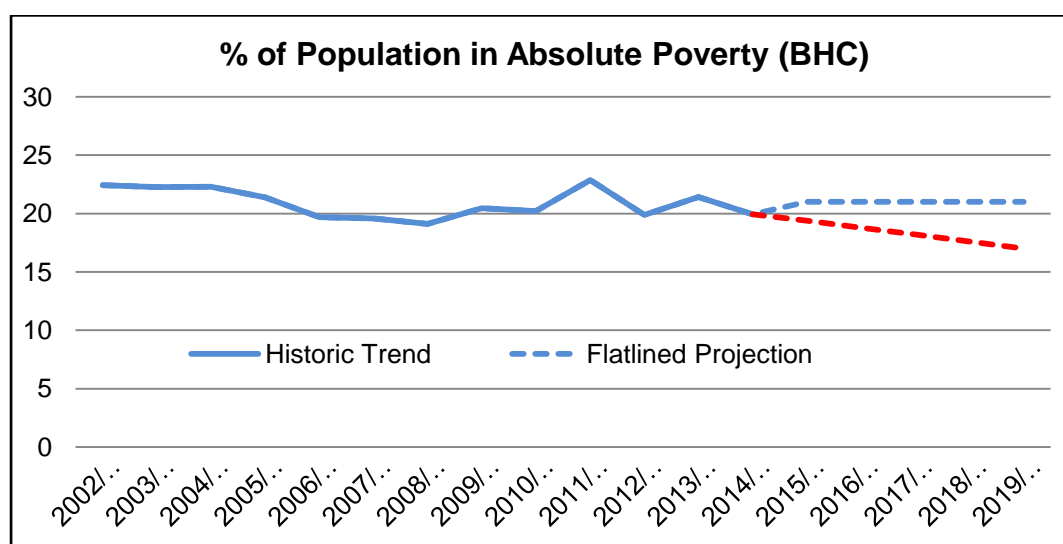
Figure 2: **Turning the Curve of Relative Poverty to achieve a statistically significant change**

% of Population in Relative Poverty (BHC)

— Historic trend   - - - Flatlined Projection
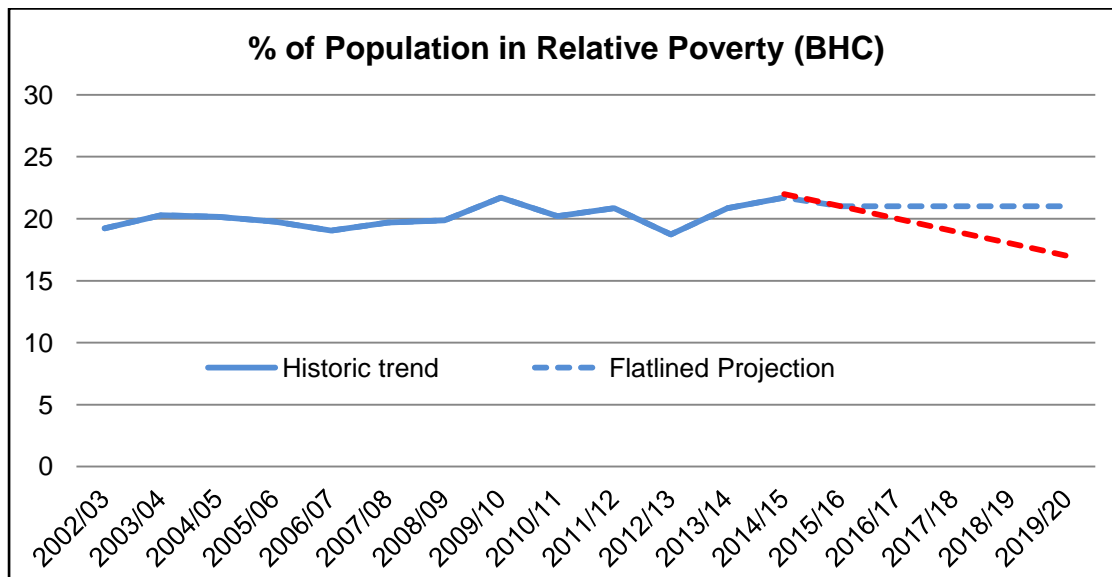
Why is this indicator important?

2.3   Relative and Absolute poverty levels provide an insight to the living standards of individuals in Northern Ireland and allow for a direct comparison with the rest of the United Kingdom.   The Households Below Average Income publication is Northern Ireland's key source of information on household income.

The Story Behind the Baseline

2.4   Despite investment strategies and the efforts of many people across society, there remain deeply ingrained problems on which we have not made enough progress.   Problems across areas such as: social exclusion, educational inequalities, health inequalities, mental health problems and addictions all have linkages and disproportionate impacts to those who are living in poverty. Although conditions for people in our society have undoubtedly improved in recent years, these problems have persisted and many people have not, or do not feel that they have experienced the changes experienced by others over the decades.   Poverty is a proxy for many of these problems, either associated with the causes and/or exacerbating the impacts.

Section 3: Baseline Position - Indicator 28: Increase the confidence and capabilities of people and communities

- **Lead measure: To be established.**

Current Status:

3.1 We are in the process of developing the indicator through the Social Omnibus Survey.

This is a new measure being introduced in autumn 2016. Putting baselines in place and establishing regular monitoring arrangements forms part of the data development agenda for the Programme for Government. TEO Statisticians will provide an update when available.

Why is this indicator important?

3.2 Self-efficacy is the extent or strength of an individual's belief in their own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. It strongly influences both the power a person has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. It can also be seen as a measure of resilience. In effect, self-efficacy acts to shape the future development and trajectory of the person's life by preventing (low) or enabling (high) them to cope with challenges. Clearly it is influenced by a range of factors, and as such can be influenced by family, community and wider societal circumstances.

The Story Behind the Baseline

3.3 This will be completed when results are available.

Section 4: The impact of health and education

Causes and Associated factors

4.1   It is not possible to deal with a lack of community/individual confidence, deprivation and social exclusion as disconnected matters. Poverty has many causes and also a wide range of aggravating factors

4.2   In respect of education, it has been demonstrated that many children who are in receipt of free school meals do not achieve the same level of academic achievement as children from more affluent backgrounds. Lack of education can also lead to lack of confidence, causing underachievement as people unconsciously limit themselves. In this way education is both a cause and an effect of poverty:

- Without education an individual may not be able to access opportunities or gain appropriate employment. In this respect educational inequalities *can cause poverty*.

- Where an individual or a community is suffering from poverty they may lack the resources necessary to either access educational opportunities or the appropriate support to facilitate study. Therefore the lack of education can also be an **effect of poverty**.

4.3   Similar observations can be made in respect of health and poverty/confidence. Individuals suffering from chronic conditions, mental health issues may suffer from discrimination which can lower confidence and affect an individual's engagement with society. Also some conditions may impact on an individual's ability to access certain employment opportunities. Again, health inequalities can be considered both a cause and effect of poverty.

- Where an individual suffers from ill health it may impact on their ability to access opportunities including both education and employment. This may be due to the health condition itself, or prejudicial attitudes in others. In this respect health inequalities *can cause poverty*.

- Where an individual has limited resources they may not be able to access services which tend to improve health. These may include a poor diet, lack of time to exercise or lack of confidence in accessing medical assistance. This in turn can lead to deterioration in physical health. Mental health issues can also arise from the high levels of

stress that dealing with the pressures of living on a limited income can cause. Therefore poor health can also be an **effect of poverty**.

4.4 Because education and health issues are so clearly bound together as causes and effects for both poverty and self efficacy it is essential that we consider addressing them as a central aspect of the work on indicators 19 and 28.

4.5 It is acknowledged that health and education inequalities are also indicators in their own rights. The indicators in relation to health and education are as follows -

- **Reducing Health Inequalities -** This outcome will be measured primarily by Healthy Life Expectancy, the number of years a person can expect to live in a healthy state.

- **Reducing Economic Inactivity -** The outcome will be measured primarily by the percentage of the population who are economically inactive and will allow us to assess the relationship between capability, employment and income levels.

4.6 Representatives from across a number of Departments have therefore come together to identify and progress actions against their respective outcomes and indicators, including amongst others the Department of Health and the Department of Education. As this work develops it will be reflected in future versions of the plan.

Section 5: Delivery Partners

5.1   It is acknowledged that the problems that are to be tackled under the new Programme of Government cannot be dealt with by one government department or agency in isolation.

5.2   Throughout the development of this action plan a series of outreach events have taken place and a co-design approach has been taken, ensuring that those who are dealing with these issues have been involved in considering the problems and helping to develop the solutions. It should be noted that we are committed to continuing this process throughout the lifespan of the action plan.   This means that as the approach evolves and develops, we will continue working with our delivery partners so we can keep our focus on what actually delivers for the communities which we are aiming to serve.

5.3   Although the lead Department for the delivery of this action plan will remain the Department for Communities, it will only be delivered with the commitment and involvement of the partners listed below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive or static list. In order to make a substantial difference to reducing poverty and associated inequalities it will be necessary to work closely with an extremely wide range of partners.

Key Partner	Their Role
Government Departments	Co-design, policy direction, funding.
Local Councils	Co-design, policy direction, funding, service delivery.
Health and Social Care Board/Public Health Agency	Co-design, commissioning, performance management, expert advice.
Health and Social Care Trusts	Co-design, policy and service delivery
Education Authority, Schools, Education organisations and professionals	Co-design, policy and service delivery
Voluntary and community sector organisations, including faith-based groups.	Co-design, expert advice, co-delivery
Business organisations:	Co-design, expert advice, co-delivery

Section 6: Proposals and interventions

What are the proposals to shift the curve?

6.1   In order to achieve the outcomes detailed above, a number of key thematic areas have been identified where it is felt that work can be undertaken to help reduce poverty and also the effects of poverty. Although intervention areas have been selected with the **human life cycle** in mind, this section has been organised on the basis of the level of intervention required in order put in place the interventions. There are three levels of intervention:

    (a)   **design from a '<u>blank sheet</u>';**
    (b)   **need for partnership approach to <u>mainstream</u> pilot programmes;**
    (c)   **<u>support</u> for existing or planned developments, using the lift, connect and co-deliver approach to improve effectiveness.**

(a)   <u>Blank Sheet Interventions – DIRECT DfC Role</u>

INTERVENTION: Digital Literacy Programme (SRO – Ian Maye and Denis McMahon)

6.2   The importance of digital literacy in the modern world cannot be overstated. Digital skills are used to gather and share information, work collaboratively together and develop new ways to solve problems. This will involve the design of a programme of work to improve digital literacy and inclusion including a "Digital Learning in School" Programme to build capacity within formal education for digital skills and computing. The Digiskills programme has 3 aims: (a) create an innovative, long term, strategic partnership between industry, education and communities; (b) maximize sustainable development – building capacity and empowering education; (c) develop the skills pipeline for generations of young people. The programme will focus on inclusion of young people who are living in poverty.

INTERVENTION: Social Inclusion Wraparound Service (SRO – Denis McMahon)

6.3   Development of a comprehensive Social Inclusion Wraparound Service, providing tailored interventions to support people at risk to access services from across the Social Inclusion Group (SIG) and across government. It is anticipated that the service would involve: (a) identifying a range of (pre-existing) interventions and support services from across government, community and voluntary and other sectors that would potentially be effective in alleviating the worst impacts of poverty and social exclusion; (b) identifying current SIG customers who could benefit from additional interventions; (c) delivering a holistic Wraparound Service.

INTERVENTION: Assessment App (SRO – Denis McMahon)

6.4 Development of a poverty assessment tool loosely based on the approach used to develop the Stoplight App developed in Paraguay. The model uses a smart phone application to complete a self evaluation survey to understand the issues that keep families below the poverty line. The approach identifies action plans that deliver opportunities to access a variety of support.

INTERVENTION: Active Ageing Inclusion (SRO – David Malcolm)

6.5 As the population ages and a greater proportion of our people are retired it is essential that we begin to consider how best to support older people and ensure their financial well being. We will in any case be seeking the full implementation of the Active Ageing Strategy. We will, put an emphasis on continuing progress in terms of benefit uptake, tacking financial abuse of older people, fuel poverty and digital inclusion.

INTERVENTION: OBA Exercise (SRO – Aidan Cassidy)

6.6 Take forward a full, intensive Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) exercise on one specific indicator together with a panel of delivery partners as a test case for a more intensive use of the OBA programme. This will have a specific focus on ways to achieve early impact on absolute poverty with a view to using this as a test case for longer term interventions.

(b)   Mainstreaming - SUPPORTING DfC Role

INTERVENTION: Early Interventions (SRO – Eilis McDaniel)

6.7 Children's life circumstances have a clear impact on their physical, psychological and wider development from pre-birth. The aim of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) is to improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding early intervention approaches. The EITP also seeks to transform mainstream services to children and families in order to deliver a long term legacy of improvement. It is intended to: (a) evaluate the success of individual initiatives under EITP; and, subject to the results of this (b) participate a joint proposal to continue some/all of the work beyond the initial four year period previously agreed for EITP.

INTERVENTION: Early Years Development and Childcare (SRO- Cathy Galway)

6.8. Research indicates that high quality childcare can benefit children from disadvantaged backgrounds, increasing cognitive, linguistic and social skills. High quality childcare has the potential to impact on rising social inequalities including PfG indicators around poverty and education. It is suggested that we consider measures to enable more disadvantaged families – particularly people seeking more work - to access early year's child care. This would allow low income families to access childcare places and increase levels of employment in their households. It would also provide developmental benefits

that are available through quality childcare and encourage interaction between people in different socio economic groups from the youngest age.

6.9.   We will work with the five Childcare Partnerships situated in each of the Health and Social Care Trust areas to help assess the level of places required and identify registered providers.

(c)   Support for Mainstreaming – SUPPORTING DfC Role

INTERVENTION: Nurture Provision in Primary Schools (SRO – Caroline Gillan)

6.10   Nurture Units help to support the social, emotional and behavioural development of young children and provide an opportunity to challenge some of the barriers which can contribute to low educational attainment. The Department of Education is currently funding 32 Nurture Units in primary schools across Northern Ireland. The programme is also providing additional employment opportunities for teachers and classroom assistants.   A QUB evaluation found that Nurture Group provision is highly successful, and strongly recommended the continuation of support.

INTERVENTION: Teenage Transitions (SRO – Mary McIvor)

6.11   The importance of addressing teenage transitions cannot be overstated. Transitions can lead to 'gaps' with limited support. For a teenager the change from full time education to employment can be problematic. This transition can be made substantially more difficult if an individual has a limited social network or limited experience to fall back on.   The Department for the Economy is considering the value of a number of existing or previous programmes, namely: the Community Family Support Programme and United Youth. The Community Family Support Programme supports families as they make life changes. It is delivered by family support organisations in the heart of the community.   The programme demonstrated very positive outcomes when run for some 900 families. A United Youth pilot focused on the needs of young people aged 16-24 who were not in education, employment or training and focused specifically on those young people who had significant barriers to participation in mainstream provision. We will work with the Department for the Economy to see how we can use the evaluations of this work in order to design a new mainstream programme.

INTERVENTION: Mental Wellbeing (SRO – Chris Matthews)

6.12   Mental Health problems and care requirements can have a wide range of impacts across the life of an individual. Potentially mental health issues can impact on an individual's physical health, social life, community standing, security and their ability to work.

6.13   An intervention has been identified in relation to self directed support. Self directed support empowers service users and carers to exercise more control over their social care services, offering greater flexibility, promoting independence, and assisting individuals to make informed choices about how and when services are provided, enabling them to tailor their support package to fit their specific needs. Other relevant proposals include:

- physical monitoring of mental health patients by GPs
- roll out of Psychological Therapies Hubs
- comprehensive perinatal mental health services.
- a mental trauma service (subject to political agreement).

6.14   We will work with DoH to support this work and to identify whether there are opportunities for the wider promotion of mental wellbeing.

INTERVENTION: Improving Literacy and Numeracy (Arrangements to be determined)

6.15   The Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Signature Programme was established through the NI Executive's Delivering Social Change Framework and received funding from the Delivering Social Change Fund. There were 5,320 primary and 13,333 post-primary school pupils supported by the programme; a grand total of 18,653 pupils. Schools reported an improvement in attendance of 57.9% of primary school pupils and 47.8% of post-primary pupils. The proportion of DSC supported year 12 FSME pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE maths increased from 24.3% in 2012/13 to 35.9% in 2014/15 an increase of 11.6 percentage points over the two years of the programme. The non DSC schools increased by 3 percentage points over the same period.

6.16   The Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Programme has been shown to be successful, in particular, in enabling schools to develop effective ways of identifying and targeting underachievement and putting in place appropriate interventions to raise attainment. In order to share the learning across the school system DE developed a legacy programme to disseminate to school leaders ways in which they can, mainstream approaches to tackling underachievement that have been shown to be effective. We will proactively build on this work.

6.17   In the summer term of 2013, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) was also commissioned to undertake a project supporting 19 schools to improve their mathematics or English provision and to build capacity for the future. This became known as the Promoting Improvement in English and

Mathematics (PIEM) project. A greater proportion of the pupils within these schools are benefiting from richer learning experiences and improved standards. Again we will proactively build on this work.

INTERVENTION: Economic Activity (SRO – Tommy O'Reilly)

6.18   At the centre of any strategy to tackle poverty must be a commitment to helping people undertake meaningful employment in order to create wealth. We intend to work closely with people to try and support them into meaningful, long term employment. Northern Ireland has consistently had the highest rate of economic inactivity of the 12 regions in the United Kingdom and our economic inactivity rate has proved stubbornly resistant to the effects of normal economic cycles and has fluctuated within a range of 26.3% to 31.5% over the past thirty years. Irrespective of economic periods, the rate of inactivity in Northern Ireland has remained stubbornly high and it has long been recognised that this is a key structural problem, both economically and socially. We will therefore seek to work closely with the work under the economic activity indicator as it develops.

Section 7: What do we propose to do?

7.1 This section summarises the actions that will be undertaken to turn the curve on the indicators that form this action plan. We have focussed on those interventions which will require direct, developmental input from the SRO. It should be noted that individual actions may be changed throughout the lifespan of this plan.

What?	Who?	When?
Design and delivery of a programme to improve digital literacy and inclusion. Will include a "Digital learning in School" Programme.	DfC, DfE, DE, NI Screen, NICCY	Governance arrangements in place by November 2016. Short plan completed by December 2016. Funding decisions by end of March 2017 and implementation.
Development of a comprehensive Social Inclusion Wraparound Service, providing tailored interventions to support people at risk to access services from across the Social Inclusion Group (SIG) and across government.	DfC, PHA, DoH, HSC, DE, Community & Voluntary Sector	Initial costed plans by end of December 2016. Pilots in place (subject to resources) by March 2017. Roll-out by September 2017.
Development of a poverty assessment tool loosely based on the approach used to develop the Stoplight App, involving co-design	To be delivered as this develops, but potentially a wide range of interests.	Initial test app by December 2016. Testing and Co-design with customers – completed March 2017. Roll-out by June 2017.
Implementation of Active Ageing Strategy. We will, however, put a particular emphasis on some early wins.	DfC, DfE, DoJ, DoH, community organisations, COPNI	Governance in place by November 2016. Initial costed plans in place by end of December 2016. Pilots in place (subject to resources) by March 2017.

OBA Exercise	DfC, DoH, DE, DfE, DoJ, HSC, Education Bodies, PSNI, community organisations.	Exercise completed by December 2016 with short plan by February 2017.
Supporting mainstreaming and the development of programmes in other Departments. Additional actions need to be included in respect of United Youth and Literacy and Numeracy as proposals are developed.	Narrowing the Gap Group of Departments	Revised Plan ready by November 2016.

Section 8: Plans for Evaluation

8.1 Actions identified for implementation under this delivery plan will be evaluated for their success using the OBA template approach. While the methodology will reflect the Treasury Green Book on Economic Evaluation and Appraisal in Central Government, the aim will be to produce short summary reports. Core metrics will include:

- Self efficacy, before and after;
- Self report service satisfaction;
- People impacted by the Programme;
- Lead indicators for health, education and poverty.

Section 9: Equality Impact

EQUALITY SCREENING

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, 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;
- Men and women generally;
- Persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Persons with dependents and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must also, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Public authorities are required to screen all policies and make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. A screening process has been completed and on this basis it has been concluded that there are no expectations of negative impact arising from the plan in terms of the Section 75 dimensions.

The Equality Screening is attached at **Annex A**.

Equality Impact Screening

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Public authorities are required to screen all policies and make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. A summary of that screening process is set out below.

Information about the policy

Name of the policy
Programme for Government 2016-21 Delivery Plan –   **Indicator 19 : Reduce Poverty**   **Indicator 28 : Increase the confidence and capabilities of people and communities**

_____

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

New policy – action plan arising from Programme for Government indicators

_____

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

This Strategy will seek to contribute towards the delivery of the Programme for Government indicators 19 and 28 –

Indicator 19 : Reduce Poverty

Indicator 28 : Increase the confidence and capabilities of people and communities

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

If so, explain how.

There is some evidence (set out below) that poverty and low community confidence may be more prevalent within specific Section 75 groups (e.g. Single adults), and therefore, specific actions aimed at reducing poverty may have a greater impact on those individuals or groups.

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Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Department for Communities with contributions from other Executive departments and in consultation with key stakeholders.

_____

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Programme for Government Indicators are set and monitored by the NI Executive. The Delivery plan sits within the remit of the Department for Communities although it requires work across departmental boundaries.

Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they

| x | financial

| x | legislative

▉ other, please specify _____

Main stakeholders affected

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

▉ staff

| x | service users

| x | other public sector organisations

voluntary/community/trade unions

| x |

other, please specify – members of the public, particularly those suffering

| x | from poverty or disenfranchised from society

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

This delivery plan will have an impact across a range of Executive policies. It is most closely associated with the Programme for Government, however it will also have the potential to impact on the following policies –

Active Ageing Strategy

Child Poverty Strategy

Strategy to improve the lives of people with disabilities

More broadly the delivery plan may have impacts across policies in relation to education, health and social matters.

Available evidence

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	In 2014-15, 26% of Catholics and 18% of Protestants lived in relative poverty Before Housing Costs (BHC). After Housing Costs (AHC) those who classified their religion as 'Other' recorded the highest levels of relative poverty, at 31%, compared to 18% of Protestants and 27% of Catholics[1]. Fourteen of the 20 most deprived areas in the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 are majority Catholic[2].
	Higher proportions of children in households where the head of the household is Catholic are in relative poverty, both before housing costs (BHC) and after housing costs (AHC), than those households headed by a Protestant. In 2014-15, 30% BHC and 32% AHC of children in Catholic-headed households were in relative poverty. For Protestant-headed households the proportion in relative poverty was 22% BHC and 26% AHC[1].
	In terms of religion and educational attainment, a key finding is the persistent trend of higher proportions of pupils of Roman Catholic background achieving successful education outcomes at years 12

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[1] DfC, Households Below Average Income 2014-15,
https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/households-below-average-income-northern-ireland-201415
[2] Based on NISRA, Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 and NI Census 2011, Table: Religion: KS211NI. Both available from NINIS, http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx

	and 14 compared to pupils of Protestant background. Furthermore, Department of Education statistics demonstrate that this gap is widening. Larger differences emerge when looking at destinations of school leavers – Department of Education statistics consistently show that a higher proportion of Roman Catholic school leavers enter higher education than other groups, while Protestant school leavers are more likely than other groups to enter further education. Department of Education statistics show that Protestant males entitled to free school meals have the lowest attainment rates at GCSE and the lowest proportions of school leavers moving on to higher education[3]. Just over one quarter (26.7%) of Protestant males entitled to free school meals achieve 5 or more GCSEs (grades A* to C including English and Maths). In comparison to 39.9% of Roman Catholic males and 49.6% of Roman Catholic females entitled to free school meals[3].
Political opinion	We will explore what information might be required in terms of political opinion in taking forward this work.
Racial group	Reports suggest that experiences of poverty exist for some people from minority ethnic groups[4]. Minority ethnic children are more vulnerable to poverty. School leavers from an ethnic minority group are six times more likely to achieve no GCSEs in comparison to school leavers from a white ethnic origin (3.2% compared to 0.5%)[3].
Age	Adults were less likely to be living in relative poverty in 2014/15. 22% of all individuals in Northern Ireland, 25% of children, 21% of working adults and 20% of pensioners were in poverty in 2014/15 (relative poverty before housing costs)[5]. In 2014-15, children living in families with a mother under 30 years old were most at risk of being in relative poverty, at 29% BHC. On the AHC measure this was more obvious, at 37%, compared to only 22% if the mother was between 40 and 49 years old[1].

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[3] School Leavers - 2014/15 Statistical Bulletin,
https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-leavers-201415-statistical-bulletin
[4] Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland,
http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/poverty-ethnicity-northern-ireland
[5] Northern Ireland Poverty Bulletin 2014-15,
https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-poverty-bulletin-2014-2015

	In total, 47% of children, which equates to 209,000 children, lived in a family which has a youngest child under the age of 5 in 2014-15. Over one quarter (26%) of these children are considered to be in relative poverty BHC. In comparison households with the youngest child aged between 11 and 15 were least likely to be in poverty at 15% (both BHC and AHC)[1].
	The youth unemployment rate in NI is 13.0% compared to 12.3% in the UK as a whole[6].
	Over the ten year period between 2005 and 2015, the number of adults here aged 65 and over increased by 24%[7]. The trend is expected to continue with the proportion of the population in this age group projected to increase by 55% between 2015 and 2033 to just under half a million people[8].
Marital status	Children living in lone-parent families were more likely to be in relative poverty when compared with children living in families with two adults in 2014-15. The percentage of children in relative poverty for lone parent families was 34% (BHC), whereas the percentage of children in low income households for couples with children was 22% (BHC). On the AHC measure the difference in poverty levels between these two family types was more substantial, 45% compared to 22%[1].
	Single Working Age Adults were more likely to be in relative poverty when compared to Couples in 2014-15. The percentage of single working adults in relative poverty (BHC) was 28%, whereas the percentage of couples in relative poverty (BHC) was 17%[1].
Sexual orientation	Homophobic motivated incidents have generally increased year on year since 2006/07. The figure for 2015/16 (343 incidents) is the highest level recorded since the data series began in 2004/05. Similarly, homophobic motivated crimes reached their highest level in 2015/16 (210 crimes); while there has been more fluctuation in the level of crimes recorded, this has increased year on year since 2011/12[9].

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[6] NI Labour Market Report September 2016,
https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/labour-market-report-september-2016.PDF
[7] NISRA 2015 Mid-year Population Estimates.
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/midyear/MYE15_Bulletin.pdf
[8] NISRA 2014 based Population Projections,
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/projections/NPP14-Bulletin.pdf
[9] Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police Northern Ireland: Quarterly Update to 31 March 2016,
https://www.psni.police.uk/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/2016/q4

	The Equality Commission received 72 enquiries/applications for assistance from individuals who believed they had been discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. Close to 30% of these enquiries related to harassment either inside or outside the workplace. The majority of those harassment enquiries related to harassment within the workplace. However, the number of enquiries relating to harassment outside the workplace has substantially increased compared with those received in the previous year[10].
Men and women generally	In 2014-15, adult females were more likely to be in relative poverty, at 23% compared to 19% for adult males (BHC)[1]. In 2014-15, 18% of male pensioners were in relative poverty (BHC) compared to 21% of female pensioners. Furthermore 28% of female pensioners who were single were in relative poverty (BHC)[1]. In the Working age adults subgroup in 2014-15, 12% of Single females in work were in relative poverty (BHC) compared to 7% of single males in work[1]. The percentage of school leavers entitled to Free School Meals achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent qualifications, including GCSE English and Maths was 41.3% in 2014-15. The figures for female pupils are higher than for male pupils (49.6% of Catholic females and 39.9% of Catholic males compared to 40.3% of Protestant females and 26.7% Protestant males)[3]. Women are more likely to be lone parents[11] – and children living in lone-parent families were more likely to live in low income households than those in families with two adults[1].
Disability	In 2014-15, approximately 564,000 individuals or 31% of the population in Northern Ireland lived in families where someone is disabled (either an adult or child). Those living in families where someone is disabled experienced higher levels of poverty than those living in families where no-one is disabled, 27% compared to 19% BHC and 26% compared to 20% AHC[1].

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[10] Promoting Sexual Orientation Equality,
http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/ECNI_SexualOrientation_PolicyPriorities.pdf
[11] NI Census 2011, Table KS107, Lone Parent Households with Dependent Children,
http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/Download/Census%202011/_KS107NI%20(s).ods

	A higher proportion of children living in families with a disabled person were in relative poverty (34%) than those children living in families where no-one is disabled (22%), BHC. On the AHC measure a similar pattern was observed. This is increased further when the children live in a family where there is one or more disabled adult but no disabled child. In these circumstances 41% of children were in relative poverty BHC and 40% AHC[1]. Almost one quarter (73.3%) of school leavers with no special educational need (SEN) achieve at least 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths compared to 38.3% of SEN Stages 1-4 and 18.9% of Stage 5[3].
Dependants	In 2014-15 couples without children had the lowest level of relative poverty, both BHC (15%) and AHC (17%)[1]. In 2014-15, on the After Housing Costs (AHC) measure it was single parents that had the highest proportion living in relative poverty, at 45%. For comparison the proportion of single adults without children living in relative poverty was 27%[1]. Larger families are generally more likely to be in poverty than smaller families. In 2014-15 children living in families with three or more children were most likely to be in relative poverty at 31% BHC and 32% AHC[1].

Needs, experiences and priorities

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	Limited qualitative information is available on why Protestant males entitled to free school meals have such low achievement compared to other groups entitled to free school meals, but some of the barriers faced by Protestant males are thought to include: negativity towards the benefits of education; the divided nature of the school system in Northern Ireland and lower post-16 provision in controlled schools; a lack of male working-class role models in schools; and weakened community infrastructure in urban Protestant areas.
Political opinion	Our research to date has not identified any specific needs relating to this strategy regarding Political Opinion but we would be very open to reviewing this in light of further information we may receive.
Racial group	Minority ethnic children are more likely to attend non-grammar secondary schools and represent a greater share of children in the integrated school sector. Although there is limited research in this area, a range of factors represent barriers to access grammar education and key amongst these appear to include the use of tests to determine admission, a lack of knowledge of the educational system, and a lack of recognition of diversity in the needs of this group.
Age	Good health during the early years of childhood underpins a child's physical, emotional, cogitative and social development[12]. These, in turn, influence the extent to which children engage with others, and therefore influence outcomes in later life. In poorer families children have been found to have more adverse behavioural conditions, higher accident rates, higher rates of decayed teeth, and poorer diet (and higher levels of obesity). Children in poverty are particularly vulnerable to ill physical and mental health and poor educational outcomes: 'Children born into low-income households are more likely to experience

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[12] National Children's Bureau (2015) Poor Beginnings: Health Inequalities Among Young Children Across England, http://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Policy_docs/ncb_poor_beginnings_report_final_for_web.pdf

developmental and health problems from birth, and to accumulate health risks as they grow older (Roberts, 2002)[13].'

Young parents are at a particular risk of poverty and may need specific advice and support (e.g. health, parenting, housing and accessing Further Education).

Gaps in achievement between the poorest children and their better-off counterparts are clearly established by the age of five. Key skills include communication, language, literacy and mathematics[14].

Risks to health are most acute when people are most dependent or vulnerable, such as in childhood, during pregnancy and in older age.

While people are now living longer, older people can face many problems including a reduction in financial resources, reduced mobility, reduced activity and reduced or non-existent social support networks. Each of these is detrimental to health. The main long-term, health problems for older people include mobility, arthritis, cognitive impairment, declining vision and heart problems. In addition, those who have experienced adverse social conditions earlier in life can experience the accumulation of these factors even more acutely. A further issue, suggested by Matthews (2015) is age-related discrimination on the part of some healthcare professionals and in the operation of some healthcare services[15].

Some of the significant challenges faced by some older people include: poverty and fuel poverty; the need for more appropriate housing; better access to transport; appropriate health and social care provision; social isolation and loneliness; access to education; improved access to leisure opportunities; better employment opportunities; and freedom to live without fear of crime[16].

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[13] The Costs of Child Poverty for Individuals and Society: A Literature Review (2008), http://www.jrf.org.uk/system/files/2301-child-poverty-costs.pdf

[14] Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness (2014), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418819

[15] Matthews, D. (2015) The Effect of Ageing on Health Inequalities. Nursing Times; 111: 45, 18-21, https://www.nursingtimes.net/roles/older-people-nurses/the-effect-of-ageing-on-health-inequalities/5091576.article

[16] NI Active Ageing Strategy 2015-2021, https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/ofmdfm/active-ageing-strategy.pdf

Marital status	In comparison to couples with children lone parents were more likely to be in poverty in 2014-15[1] and have particular needs in relation to childcare and housing (as noted in consultation).
Sexual orientation	LGB people can have specific needs/experiences/priorities in relation to service provision, economic/workplace inclusion, education, health and well-being and community safety and security.
Men and women generally	A key finding[17] is the persistent educational attainment gap between males and females, and the fact that this gap consistently increases, with progression through the stages of schooling, to the detriment of males, after leaving primary school. The literature highlights,[18] many barriers to achievement for males including peer group culture, levels of motivation, a shortage of male role models in schools (particularly primary schools), levels of motivation, frustration with the formal nature of the classroom, some teachers having lower expectations of males, and a lack of connection between curriculum content and the lives of many males. Females are more likely to go on to higher education than males, while males are more likely than females to go on to further education[3]. Males are more likely than females to enrol on STEM courses in further and higher education[19].
Disability	Persons with disabilities can face specific barriers in relation to participation and active citizenship; discrimination; accessibility to the physical environment, goods and services and mobility; housing, care, social activities and transport; employment and employability. Young disabled people are particularly vulnerable to exclusion and may have specific needs (e.g. play provision). For parents and guardians of children with disabilities the report found that the parenting role can be further complicated with a disabled child or children because of restrictions to choice in terms of childcare, additional costs, inadequate information and lack of co-ordination between support services. Persons with disabilities often feel more vulnerable to crime.

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[17] Education Inequalities In Northern Ireland, School of Education, Queen's University Belfast, 2015,
http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/EducationInequality-FullReportQUB.pdf
[18] Lloyd, T. (2011) Boys' Underachievement in Schools Literature Review,
http://www.boysdevelopmentproject.org.uk/Boys-and-underachievement-literature-review-edited-in-pdf.pdf
[19] Further Education Activity in NI 2010/11 to 2014/15,
https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/FurtherEducationActivityNI201011to201415bulletin.pdf

	Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children and the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect[20]. Families in which someone is disabled (either parent or child) were at a higher risk of poverty in 2014-15[1]. Children of parents with disabilities may have carer responsibilities and may need additional support in relation to education and health.
Dependants	Parents are fundamental to their children's development and so successful parenting is a key element in preventing children developing behavioural difficulties (Pugh, De'Ath & Smith, 1994). However, parents vary in their capabilities. All parents find parenting a challenge at times but parents differ in the internal and external resources on which they can call. Internal resources include their own mental well-being and personal resilience. External factors include poverty, social disadvantage and the absence of supportive families and friends. These factors interact and multiple adverse factors may lead to a parent not developing or not implementing effective parenting skills, in order to provide an appropriate environment for the development of their children. Supporting parents to develop effective parenting skills has therefore been recognised as an important prevention and intervention strategy[21].' Good maternal health during pregnancy is vital for both the mother and child. Research by McAvoy et al in 2006[22] has shown that babies born to parents who were unemployed were approximately twice as likely to have a low birth weight as those born to parents who belonged to professional occupational groups, and those born to teenage mothers were also significantly more likely to have a low birth weight. This research also highlighted the lasting causal effects of low birth weight has on later life, including a greater risk of death, disability and academic underachievement.

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[20] Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance, Manifesto 2012,

http://www.disabilityaction.org/fs/doc/publications/cdsa-manifesto-31-01.pdf

[21] Parenting Early Intervention Programme Evaluation,
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182715/DFE-RR121A.pdf
[22] McAvoy, H., Sturley, J., Burke, S., and Balanda, K. (2006) Unequal at Birth: Inequalities in the Occurrence of Low Birthweight Babies in Ireland. Institute of Public Health In Ireland,
https://www.publichealth.ie/files/file/Unequal_at_Birth.pdf

There is a substantial body of literature highlighting the benefits of early engagement with structured childcare and with parenting programmes[21],[23].

Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	There is no expectation of a negative policy impact on people of differing religious beliefs. All aspects of the delivery plan should have positive impacts to all sections of the community who avail of them.	None.
Political opinion	We are not aware of particular impacts in relation to political opinion.	None.
Racial group	There is no expectation that this policy will have a negative impact in respect of people of different racial backgrounds. All aspects of the delivery plan should have positive impacts to all sections of the community who avail of them.	None.
Age	The delivery plan will have positive impacts across all age groups by dealing both with both the effects of existing poverty and impacting on the potential causes of future policy.	None.

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[23] Karoly, L., Kilburn, R., and Cannon, J. (2005) Proven Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions. RAND Corporation http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9145.html

Marital status	There is no expectation of a negative policy impact on people of differing marital status. All aspects of the delivery plan should have positive impacts to all sections of the community who avail of them. As lone parents are particularly likely to be in poverty there may be a positive impact in addressing this inequality – however it is not expected there will be any adverse impact.	None.
Sexual orientation	The intention is that the delivery plan will have a positive impact and address inequalities; it is not envisaged that there will be an adverse impact in terms of sexual orientation.	None
Men and women generally	The intention is that the delivery plan will have a positive impact and address inequalities; it is not envisaged that there will be an adverse impact in terms of sexual orientation.	None
Disability	The intention is that the delivery plan will have a positive impact and address inequalities; it is not envisaged that there will be an adverse impact in terms of sexual orientation.	None
Dependants	The intention is that the delivery plan will have a positive impact and address inequalities; it is not envisaged that there will be an adverse impact in terms of sexual orientation.	None.

2	Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?	
Section 75 category	If **Yes**, provide details	If **No**, provide reasons
Religious belief	As the delivery plan focuses on increasing confidence and helping to limit the impacts of poverty on individuals and communities, the actions captured within it have the potential to ensure increased opportunities for those suffering from poverty and lower levels of confidence.	
Political opinion	As above.	
Racial group	As above.	
Age	As above.	
Marital status	As above.	
Sexual orientation	As above.	
Men and women generally	As above.	
Disability	As above.	
Dependants	As above.	

3	To what extent is the policy 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 impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	This policy is not expected to have any impact on good relations.	None
Political opinion	This policy is not expected to have any impact on good relations.	None.
Racial group	This policy is not expected to have any impact on good relations.	None.

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 reasons
Religious belief		The delivery plan offers limited potential to promote good relations.
Political opinion		The deliver plan offers limited potential to promote good relations.
Racial group		The deliver plan offers limited potential to promote good relations.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity - people who fall into more than one Section 75 category (i.e. disabled women; young Protestant men, etc)

We are very aware that many people have multiple identities. We will seek the views of those representing Section 75 groups in consultation on this strategy.

There will be minor impacts of the strategy on some people with multiple identities, such as young protestant males who have the lowest attainment level at GCSE and A Level, the highest level of non-attainment and the lowest proportions of school leavers moving on to higher education.

Information/data collected in relation to any of the Section 75 categories is provided in this document.

Screening decision

On the basis that we have not identified potential adverse impacts on any of the section 75 groups; and on the basis that the delivery plan is intended to address inequalities, tackle poverty, increase community confidence and operates on the basis of objective need; we are not proposing to screen the Delivery plan in and conduct a full equality impact assessment.

Additionally the indicators which the Delivery plan is intended to deliver are part of the Programme for Government and have therefore been subject to a full consultation process.

Continued liaison with stakeholders will be part of this work and we will seek to respond to needs identified on an ongoing basis.

For these reasons we consider that an EQIA is not required at this stage but the option to carry one out remains open at any stage.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

Should we become aware of significant equality issues remaining we will reconsider the question of carrying out an EQIA.

Mitigation

We will continually review the delivery plan and re-screen if significant evidence or issues are raised.