



National Policy  National Procedure  National Protocol  National Guideline   
National Clinical Guideline

## HSE National Procedure for Conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)

### DOCUMENT GOVERNANCE <sup>1</sup>

<b>Document Owner post title:</b>	National Lead, Diversity Equality and Inclusion
<b>Document Owner name:</b>	James Glover
<b>Document Owner email contact:</b> <i>(Generic email addresses only for the Repository)</i>	<a href="mailto:Diversity.HR@hse.ie">Diversity.HR@hse.ie</a>
<b>Document Commissioner(s): (Name and post holder title):</b>	National Lead, Diversity Equality and Inclusion
<b>Document Approver(s): (Name and post holder title):</b>	National Lead, Diversity Equality and Inclusion
<b>Development Group Name:</b>	National Diversity Equality & Inclusion Team, National HR Leadership & Capability
<b>Development Group Chairperson:</b>	National Lead, Diversity Equality and Inclusion

*Additional headings can be inserted as required*

### DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT <sup>2</sup>

<b>Date effective from:</b>	28/01/2026		
<b>Date set for next review:</b>	01/05/2028		
<b>Your Reference No:</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>	Click or tap here to enter text.		
<b>Current version no:</b>	1	<b>Archived version no:</b>	0

Note: Original document is Version 0. First revision is Version 1. Second revision is Version 2, and so on.

Note: HSE National 3PGs should be formally reviewed every 3 years, unless new legislative/regulatory or emerging issues/research/technology/audit etc. dictates sooner.

<sup>1</sup> Records the senior management roles involved in the governance and development of the document.

<sup>2</sup> Records the control information about the document.

VERSION CONTROL UPDATE <sup>3</sup>		
Version No. (most recent version first)	Date reviewed (most recent date first)	Comments (1 sentence max, if required)
1	28/01/2026	Web links and document references updated
0	24/07/2025	Published 24/07/2025, effective from 01/05/2025
<b>Document management notes:</b>		

PUBLICATION INFORMATION <sup>4</sup>
<b>Topic:</b> Equality Impact Assessments
<b>National Group:</b> HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) team
<b>Short summary:</b> The HSE is committed to enhancing the way in which it addresses diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) in the infrastructure, policy and practice relating to its workforce, as outlined in the HSE's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2027 and subsequent strategies. This National Procedure sets out the process for conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA).
<b>Description:</b> The purpose of this Procedure is to set out a clear and consistent methodology for conducting EQIAs. EQIA is the process used by the HSE to enhance the DEI content of workplace policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines. The process may also be used to equality-proof key decisions and strategies impacting upon the workforce.

<sup>3</sup> Records details when a document is reviewed, even if no changes are made.

<sup>4</sup> Records the document information required for publication on the HSE National Central Repository.

## Contents

1.0	Planning.....	5
1.1.	Overview.....	5
1.2.	Purpose .....	6
1.3.	Scope.....	6
1.3.1.	Target users .....	6
1.3.2.	Target population .....	6
1.4.	Objective(s).....	6
1.5.	Outcome(s) .....	7
1.6.	Disclosure of interests .....	7
1.7.	Rationale / alignment with HSE national priorities .....	7
1.8.	Supporting evidence .....	8
2.0	Methodology .....	9
2.1.	List of key questions this National 3PG will answer.....	9
2.2.	Describe and document the evidence search.....	9
2.3.	Describe the method of screening and evidence appraisal .....	10
2.4.	Attach any copyright or permissions sought .....	10
3.0	Procedure.....	10
3.1.	Scope of the EQIA process.....	10
3.2.	Evidence and data in EQIA.....	11
3.3.	Staff engagement in the EQIA process .....	11
3.4.	Outline of steps in the EQIA procedure.....	12
3.5.	Data protection considerations .....	13
3.6.	Specific roles and responsibilities .....	14
4.0	Consultation .....	15
4.1.	Stakeholder involvement .....	15
4.2.	External review .....	15
5.0	National implementation plan .....	15
5.1.	Implementation plan listing actions, barriers, facilitators and timelines.....	15
5.2.	Resource implications.....	16
5.3.	Describe the structure and governance of your national implementation team. ....	16
5.4.	List tools and resources developed to support local implementation of your National 3PG.....	16
5.5.	Expected date of full implementation of your National 3PG .....	17
6.0	Governance and approval.....	17
7.0	Communication and dissemination plan.....	17
8.0	Sustainability.....	17
8.1.	Describe the plan for national monitoring and audit.....	17
8.2.	National audit tool.....	18
9.0	Review / update.....	18
9.1.	Next review date.....	18
10.0	References.....	19
11.0	Glossary of terms .....	19

This is a controlled document and must always be accessed from the [HSE National Central Repository](#). Whilst printing is permitted, printed copies are not controlled. Controlled documents must never be saved to secondary electronic/other locations which are accessible by staff or the public.

12.0 Appendices .....20

Appendix 8: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) toolkit ..... 21

Appendix 9: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel of Staff Representatives (2025) .....27

Appendix 10: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for Policy ..... 29

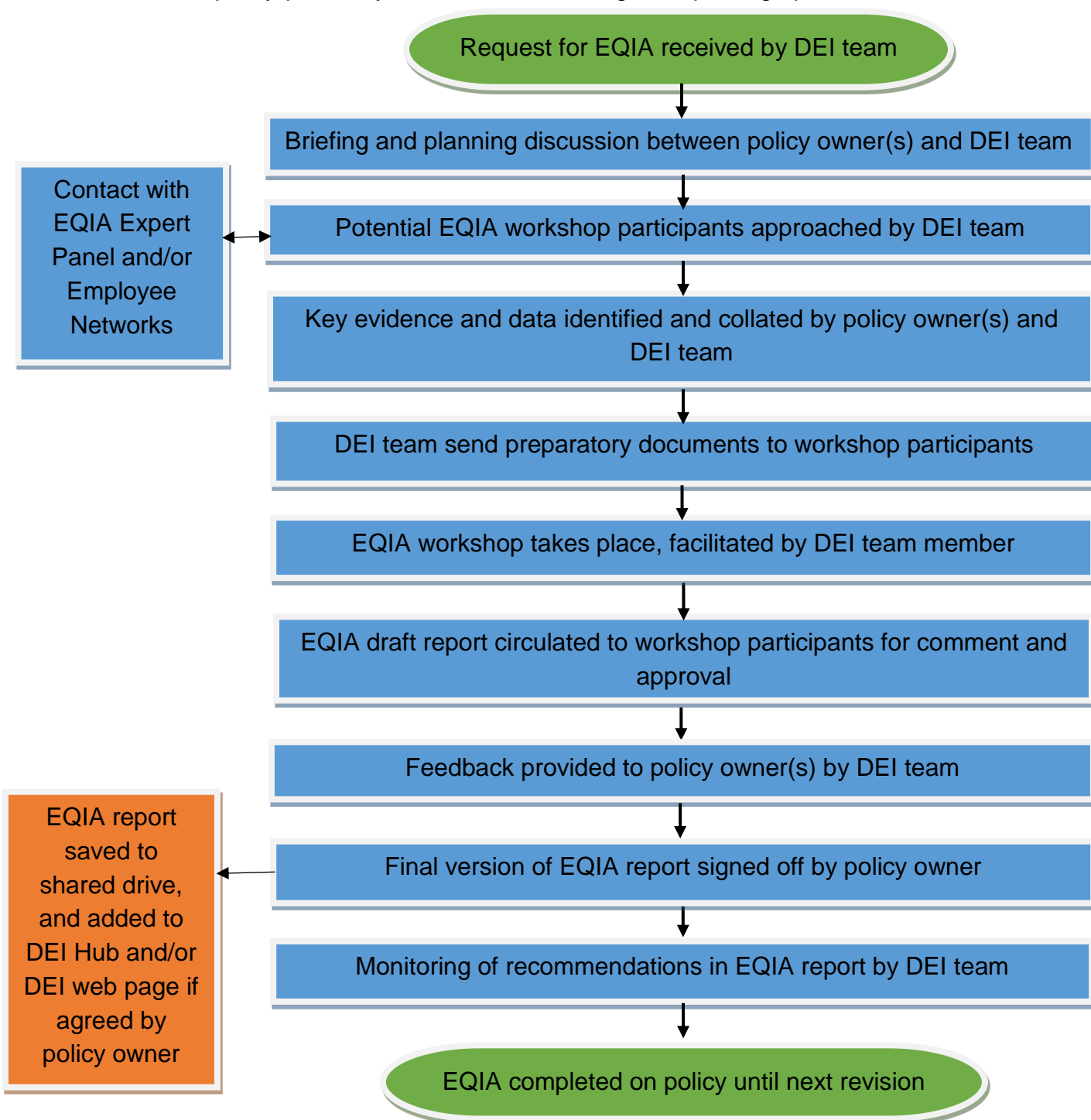
Owners (2025) ..... 29

Appendix 11: Equality Impact Assessments in the HSE: Frequently Asked Questions .....32

## 1.0 Planning

### 1.1. Overview

EQIA is the process used by the HSE to enhance the DEI content of workplace policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines. The process may also be used to equality-proof key decisions and strategies impacting upon the workforce.



This is a controlled document and must always be accessed from the [HSE National Central Repository](#). Whilst printing is permitted, printed copies are not controlled. Controlled documents must never be saved to secondary electronic/other locations which are accessible by staff or the public.

## 1.2. Purpose

The HSE is committed to creating a culture that supports diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. The purpose of this SOP is to set out the steps involved in enhancing the extent to which existing and new HSE workforce policies, procedures, guidelines and protocols (hereinafter described as “policies”), address DEI, including measures to improve compliance with equality legislation. The approach set out in this document is referred to as Equality Impact Assessment, or EQIA.

The EQIA process supports the HSE to meet its commitments under the following:

- The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021
- The Disability Act 2005
- Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty
- Our Public Service (OPS) 2020
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Articles 9 (Accessibility) and 27 (Work and Employment)

## 1.3. Scope

The scope of this document is limited to workforce policies impacting directly on prospective, current and former HSE employees and their managers within the HSE. Policies which are not focused on the workplace (such as policies relating to service delivery) are not comprehended by this SOP.

### 1.3.1. Target users

All HSE employees. Employees from Section 38/39 organisations and other HSE-funded organisations may also use these guidelines as a resource.

### 1.3.2. Target population

All HSE employees. Employees from Section 38/39 organisations and other HSE-funded organisations may also use these guidelines as a resource.

## 1.4. Objective(s)

This SOP has the following objectives:

- 1.4.1 To summarise the rationale for enhancing the extent to which workforce policies address DEI
- 1.4.2 To introduce the HSE workforce EQIA tool and to set out the steps involved in using the EQIA tool to enhance workforce policies, in order to ensure a consistent, high-quality and effective range of plans, processes and policies by which the HSE workforce is governed
- 1.4.3 To ensure that only policies relating to the workforce are dealt with and not

policies about non-employment issues

- 1.4.4 To set out how the involvement of HSE employees representing diversity grounds should be conducted
- 1.4.5 To set out appropriate recording and monitoring processes so that it is possible to report on impact assessment outputs, identify and measure trends in impact assessment, inform research and maintain a high quality, effective and timely equality-proofing service
- 1.4.6 To support the development of a work culture where all employees are valued and supported, and work in an environment free from discrimination, and to support the HSE to meet the statutory requirements set out in national equality-related legislation relating to all public bodies i.e. those specified in the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021; the Disability Act 2005 and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

## 1.5. Outcome(s)

- 1.5.1 This Procedure is expected to result in improvements in the quality and consistency of workforce policies and their compliance with equality legislation, leading to enhanced diversity, equality and inclusion across the HSE workforce.
- 1.5.2 The outcomes are anticipated to include a better-informed and better-governed workforce with managers and staff more knowledgeable about how to create a positive, equitable and inclusive culture at work; fewer workplace disputes; reduced sickness absence and staff turnover, particularly for staff for whom their diversity characteristics are a factor.

## 1.6. Disclosure of interests

No conflicts of interest were declared by members of the Development Group.

## 1.7. Rationale / alignment with HSE national priorities

- 1.7.1 The HSE is by some way the largest public body (and the largest employer) in the state. As a public body and as an employer it is subject to a range of legal duties related to DEI. These include:
  - The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021
  - The Disability Act 2005
  - The Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014.

The legislation above places a positive duty on public sector bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect Human Rights, in their day-to-day work.

- 1.7.2 This Procedure aligns with the HSE's People Strategy 2019-2024, the overarching national strategy setting out how the HSE will develop the way it recruits, plans, leads, employs and develops its workforce. A number of priorities set out in the People Strategy either explicitly or implicitly support the enhancement of DEI measures. Priority 9 (Professional HR Service: Strengthen HR governance and oversight) specifically aims to improve HR policy and governance, and is relevant to this Procedure.
- 1.7.3 The HSE currently has numerous national HR policies in place, ranging from the standard contract of terms and conditions to specific policies addressing dignity at work, smoking in the workplace and sharps injuries. All National HR policies can be accessed through the [HSE National Central Repository](#). A large number of other, subordinate policies impact on the day-to-day work of employees across the HSE. Many of these policies have the potential to impact upon DEI in the workplace, either positively or negatively, in ways that are often not immediately apparent. Key to the enhancement of existing and new HR policies is the development of a process to add or improve the DEI content of these. This document sets out the steps by which an EQIA tool may be used as a systematic means of achieving this.
- 1.7.4 The content in this Procedure also aligns with How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023. This guide sets out a clear and consistent approach to developing policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines (3PGs). This document recommends including diverse perspectives when developing 3PGs, in order to enhance their DEI content. It explicitly references the EQIA process as a way to support this aim.

## 1.8. Supporting evidence

- 1.8.1 Relevant legislation includes:
- The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021
  - The Disability Act 2005
  - The Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014

The legislation above details the legal duties related to DEI that the HSE and other public bodies must uphold, and places a positive duty on public bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect Human Rights, in their day-to-day work.

- 1.8.2 Related 3PGs:
- How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1. List of key questions this National 3PG will answer

- 2.1.1 What is the rationale for EQIA?
- 2.1.2 How should EQIA be conducted?
- 2.1.3 On what types of policy should EQIA be conducted?
- 2.1.4 What kind of evidence is useful in EQIAs?
- 2.1.5 What is the rationale for broad staff engagement in the EQIA process, and how can this be arranged?
- 2.1.6 How can the quality of EQIAs be assured?

### 2.2. Describe and document the evidence search

2.2.1 The DEI team conducted a review of EQIA processes in other public sector bodies in both Ireland and other jurisdictions. This review included:

- A search of guidance documents on developing EQIA processes, such as those developed by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)
- A search of publicly available information on EQIAs in other organisations

2.2.2 EQIA is a well-established, systematic and collaborative approach to enhancing policies, plans and decisions of all types. It is used in a number of jurisdictions in the UK<sup>5</sup> and Europe<sup>6</sup> to build equality into day-to-day practice, or “mainstreaming”). Although its use is not yet well established in Ireland, it is promoted as a key step in building a culture of equality in the workplace by IHREC:

“An equality and human rights impact assessment is carried out on a policy or plan [ideally] at design stage. It seeks to ensure that the policy or plan is compliant with non-discrimination and human rights standards, can take account of diversity, and will advance equality. It tests for potential negative impact and identifies corrective action to redesign the policy or plan. Where redesign is not an option, it involves identifying mitigating actions to address the potential negative impact.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> In Wales: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-impact-assessments>

<sup>6</sup> For example in Italy: [https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pubblicazioni/corsi-convegni/palestini\\_equita2019/@\\_@download/publicationFile/Palestini\\_2019\\_5\\_10.pdf](https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pubblicazioni/corsi-convegni/palestini_equita2019/@_@download/publicationFile/Palestini_2019_5_10.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> IHREC at <https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-for-employers/building-a-culture-of-human-rights-and-equality-in-the-workplace/>

2.2.3 While there are many different methods of carrying out EQIA, all such processes have the same basic steps:

1. What is the policy in question trying to achieve?
2. How will the policy impact on people with diversity characteristics?
3. How can likely negative impacts be eliminated or mitigated?
4. How can likely positive impacts be maximised and promoted?
5. What actions require to be taken to enhance the overall impact of the policy on DEI, and by whom?

2.2.4 EQIAs are demonstrated to have a beneficial part to play in the development and review of policies in the public sector<sup>89</sup>. There are also significant learning benefits for participants in EQIAs, in that staff responsible for a particular policy or plan are encouraged to understand how their work relates to DEI as part of the process.

### 2.3. Describe the method of screening and evidence appraisal

The DEI team reviewed all available evidence and agreed upon a process to conduct EQIAs in the HSE.

### 2.4. Attach any copyright or permissions sought

No copyright or permissions are required in relation to this document.

## 3.0 Procedure

### 3.1. Scope of the EQIA process

#### Scope of the EQIA process

3.1.1 Policies are regarded as within scope of this EQIA process as follows:

- Policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines that are intended to provide rules, procedures, guidance or recommendations relating to the way HSE staff conduct themselves in the course of their work (e.g. National HR policies such as the HSE's Standard Terms and Conditions of Employment; Dignity at Work Policy; Occupational Health and Safety Mandatory Training Policies).
- Strategies, plans and decisions directly affecting the HSE workforce

---

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Government at <https://archive2021.parliament.scot/abouttheparliament/25487.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> Equality Commission of Northern Ireland at [https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/EQIA-PracticalGuidance\(2005\).pdf](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/EQIA-PracticalGuidance(2005).pdf)

(e.g. Healthy Workplace Framework; HSE People Strategy).

3.1.2 Policies are regarded as not relevant to this EQIA process as follows:

- The policy is primarily focused on the way a service is delivered to patients, clients or service users (e.g. a clinical procedure)
- The policy is aimed at the research or provision of a health service to sections of the community (e.g. a Community Health Needs Assessment).

### 3.2. Evidence and data in EQIA

3.2.1 The EQIA process is enhanced by consideration of as wide a range of evidence and data as is practicable, within time constraints. Such data may include, but is not restricted to:

- Quantitative data, such as workforce statistical data, data from the National Staff Survey or Irish Census data
- Qualitative data including evidence from DEI enquiries, Employee Relations cases, or staff engagement
- Evidence from legal proceedings such as case law
- Good practice examples from within Ireland or from other comparable jurisdictions.

3.2.2 This Procedure allows for evidence sources to be listed, in the relevant section of the EQIA toolkit. This toolkit is attached as Appendix 8.

### 3.3. Staff engagement in the EQIA process

3.3.1 EQIA is a collaborative, participative process and the quality of the discussion very much depends on the range of perspectives and experiences included. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that a reasonable number of staff representatives with lived experience or good understanding of the relevant diversity grounds are invited to take part in the EQIA. For example, a HR policy likely to have a significant impact on disabled staff might be impact assessed by a group including several employees with different disabilities and long-term health conditions.

3.3.2 The DEI team arranges for staff representative participation for each EQIA. The DEI team has an Expert Panel of staff representing different diversity grounds for this purpose, including the grounds of disability, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Panel members are recruited in the following ways:

- By inviting participation in response to expressions of interest received by the DEI team from employees representing a range of diversity characteristics

- By inviting participation from members of the three HSE employee networks:
  - The Cultural Diversity network for employees from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds
  - The Le Chéile network for employees with disabilities, neurodiverse conditions and long-term health conditions, and their allies
  - The Reach Out network for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA +) staff and their allies

Staff representatives are provided with training prior to participating in EQIAs.

3.3.2 A Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel of staff representatives is attached as Appendix 9.

### 3.4. Outline of steps in the EQIA procedure

3.4.1 A workforce policy requiring impact assessment is identified through a range of different routes. This can be either in a planned fashion (e.g. through building EQIA into the strategic review of a suite of HR policies) or in an ad-hoc responsive manner (e.g. a policy is prepared without EQIA being considered at the pre-planning stage).

3.4.2 An approach is made to the DEI team to initiate the EQIA process.

3.4.3 An initial briefing meeting takes place between the department or team preparing the policy (the “policy owner”) and the DEI team as the EQIA facilitator. This discussion aims to clarify the rationale, scope, process and potential outcomes of the EQIA process, as well as probable timescales. A Terms of Reference for policy owners is attached as Appendix 10.

3.4.4 The DEI team source relevant participation from key stakeholders. Typically, an EQIA will be completed by 6-10 stakeholders including the policy owner(s), a DEI team representative, and a number of expert participants such as staff representatives with lived experience of a range of relevant diversity characteristics, such as employees with disabilities.

3.4.5 A date is set for a facilitated workshop, which will usually take place via a virtual (video-conference) platform. An EQIA usually takes 90 minutes but may take longer if discussions are complex and involved. This workshop is attended by a DEI team representative, a number of staff representatives with lived experience of different diversity characteristics, and other subject matter experts if appropriate. The policy owner may not attend the initial EQIA workshop.

- 3.4.6 Relevant preparatory materials are sent to participants, including potentially a draft version of the policy to be assessed (or a short summary of this), with sufficient time for full consideration. Usually the (blank) EQIA toolkit is also sent out at this point (see Appendix 8). Key evidence or data may also be circulated ahead of the workshop.
- 3.4.7 The workshop takes place, facilitated by a member of the DEI team. Sources of evidence and data are listed and considered as part of the discussion. Potential impacts and recommendations are identified during the discussion and recorded using the EQIA toolkit. A participant will be identified to complete this document during the meeting (usually a member of the DEI team). It is not usually necessary to also make a separate note of the discussions.
- 3.4.8 A draft of the EQIA report is distributed to all workshop participants for comments and feedback.
- 3.4.9 The DEI team provides feedback from the EQIA workshop to the policy owner and shares a copy of the draft EQIA report. Feedback may be provided by phone, video conference, or email, depending on the preference of the policy owner. Following consideration of the feedback, the DEI team and policy owner agree on a list of recommendations, person(s) responsible and timescales for their implementation. The DEI team prepares a final version of the EQIA report, which is then approved by the policy owner.
- 3.4.10 The EQIA report is stored in the DEI shared folder. The report may be published on the DEI Hub or HSE website with the agreement of the policy owner.
- 3.4.11 Usually within 3-6 months the DEI team will make contact with the policy owner to review progress with the recommendations identified during the EQIA meeting. Further contact may take place at similar intervals until all recommendations have been implemented (or judged as not possible to implement).
- 3.4.12 Once the final policy, procedure, protocol or guideline is published by the policy owner, a link to where the formal document is stored on the National Central Repository is shared with all staff representatives who participated in the EQIA.

### 3.5. Data protection considerations

The following considerations are relevant under the HSE's General Data Protection Regulations responsibilities:

- 3.5.1 EQIA reports should only identify participants with the agreement of

individuals taking part in the impact assessment. Only the contact details of the agreed policy owner should be provided in the report.

- 3.5.2 The final version of the EQIA report should be transferred as soon as possible to an appropriate secure destination within the DEI Shared Folder at [\\pndcfprdfs001.healthirl.net\dei\\$](\\pndcfprdfs001.healthirl.net\dei$).
- 3.5.3 The EQIA report should only be published on the DEI Hub or DEI web page, or shared externally, with the agreement of the policy owner.
- 3.5.4 EQIA meetings should take place using approved video-conferencing platforms using appropriate secure and encrypted HSE devices (for HSE participants).

### 3.6. Specific roles and responsibilities

3.6.1 All DEI team members are responsible for:

- Sourcing and reviewing relevant evidence for use in the EQIA process
- Participating in EQIA workshops and assisting in the preparation for these
- Recording the outputs of EQIA workshops using the toolkit to prepare the EQIA report
- Facilitating EQIA workshops where appropriate.

3.6.2 The Grade VIII Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Manager with oversight of DEI policy and practice development is responsible for implementing and monitoring this Procedure. They are also responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the planning of EQIAs for workforce policies
- Supporting, training and recruiting a panel of HSE staff representatives with lived experience of a range of diversity characteristics, including disability
- Providing EQIA documentation and content for publication on the DEI Hub and DEI web page
- Monitoring and follow-up of EQIA reports and recommendations, including providing regular update reports on these. Recommendations may be escalated to the National Lead for Diversity Equality and Inclusion for follow-up if necessary
- Quality assurance of the EQIA process.

3.6.2 The National Lead for Diversity Equality and Inclusion is responsible for:

- Forwarding EQIA reports to senior management in HR Leadership and Capability and other parts of the HSE
- Following up escalated recommendations and other issues with

- other functions of the HSE as required
- Liaising with senior managers in National HR and other functions to facilitate broader application of the EQIA process
- Overall oversight and governance of the EQIA process.

## 4.0 Consultation

### 4.1. Stakeholder involvement

The process for conducting EQIAs has been updated in the current Procedure following feedback received from stakeholders who have been involved with completing EQIAs. In addition, members of the DEI team were consulted in the development of this Procedure and were invited to review drafts of the document.

### 4.2. External review

No external review was required.

## 5.0 National implementation plan

### 5.1. Implementation plan listing actions, barriers, facilitators and timelines

- 5.1.1 This Procedure will be implemented within the DEI team through training delivered at DEI team meetings and through one-to-one communication and support. All DEI team members will familiarise themselves with this document.
- 5.1.2 The DEI team will continue to recommend the mandating of the EQIA process as part of the standard policy development and revision procedure within National HR.
- 5.1.3 A separate Terms of Reference exists for the Expert Panel of staff representatives who provide support and input to EQIAs under this Procedure, and this is attached as Appendix 9. The DEI team will continue to expand its panel of staff representatives with lived experience of the relevant diversity characteristics, including disability. New panel members will be recruited from staff groups including staff who have contacted the DEI team with enquiries relating to equality-proofing of HSE policies, and members of the three HSE employee diversity networks.
- 5.1.4 Implementation of this Procedure will be facilitated by all DEI team members following the steps outlined in this document in order to implement a consistent methodology for completing EQIAs. Implementation will also be facilitated by engaging with relevant

stakeholder groups including policy owners and staff representatives to support completion of individual EQIAs. Barriers to implementation may include lack of availability of relevant stakeholders to contribute to EQIAs.

5.1.5 The revised version of this Procedure is in place from 28 January 2026.

## 5.2. Resource implications

The resources necessary to implement this Procedure include:

- Use of collaboration platforms such as MS Teams and Webex
- DEI team availability
- EQIA participant availability
- Irish Sign Language Interpreter (ISL) supports.

## 5.3. Describe the structure and governance of your national implementation team.

The HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion team has responsibility for implementing this Procedure. This team is part of the HSE's Leadership & Capability function within National Human Resources. The structure of this team is as follows:

- 1 National Lead, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (General Manager)
- 2 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Managers (Grade VIII)
- 2 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Officers (Grade VII)

## 5.4. List tools and resources developed to support local implementation of your National 3PG.

Stakeholder collaboration channels:

- MS Teams
- Webex
- Zoom
- HSE Email

Promotional channels:

- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion webpage
- HSE All Staff Update emails
- HSE social media channels
- Health Matters

EQIA documentation:

- EQIA tool (Appendix 8)
- Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel of Staff Representatives (Appendix 9)
- Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for Policy Owners (2025) (Appendix 10)
- Equality Impact Assessments: Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix

11)

### 5.5. Expected date of full implementation of your National 3PG

This revised Procedure will be implemented from 28 January 2026.

## 6.0 Governance and approval

Governance of this document sits with the DEI team. The National Lead for DEI approves the content of this Procedure.

## 7.0 Communication and dissemination plan

- 7.1 This Procedure is primarily for the use of the DEI team.
- 7.2 The document will be made available for access by all team members on the DEI team's shared folder.
- 7.3 The document may be shared with key partner agencies and stakeholders for the purpose of sharing good practice.
- 7.4 A written guide to the EQIA concept, tool and process has been developed and is available at the [DEI web page](#). It is also attached as Appendix 10.
- 7.5 Staff participants in EQIAs may be offered a face-to-face/virtual/telephone training briefing by the DEI team.
- 7.6 EQIA guides and training materials will be provided in accessible formats and adapted as required for employees with specific accessibility requirements.

## 8.0 Sustainability

### 8.1. Describe the plan for national monitoring and audit

#### EQIAs are monitored in the following ways:

- 8.1.1 The recommendations arising from an EQIA are logged in individual EQIA reports, along with the person responsible and a likely timescale for completion of actions arising from the recommendations.
- 8.1.2 Recommendations are monitored by the DEI team. A member of the team will contact the policy owner at regular intervals, typically every 3-6 months, seeking updates on whether or not a recommendation has been completed. Policy owners may be

requested to provide an explanation if a recommendation has not been implemented.

- 8.1.3 On occasions where a recommendation cannot reasonably be completed due to a change in circumstances or because it has been superseded, the DEI team member will make a note of this.
- 8.1.4 The relevant DEI team member may escalate recommendations to the National Lead where it has not been possible to secure an update from the policy owner, or where an outcome is not in line with the original EQIA report.
- 8.1.5 An EQIA monitoring report will be prepared at least once per annum, listing completed recommendations as well as those outstanding for any reason. This report will allow measurement of the effectiveness of the EQIA process as a whole. The report also highlights trends in equality-proofing, identifies issues of particular interest and presents overall numbers including the number of EQIAs completed.
- 8.1.5 Auditing of EQIAs is conducted at least annually. Audits of a proportion of EQIA reports will review the quality of these documents, and identify any potential amendments to the EQIA toolkit and associated documentation. Auditing may also identify issues relating to the level of participation in EQIA workshops. The recommendations of the audit will contribute to ongoing Quality Improvement activities within the DEI team.
- 8.1.6 A formal evaluation of the EQIA process is conducted at least once every three years. This evaluation will include a review of the EQIAs completed during the review period (including stakeholder participation and recommendations and outcomes), feedback from participants (including both policy owners and Expert Panel members), and any recommendations for improvements to the EQIA process. These evaluation reports will be published on the DEI webpage.

## 8.2. National audit tool

A national audit tool is not required for this Procedure as it has been created for internal use within the DEI team.

## 9.0 Review / update

### 9.1. Next review date

#### 9.1.1 Procedure for the update of this Procedure

This is a controlled document and must always be accessed from the [HSE National Central Repository](#). Whilst printing is permitted, printed copies are not controlled. Controlled documents must never be saved to secondary electronic/other locations which are accessible by staff or the public.

This document is reviewed every three years or more often if required.  
The next date for revision is 1 May 2028.

### 9.1.2 Method for amending Procedure if new evidence emerges

This document may be amended at any time by the relevant DEI team member. Approval responsibility is with the National Lead for DEI.

### 9.1.3 Completion of version control update on cover sheet

The National Lead for DEI is responsible for amending the front sheet of this document.

## 10.0 References

- How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023
- HSE People Strategy 2025-2027
- HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2027

## 11.0 Glossary of terms

**DEI:** Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

**Diversity characteristic:** a characteristic of a person defined as a protected “ground” under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021 and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. There are nine diversity grounds.

**EQIA:** an acronym for Equality Impact Assessment

**EQIA staff representatives:** a group of HSE staff representing a range of diversity characteristics, geographical areas, grades and disciplines who have been trained in how to equality-proof HR policies

**Equality Impact Assessment:** a phrase used to describe a process for enhancing the extent to which a policy, plan or decision addresses diversity, equality and inclusion. Also referred to as “equality-proofing”.

**3PG/PPPG:** Policy, Procedure, Protocol and/or Guideline

**Policy:** often will also include plans and key decisions

**Policy owner:** the person or department with responsibility for developing, updating, reviewing and implementing a policy

**Positive duty:** also known as the Public Sector Duty, this legislation places a requirement on public sector

organisations in the State to take proactive steps to eliminate the potential for discrimination, rather than addressing such problems retrospectively. For more information see [the IHREC website](#).

## 12.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1: Membership of Development Group
- Appendix 2: Membership of Approval Governance Group
- Appendix 3: Conflict of Interest Declaration Form
- Appendix 4: Sample implementation plan template
- Appendix 5: National Audit Tool
- Appendix 6: Checklist
- Appendix 7: Signature sheet
- Appendix 8: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) toolkit
- Appendix 9: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for Staff Representatives (2025)
- Appendix 10: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for Policy Owners (2025)
- Appendix 11: Equality Impact Assessments in the HSE: Frequently Asked Questions

Please note that Appendices 1-7 are not included in the current Procedure. Templates for these appendices can be found in the HSE National Central Repository.

## Appendix 8: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) toolkit

### 1. About the EQIA

Name of policy, plan or decision	
Date of EQIA	
People present	Facilitator: Attendees:
Evidence available at the time of the EQIA	

### 2. About the policy, plan or decision being assessed

Person/department responsible for policy, plan or decision (give contact details)	
What will change as a result of this policy, plan or decision? (in summary)	
Who will be affected by the policy, plan or decision (e.g. all staff, staff from one discipline, candidates for jobs in one area)	

### 3. About the impacts of the policy, plan or decision being assessed

What will be different for people with the characteristics below as a result of the policy, plan or decision?	Impact
---	--------

Age (e.g. younger people, older people)	
Civil Status (relationship status)	
Disability (include long term and periodic conditions)	
Ethnicity and race	
Family status (e.g. people with or without children; caring responsibilities)	
Gender	
Religion	
Sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex)	

Traveller status	
General impacts on diversity, equality and inclusion	

4. Summary of positive impacts

Short statement summarising main positive impacts on equality of the policy, plan or decision here	
--	--

5. Summary of negative impacts

Short statement summarising main negative impacts on equality of the policy, plan or decision here	
--	--

## 6. Recommendations

What actions need to be carried out to:

- Promote the positive impacts on equality more widely
- Eliminate or mitigate the negative impacts on equality

Recommendation 1			
Affecting who? (list the diversity grounds affected)	Timescale	Responsibility	Recommendation complete? (reason if not complete)

Recommendation 2			
Affecting who? (list the diversity grounds affected)	Timescale	Responsibility	Recommendation complete? (reason if not complete)

Recommendation 3			
Affecting who? (list the diversity grounds affected)	Timescale	Responsibility	Recommendation complete? (reason if not complete)

Recommendation 4			
Affecting who? (list the diversity grounds affected)	Timescale	Responsibility	Recommendation complete? (reason if not complete)

## 7. Signoff

I confirm that the actions above will be taken within the timescales shown (as far as is reasonably possible). I understand that a member of the Diversity, Equality & Inclusion team will be in contact with me to monitor the outcomes of this EQIA.

Signature:	
Name:	
Position:	
Date:	
Email:	
Telephone:	

## Appendix 9: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel of Staff Representatives (2025)

### Background

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is the process used by the HSE to enhance the diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) content of workplace policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines. The process may also be used to equality-proof key decisions and strategies impacting upon the workforce. EQIA is a well-established, systematic and collaborative approach to enhancing policies, plans and decisions. It is used in a number of jurisdictions in the UK<sup>10</sup> and Europe<sup>11</sup> to build equality into day-to-day practice. Although its use is not yet well established in Ireland, it is promoted as a key step in building a culture of equality in the workplace by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC):

“An equality and human rights impact assessment is carried out on a policy or plan [ideally] at design stage. It seeks to ensure that the policy or plan is compliant with non-discrimination and human rights standards, can take account of diversity, and will advance equality. It tests for potential negative impact and identifies corrective action to redesign the policy or plan. Where redesign is not an option, it involves identifying mitigating actions to address the potential negative impact.”<sup>12</sup>

### HSE policies

The HSE currently has a range of national HR policies in place, ranging from the standard contract of terms and conditions to specific policies addressing dignity at work, smoking in the workplace and sharps injuries. A large number of other policies impact on the day-to-day work of employees across the HSE. Many of these policies have the potential to impact upon DEI in the workplace, either positively or negatively, in ways that are often not immediately apparent.

### Strategic context

As a public sector body, the HSE is subject to a range of legal duties related to DEI. These include:

- The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021, which provide employees with comprehensive protection against discrimination on the nine diversity grounds (age, civil status, disability, family status, gender, membership of the Traveller community, race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation).
- The Disability Act 2005, Part 5 of which places a duty on the HSE and other public bodies to take proactive steps to address inequality in the recruitment and employment of disabled people and provides for a target of 3% of the workforce with a disability. This is expected to increase to 6% from 2025.
- The Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014, which places a positive duty on public sector bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate

---

<sup>10</sup> In Wales: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-impact-assessments>

<sup>11</sup> For example in Italy: [https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pubblicazioni/corsi-convegni/palestini\\_equita2019/@\\_@download/publicationFile/Palestini\\_2019\\_5\\_10.pdf](https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pubblicazioni/corsi-convegni/palestini_equita2019/@_@download/publicationFile/Palestini_2019_5_10.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> IHREC at <https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-for-employers/building-a-culture-of-human-rights-and-equality-in-the-workplace/>

discrimination, promote equality, and protect Human Rights, in their day-to-day work.

The HSE's People Strategy 2025-2027 is the overarching national strategy setting out how the HSE will develop the way it recruits, plans, leads, employs and develops its workforce. A number of priorities set out in the People Strategy either explicitly or implicitly support the enhancement of DEI measures.

### **Importance of staff participation in EQIA**

EQIA is a collaborative, participative process and the quality of the discussion very much depends on the range of perspectives and experiences included. For this reason it is strongly recommended that a reasonable number of staff representatives with lived experience or good understanding of the relevant diversity grounds are invited to take part in the EQIA. For example, a HR policy likely to have a significant impact on staff with disabilities might be impact assessed by a group including several employees with different disabilities, as well as the relevant HR staff.

### **Expert Panel recruitment and selection**

- An Expert Panel of staff representatives will be recruited based on their area of expertise or lived experiences of one or more of the nine diversity grounds.
- The DEI team will arrange for Expert Panel participation as appropriate based on the subject matter of the policy or guideline being assessed.
- Expert Panel members may participate in three to four workshops per year.

### **Roles of EQIA Expert Panel**

- To take part in EQIA workshops and provide evidence and insights from lived experiences relating to one or more of the nine diversity grounds.
- To review the potential positive and negative impacts of a HSE policy or guideline in relation to one or more of the nine diversity grounds.
- To provide feedback on EQIA workshop reports.
- To provide feedback and suggestions for improvement for EQIA workshops.

### **Training and communication**

- EQIA Expert Panel members will receive EQIA training from the DEI team.
- EQIA Expert Panel members will receive periodic updates from the DEI team on outputs from EQIA workshops and discussions with policy owners.

### **Confidentiality**

GDPR principles are respected at all times during the EQIA process. No evidence provided by an Expert Panel member and included in the EQIA report is attributed to an individual panel member. The names of Expert Panel members in attendance at an EQIA workshop can be redacted or initials provided on request.

## Appendix 10: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Terms of Reference for Policy Owners (2025)

### Background

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is the process used by the HSE to enhance the diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) content of workplace policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines. The process may also be used to equality-proof key decisions and strategies impacting upon the workforce. EQIA is a well-established, systematic and collaborative approach to enhancing policies, plans and decisions. It is used in a number of jurisdictions in the UK<sup>13</sup> and Europe<sup>14</sup> to build equality into day-to-day practice. Although its use is not yet well established in Ireland, it is promoted as a key step in building a culture of equality in the workplace by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC):

“An equality and human rights impact assessment is carried out on a policy or plan [ideally] at design stage. It seeks to ensure that the policy or plan is compliant with non-discrimination and human rights standards, can take account of diversity, and will advance equality. It tests for potential negative impact and identifies corrective action to redesign the policy or plan. Where redesign is not an option, it involves identifying mitigating actions to address the potential negative impact.”<sup>15</sup>

### HSE policies

The HSE currently has a range of national HR policies in place, ranging from the standard contract of terms and conditions to specific policies addressing dignity at work, smoking in the workplace and sharps injuries. A large number of other policies impact on the day-to-day work of employees across the HSE. Many of these policies have the potential to impact upon DEI in the workplace, either positively or negatively, in ways that are often not immediately apparent.

### Strategic context

As a public sector body, the HSE is subject to a range of legal duties related to DEI. These include:

- The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021, which provide employees with comprehensive protection against discrimination on the nine diversity grounds (age, civil status, disability, family status, gender, membership of the Traveller community, race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation).
- The Disability Act 2005, Part 5 of which places a duty on the HSE and other public bodies to take proactive steps to address inequality in the recruitment and employment of disabled people and provides for a target of 3% of the workforce with a disability. This is expected to increase to 6% from 2024.
- The Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014, which places a positive duty on public sector bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate

---

<sup>13</sup> In Wales: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-impact-assessments>

<sup>14</sup> For example in Italy: [https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pubblicazioni/corsi-convegni/palestini\\_equita2019/@\\_@download/publicationFile/Palestini\\_2019\\_5\\_10.pdf](https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pubblicazioni/corsi-convegni/palestini_equita2019/@_@download/publicationFile/Palestini_2019_5_10.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> IHREC at <https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-for-employers/building-a-culture-of-human-rights-and-equality-in-the-workplace/>

discrimination, promote equality, and protect Human Rights, in their day-to-day work.

The HSE's People Strategy 2025-2027 is the overarching national strategy setting out how the HSE will develop the way it recruits, plans, leads, employs and develops its workforce. A number of priorities set out in the People Strategy either explicitly or implicitly support the enhancement of DEI measures.

## **Policy owner participation in EQIA**

"Policy owners" in this instance include any departments, teams or groups preparing a policy, procedure, protocol, guideline, strategy, plan or recommendation relating to the HSE workforce. Policy owners are invited to contact the DEI team at [diversity.HR@hse.ie](mailto:diversity.HR@hse.ie) to request an EQIA of their draft policy. The EQIA will be facilitated by the DEI team, who will source relevant participation from key stakeholders. Typically, an EQIA will be completed by 6-10 stakeholders including the policy owner(s), a DEI team representative, and a number of expert participants such as staff representatives with lived experience of a range of relevant diversity characteristics.

## **Staff participation in EQIA**

EQIA is a collaborative, participative process and the quality of the discussion very much depends on the range of perspectives and experiences included. For this reason it is strongly recommended that a reasonable number of staff representatives with lived experience or good understanding of the relevant diversity grounds are invited to take part in each EQIA. For example, a HR policy likely to have a significant impact on staff with disabilities might be impact assessed by a group including several employees with different disabilities, as well as the relevant HR staff.

The DEI team has formed a panel of staff representatives based on their area of expertise or lived experiences of one or more of the nine diversity grounds. The DEI team will arrange for staff representative participation as appropriate based on the subject matter of the policy or guideline being assessed. Staff representatives will be invited to review the draft document(s) and attend an EQIA workshop to review potential positive and negative impacts in relation to one or more of the nine diversity grounds.

## **Roles of policy owners**

- To approach the DEI team to initiate the EQIA process on a policy, procedure, protocol, guideline, strategy or plan that impacts the HSE workforce.
- To have a briefing discussion with the DEI team in order to clarify the rationale, scope, process and potential outcomes of the EQIA process, as well as probable timescales.
- To support the DEI team in identifying and sourcing relevant preparatory materials to circulate to the EQIA staff representatives in advance of the EQIA workshop. These will include a draft version of the relevant policy document. The policy owner is not required to attend the EQIA workshop; however, this may be facilitated on request.
- Following the EQIA workshop, to attend a feedback session the DEI team, where the outcome of the discussions from the workshop and a draft of the EQIA report are shared. This feedback session may be facilitated by phone, video

- conference, or email, depending on the preference of the policy owner.
- To agree on a list of recommendations, person(s) responsible and timescales for their implementation. These will be included in the final version of the EQIA report.
  - To sign off on the final version of the EQIA report, which may be published on the DEI Hub on HSeLanD or on the HSE website with the agreement of the policy owner.
  - To follow up on the agreed recommendations within the agreed timescales. Usually within 3-6 months the DEI team will contact the policy owner to review progress with the recommendations identified during the EQIA meeting. Further contact may take place at similar intervals until all recommendations have been implemented (or judged as not possible to implement).
  - To provide feedback and suggestions for improvements for the EQIA process.

## Appendix 11: Equality Impact Assessments in the HSE: Frequently Asked Questions

### What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is carried out on a policy or plan to ensure it takes account of diversity and equality. An EQIA looks at potential positive and negative impacts of a policy or plan in relation to nine diversity grounds (age, civil status, disability, family status, gender, membership of the Traveller community, race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation).

The HSE carries out EQIAs on policies, procedures, protocols, guidelines, strategies or plans that impact the HSE's workforce.

### Who is involved in an Equality Impact Assessment?

- ▶ HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) team: The DEI team facilitates the assessments, prepares the reports, and monitors the recommendations.
- ▶ Policy owners: These are the departments, teams or groups preparing a policy or plan relating to HSE workforce. To request an EQIA, please contact [diversity.HR@hse.ie](mailto:diversity.HR@hse.ie).
- ▶ Expert Panel: This is a group of staff representatives with lived experience or good understanding of one or more of the nine diversity grounds. Staff representatives receive training in taking part in EQIAs. To join this panel, please contact [diversity.HR@hse.ie](mailto:diversity.HR@hse.ie).

### What are the steps in an Equality Impact Assessment?

- ▶ The policy owner(s) contacts the DEI team to request an EQIA of their policy or plan. They agree a process for completing the assessment.
- ▶ The DEI team invites representatives from the Expert Panel to attend an online workshop. The panel assesses the potential positive and negative impacts of the policy or plan on the nine diversity grounds. They use a structured questionnaire (the EQIA tool) to complete this assessment. The DEI team drafts a report and sends it to the panel for feedback.
- ▶ The DEI team gives feedback from the workshop and a copy of the draft report to the policy owners. They agree on recommendations and timescales. The DEI team prepares a final version of the report.
- ▶ The DEI team and policy owner(s) follow up on the recommendations.

### What is the EQIA tool?

The HSE EQIA tool is a structured questionnaire, used to guide the impact assessment process. The following steps are considered:

- ▶ What is the policy or plan trying to achieve?

- ▶ What is the impact on people with diverse characteristics?
- ▶ How can likely negative impacts be eliminated or mitigated?
- ▶ How can likely positive impacts be maximised and promoted?
- ▶ What actions are required to enhance the impact of the policy on DEI, and by whom?

### How can I find out more?

Please contact [diversity.HR@hse.ie](mailto:diversity.HR@hse.ie) to find out more about how you can take part in EQIAs.