



Public
Prosecution
Service

Independent
Fair
Effective

2026-2029

**Equality
Action
Plan**

You can download this document from our website at www.ppsni.gov.uk.

The document can also be made available in an alternative format, such as large print, paper copy, Audio CD/MP3, Braille, Computer Disk and other languages.

If you would like an alternative format, please contact the person named below to discuss your request:

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PPS Purpose

Our Mission

Delivering an independent, fair and effective prosecution service.

Our Vision

Working for a safe and just society

Our Values

Doing the right thing

Consistently demonstrating integrity, independence, fairness and impartiality in everything that we do. Being accountable by always following through on our own commitments in delivering justice.

Everyone matters

One PPS, helping people achieve their potential, caring deeply about everyone's wellbeing whilst displaying mutual respect for each other as well as everyone within our society.

Succeeding together

One team, being resilient in difficult times, pulling together, supporting each other, taking real pride in everything we do, partnering, innovating and collaborating with others.

Having a strong voice

Having a strong voice for change within the criminal justice system, standing our ground for what is right by speaking the truth and holding ourselves (and others) accountable.

Making a difference

Driving change, minimising delay and working for a more effective justice system. Delivering a just and safe society for victims and adding value through independent, fair prosecutions.

Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act. The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) is fully committed to the promotion of equality and good relations, as set out in the Act.¹

The Public Prosecution Service

Role of the PPS

The PPS is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland with responsibility for taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police and other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not. Additional services are also available which enhance effectiveness, including the provision of prosecutorial and pre-charge advice and an enhanced service to victims and witnesses. Options are also available to allow prosecutors to deal with offenders other than through prosecution including adult and restorative cautions, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the National Driver Alertness Scheme.

All staff, other than the Director and Deputy Director, are members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. It should be noted that responsibility for the development of policies relating to the recruitment and management of our workforce, as with all Northern Ireland Civil Servants, is the responsibility of the Department of Finance (DoF).

¹ It should be noted that matters relating to the prosecution of offences are excluded from Section 75 by Section 38 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

PPS Equality Structures

The PPS works with its criminal justice partners as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland (CJSNI) to tackle inequalities across the categories specified under Section 75 and to build good relations between persons of differing beliefs, political opinion or racial group. This is achieved through a range of operational mechanisms and policies, and through working in partnership with key stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary and community sectors.

As part of our commitment to our Section 75 obligations, the PPS Management board have appointed the Senior Assistant Director (SAD) for Resources and Change as the PPS Equality Champion, their role is to oversee all aspects of the process and they are accountable to the Management Board and the Director.

The Equality Champion represents the PPS on the Diversity Champions Network (DCN), which brings together senior representatives from across the NI Civil Service and which aims to drive forward the equality and diversity agenda across the system. They also chair the Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), which is made up of representatives from across the Service. The group monitors progress towards meeting the PPS's equality and diversity agenda, ensuring that Section 75 obligations are fulfilled and reporting progress to the PPS Management Board.

The Equality Officer works within the PPS Policy and Information Unit and has day to day responsibility for co-ordinating Section 75 statutory obligations across the PPS. They take the lead role in the promotion and embedding of an equality culture within the PPS, raising awareness of Section 75 through induction or other appropriate training provision, ensuring that the Service's working arrangements and policies engender equality best practice. They

also sit on the Criminal Justice Equality Network, the purpose of which is to explore cross-sector equality issues.

All senior managers across the PPS are responsible for ensuring that Section 75 obligations are fully complied with in developing, reviewing and implementing policy decisions within their remit.

About this Action Plan

This document sets out the department's response to Life and Times Survey May 2025, NICS People Survey 2025, PPS complaints and assessment by the Service of those areas where outcomes could be improved in terms of our Section 75 responsibilities aligned to our current Business Plan priorities.

This 3-year Action Plan has been produced in accordance with the commitments set out in the PPS's Equality Scheme and has been subject to public consultation.

Next steps

The PPS will monitor progress on the delivery of its action measures and update the plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to its functions and duties.

While the Service will work to meet the specific deliverables set out in this plan, efforts to promote equality across the Section 75 categories will continue in all aspects of the Service's business.

The PPS will also report formally to the Equality Commission as part of its Annual Progress Report.

PPS Equality Action Plan 2026 - 2029

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver and improve services and support provided to victims and witnesses, across all section 75 groups in Northern Ireland	1.	Each victim and witness will have a Needs Assessment undertaken by their Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) Case Officer and have an opportunity to highlight any difficulties they are experiencing or support they may require.	All section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of VWCU	Ongoing
	2.	PPS will lead on a review of the current needs assessment policies and processes within the VWCU, ensuring they are delivered consistently and in a trauma-informed way. We will also consult with stakeholders and take advice on any suggested improvements to the design of the needs assessment process.	All section 75 groups.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Head of VWCU	31 March 2027
	3.	PPS will continue to engage with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other partner organisations regarding the potential enhancement of the broader VWCU Needs Assessment Service.	All section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of VWCU	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver and improve services and support provided to victims and witnesses, across all section 75 groups in Northern Ireland (Continued)	4.	Special Measures will be considered and applied for in cases where it is deemed appropriate.	All section 75 groups, in particular: Age, Gender, Disability, Dependants.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Directors	Ongoing
	5.	PPS will conduct a review (in partnership with the PSNI) of all existing processes and procedures in order to enhance the timely identification of special measures requirements.	All section 75 groups, but in particular: Age, Gender, Disability, Dependants.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Head of Policy and Information	31 March 2027
	6.	PPS will continue to work with the DOJ and other partners to ensure that the Remote Evidence Centres (RECs) are being utilised effectively, with additional training and guidance provided for prosecutors and other staff as required.	All section 75 groups but in particular: Age, Disability, Dependants.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Directors / Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver and improve services and support provided to victims and witnesses, across all section 75 groups in Northern Ireland (Continued)	7.	PPS will provide ongoing support for the Registered Intermediaries (RI) Scheme in the Crown and Magistrates' Courts.	All section 75 groups but in particular: Age, Disability.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Directors / Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing
	8.	PPS will respond to the DOJ-led review into the use of Victim Personal Statements, taking the steps necessary to enhance our processes and procedures in response to agreed recommendations.	All section 75 groups.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Head of Policy and Information	To agreed timescales
	9.	PPS will publish a new Sexual Offences Strategy (jointly with PSNI) and ensure that all agreed actions in respect of Outcome 1 (Support to Victims) are delivered in line with our action plan targets.	All section 75 groups but in particular: Gender, Age.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Director Serious Crime Unit / Head of Policy and Information	To agreed timescales
	10.	PPS will engage with partners to fully implement the Protocol for expediting cases involving serious sexual offences against children under the age of 13 and will work to extend the Protocol further to include cases involving serious sexual offences against children under the age of 16.	All section 75 groups but in particular: Age, Gender.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Director Serious Crime Unit	To agreed timescales

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver and improve services and support provided to victims and witnesses, across all section 75 groups in Northern Ireland (Continued)	11.	PPS will establish a new Sexual and Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategic Oversight Board to provide a governance and oversight framework for our work in tackling sexual and domestic abuse. The Board will be complemented by an Independent Consultation Group to include representatives from statutory organisations and voluntary groups in order to ensure that victims receive the best possible support and encouragement to stay engaged in the criminal justice process.	All section 75 groups but in particular: Gender, Age.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Director Serious Crime Unit / Head of Policy and Information	30 June 2026
	12.	PPS will work with partners to implement a new Restorative Justice (RJ) Pilot and roll out the initiative across NI as required.	All Section 75 groups.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Head of Policy and Information	To agreed timescales
	13.	PPS will respond to the findings and recommendations arising from Criminal Justice Inspection NI's thematic reports.	All Section 75 groups.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Head of Policy and Information	To agreed timescales

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver and improve services and support provided to victims and witnesses, across all section 75 groups in Northern Ireland	14.	PPS will implement all legislative changes relating to victims and witnesses introduced by Parliament at Westminster and the NI Assembly, including any new provisions set out in the Sentencing Bill, Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill and the Crime and Policing Bill.	All section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	To agreed timescales
Increase communication, satisfaction and confidence among section 75 groups and members of the wider public	15.	The findings of the Life and Times Survey will be published in a Statistical Bulletin and considered by the PPS senior Team, with a particular focus on the public perception of the PPS across the various s75 groups.	All section 75 groups.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Head of Policy and Information	Annually
	16.	PPS will monitor and assess feedback / complaints received from service users, and consider relevant s75 data where available.	All section 75 groups.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Increase communication, satisfaction and confidence among section 75 groups and members of the wider public (Continued)	17.	PPS representatives will attend outreach events and meetings to address the perceptions of people in affected S75 groups.	All section 75 groups.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Assistant Directors	Ongoing
	18.	PPS will continue to schedule and host regular meetings of the Stakeholder Engagement Forum (SEF) and invite s75 representative groups to participate.	All section 75 groups.	SAD for Serious Crime and Regions Head of Communications	On a six-monthly basis
	19.	PPS Statistics and Research Team will publish regular Statistical Bulletins covering: (a) PPS casework; (b) Sexual offences; and (c) Hate crime.	All section 75 groups, but in particular: Age, Gender.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Annually
Ensure appropriate access to information	20.	PPS will ensure information on the PPS website and intranet is accessible and available in different formats on request (e.g. Braille, large print, audio etc.).	All section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure appropriate access to information (Continued)	21.	PPS will identify opportunities to deliver key messages and information in a more accessible way, e.g. easy read documents and animations.	All section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing
	22.	PPS will provide information and key updates via social media releases were appropriate.	All Section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing
Improve the range of legal policy guidance available in respect of s75 groups	23.	PPS will publish revised guidance on the prosecution of offences involving electronic communications.	All Section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	30 September 2026
	24.	PPS will provide updates to all key policy statements as required, reflecting changes in legislation, victim and witness provisions and related PPS / criminal justice processes and procedures.	All Section 75 groups.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Increase staff awareness in respect of equality, disability and diversity issues and the importance of promoting equality of opportunity	25.	Mandatory NICS equality and diversity training courses will be completed by all staff.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change Line Managers	Ongoing
	26.	Staff will be provided with opportunities to complete external equality and diversity courses where available.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing
	27.	Staff Network events will be promoted and published on the PPS intranet.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing
	28.	International Days and Weeks (e.g. International Women's Day) and related events will be highlighted on the PPS intranet.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Section 75 Group	Responsibility	Timescale
Manage PPS statutory equality responsibilities and ensure related governance arrangements are effective	29.	The Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission will be completed and published to the required timescale.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information / Equality Officer	Annually
	30.	All New policies and initiatives will be screened and EQIAs completed where appropriate	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change All managers	Ongoing
	31.	PPS will continue to contribute to the NICS Diversity Champions' Network.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing
	32.	The Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) will meet regularly to monitor and discuss equality and disability-related matters.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing
	33.	The EDSG will review the Equality Action Plan on a regular basis and identify new measures as appropriate.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing
	34.	The SAD for Resources and Change will provide regular updates to the Management Board on the work of the EDSG.	All Section 75 groups	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing

Contact Us

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