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| **INITIAL EQUALITY SCREENING FORM** |
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| DIVISION**:** | Skills and Competitiveness | **TEAM:** | Attract In / Attract Out |
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| **Name of Policy/Decision/Practice to be Equality Screened** |
| Alternative Talent Pathways |
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| **Is it New or Revised?** | New |
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| **Who Does the Policy Effect, e.g Service Users/Staff:** | Service Users |
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| **Question 1** – Define the aim of the Programme or . What is it trying to achieve? (Intended aims/outcomes) |
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| The aim of the programme is to address labour market shortages by connecting employers with underrepresented talent pools such as newcomers, individuals living with a disability, neurodivergent individuals, carers and women returners. By signposting and facilitating relationships, the programme seeks to challenge traditional recruitment models and support businesses in accessing untapped talent. Through signposting, networking and partnership building with relevant stakeholders and organisations, the programme facilitates meaningful connections that lead to job outcomes and addressing the labour shortages across Northern Ireland.  |
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| **Question 2** – Does the Programme or have the potential to have an impact on the promotion of equality impact for any of the Section 75 groupings? (See Question 4 for list of equality groups.) | /No |
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| If no go to Question 6 – Good Relations. | If yes please continue. |
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| Yes, the programme has strong potential to positively impact the promotion of equality for several of the Section 75 groupings. By connecting employers with economically inactive individuals from a range of underrepresented backgrounds, the programme actively supports:* Racial and ethnic groups: through engagement with refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minority communities who often face barriers to employment.
* Individuals living with a disability/neurodivergent individuals: by highlighting talent amongst those living with a disability and linking employers with organisations that support their inclusion.
* Caring responsibilities / women returners: by supporting individuals such as carers in their return to work.
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| **Consideration of Available Date/Research** |
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| **Question 3** – What  is there available – statistics or perception – to help you decide who the Programme or might affect the most? i.e. What evidence, qualitative or quantitative, have you gathered to inform your decision making process? |
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| There is a wide body of evidence, both statistical and anecdotal that highlights the scale of economic inactivity and labour shortages in Northern Ireland. Quantitative evidence includes figures from NISRA, The Skills Barometer Report and the Office for National Statistics that highlight economic inactivity in Northern Ireland, particularly suggesting that a high percentage of economically inactive individuals would work if the conditions were right. Qualitative evidence includes:* Feedback from employers expressing difficulties in sourcing candidates through traditional recruitment channels
* Conversations with stakeholders and organisations working directly with economically inactive individuals, reporting interest from these individuals that they would return to work if the conditions were right
* Case studies demonstrating the benefits of hiring individuals from underrepresented groups
* Case studies and lived experiences demonstrating the potential and readiness from these underrepresented groups to re-join the workforce
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| **Assessment of Impact** |
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| **Question 4** – Explain if what you plan to do is likely to be perceived as having a high, medium or low impact upon the 9 Equality groupings according to their needs. Also if what you are planning to do is likely to be perceived as having a positive or negative effect upon the 3 different groups in relation to the promotion of good relations. |
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| **9 Equality Groups** | **Perceived Impact****High – (H)****Medium - (M)****Low – (L)** | **Why this rating?** | **Promotion of Good Relations****(Yes/No)** | **Why this rating?** |
| Religious Belief | Low | This program does not directly address religion but supports inclusive employment practices which may indirectly benefit individuals of all faiths | Yes | Promoting inclusion across all backgrounds can support greater understanding and collaboration |
| Racial/Ethnic Group | High | The program actively supports engagement with refugees and ethnic minorities who face barriers to employment | Yes | Encouraging employers to access diverse talent pools promotes positive experiences in the workplace.  |
| Political Opinion | Low | The program is apolitical and does not engage with political beliefs. | Yes | Promoting shared goals can reduce social division and foster respect despite differing political views. However, this group is not targeted under promotion of good relations. |
| Age | High | Older workers, including early retirees, are often economically inactive and are a key group being supported back into work. | Yes | Encouraging multi-generational workplaces can assist in building understanding and reduce age related bias/assumptions. However, this group is not targeted in relation to promotion of good relations. |
| Gender | High | The program targets groups like women returners who face gender-specific barriers to re-entering the workforce | Yes | Increasing visibility and opportunities for women helps normalise gender equality, however this group is not targeted under promotion of good relations. |
| Marital Status | Low | While not a primary focus, this programme may indirectly support single parents and carers. | No | This group is not targeted under promotion of good relations. |
| Sexual Orientation | Low | The programme does not focus on this category but promotes inclusive hiring practices that benefit all. | No | This group is not targeted under promotion of good relations. |
| Disability | High | A key target group is individuals living with a disability who are significantly underrepresented in the workforce | Yes | While we intend to promote awareness, accessibility and inclusion in the workplace, this group is not targeted under promotion of good relations. |
| Dependants | High | Carers with dependents are among the target groups for support | No | While support is available, this group is not targeted under promotion of good relations. |
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| **Opportunities to better promote Equality of Opportunity** |
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| **Question 5** – Are there steps which could be taken to reduce any adverse impact upon the Section 75 groups as identified in Question 4? |
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| While the programme is designed to have a positive impact on equality and inclusion, there are several proactive steps that can be taken to ensure that no Section 75 groups are inadvertently excluded or disadvantaged. 1. We can widen the range of referral partners and stakeholders, ensuring that the organisations we partner with include those directly working with underrepresented groups so the full spectrum of economically inactive individuals can be reached.
2. We can use diverse and inclusive language and visuals in all communication, events, promotional material, memos etc to ensure that no group feels the program does not include them.
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| **Good Relations** |
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| **Question 6** – Is there an opportunity in what you are trying to do to better promote Good Relations between the groups relating to Religious Belief or Racial/Ethnic Group or Political Opinion? |
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| There is a clear opportunity to promote good relations between groups relating to religious belief and racial/ethnic backgrounds. The program fosters cross-sector collaboration between employers and community organisations working with diverse groups. By supporting inclusive hiring and raising awareness of the value of diverse talent, the programme encourages interaction and understanding with individuals from different backgrounds. By actively connecting employers with individuals from a wide range of communities, the programme brings people together and creates new connections, breaks down barriers, challenges assumptions and fosters mutual respect.While political opinion is not directly targeted, encouraging inclusive recruitment can reduce division by building common ground through work, shared values and economic participation.  |

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| **Consultation** |
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| **Question 7** – Tell us about who have talked to about your proposals internally or externally to help you decide if the needs further or no further equality investigation. |
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| Pamela Marron |
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| **Question 8** – In light of the above should the be |
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| X | Screened Out – No Equality Issues – Please provide rationale for this decision. |
| The programme directly targets Section 75 groups including newcomers, refugees, ethnic minority communities, individuals living with a disability, neurodivergent individuals, women returners and carers. It presents an opportunity to promote equality and good relations across organisations in Northern Ireland and is actively aiming to improve outcomes for underrepresented groups and change employers behaviours. We do not see any barriers to engagement. |
| [ ]  | Screened Out with some adjustments. – What adjustments have you made? |
| N/A |
| [ ]  | Screened In for a deeper level of analysis of what is being considered or intended to be undertaken. (EQIA) – Please provide rationale for this decision. |
| N/A |
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| Signed: | Joanne McMullan | Date: | 30/08/25 |
|  | Policy /Programme Owner |  |  |
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| Approved | Pamela Marron | Date: | 30/08/25 |
|  | Equality Manager |  |  |
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| Modifications made. | Date: |       |
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| Date: |       |
| Approved by Equality Manager |  |  |