

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This document fulfils the ICO's requirements to conduct Equality Impact Assessments, as a requirement to have due regard under the Equality Act 2010, S75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the public sector equality duty. This document helps you to assess the equality relevance of a policy or procedure on one or more groups of people with protected characteristics. Guidance is also available for Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs), along with a glossary of issues to consider. The purpose of an EqIA is to ensure that equality issues are identified and mitigated. The guidance and 'issues to consider' documents are intended to assist with this, but they are not a substitute for consultation with people with lived experience of any of the protected characteristics. Therefore, you should, wherever appropriate, consult with the relevant EDI staff networks or other colleagues to discuss potential impacts.

You must read the [guidance](#) and [glossary of issues to consider](#) before completing the document.

Completed EqIAs will be published [on the ICO's website](#).

Summary

Prepared by: RK, Policy Manager

What is the title of this piece of work? Review of the current Special Leave Policy

Briefly describe the overall purpose of this work. There is a need to update the current Special Leave Policy in line with the introduction of the Carer's Leave Act 2023 which came into effect on 06 April 2024. This grants employees the right to take up to one week of leave per year to provide or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need.

Initial screening questions

Q1. Does this work relate to an ICO policy, procedure, working practice or anything broadly similar? This includes both current policies and new policies under development.

Yes. The work involves undertaking a review of our current Special Leave Policy.

*If you answer **No** to this question, you may not need to complete a EqIA.*

Q2. Is this work about the explanation of the laws which the ICO regulates, or about decisions to use or not use any of our regulatory powers (eg monetary penalties, enforcement notices, information notices etc)?

No.

*If you answer **No** to this question, you may not need to complete a EqIA.*

If you answered no to both Q1 and Q2, it is best practice to rationalise why there are no negative impacts to each protected characteristic in the table below.

Impact on people with protected characteristics

Q3. For each of the protected characteristics, you should consider whether there are any **positive impacts** for people with each characteristic and set those out in the table below. If you think there are any **negative impacts**, set those out in the table below **and** explain how you will fully mitigate those impacts. It is best practice to include three mitigations per negative impact. Sign off can only be done with a minimum of two mitigations. If you think there is no impact, please explain why you think that is the case.

| Protected characteristic | Is there likely to be a specific impact on people with this characteristic? | List the mitigations proposed for each impact, stating whether the impact will be reduced or removed. Please state proposed timescale for mitigations. |
|---|---|--|
| Religion or belief | No disproportionate impact identified. | No negative impact identified. |
| Race, nationality or cultural background | In Northern Ireland (NI), there is currently no statutory entitlement to Carer's Leave. The policy applies to all employees of the ICO, including those based in NI. | No negative impact identified. |
| Disabled people | Carer's leave may enhance the support and assistance available to employees who have a responsibility of caring for a dependent who is affected by long term illness or disability. | No negative impact identified. |
| Sexual orientation | No disproportionate impact identified. | No negative impact identified. |
| Sex (see note 1) | Carer's leave is available to all ICO employees. Research shows that women are more likely to take on caring roles than men. | No negative impact identified. |

| Protected characteristic | Is there likely to be a specific impact on people with this characteristic? | List the mitigations proposed for each impact, stating whether the impact will be reduced or removed. Please state proposed timescale for mitigations. |
|---|---|---|
| Age | Carer's leave will assist employees who have specific caring responsibilities. Research shows that carer's are more likely to be over the age of 30, with the peak age being 45-64 years. | No negative impact identified. |
| Gender reassignment (see note 2) | No disproportionate impact identified. | No disproportionate impact identified. |
| Marital status | No disproportionate impact identified. | No disproportionate impact identified. |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Eligible parents can take Carer's Leave, in addition to other family leave entitlements. | No negative impact identified. |
| Political opinions | No disproportionate impact identified. | No negative impact identified. |
| People with dependants | Carer's leave will assist employees who have specific caring responsibilities. | No negative impact identified. |
| People without dependants | No disproportionate impact identified. | No disproportionate impact identified. |
| Socio-economic groups or social classes (see note 3) | We are proposing to offer 5.0 days carer's leave at full pay, which is above statutory legislation requirements. We hope this will reduce financial strain on employees. | |

| Protected characteristic | Is there likely to be a specific impact on people with this characteristic? | List the mitigations proposed for each impact, stating whether the impact will be reduced or removed. Please state proposed timescale for mitigations. |
|--|--|---|
| Multiple protected characteristics (see note 4) | No disproportionate impact identified. | No negative impact identified. |

Note 1: you may also wish to consider gender while considering sex, although gender is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act or s75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Note 2: you may wish to consider the impact on transgender people while considering the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. This includes if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process.

Note 3: Socio-economic group or social class is not a protected characteristic, but we would still like to ensure that we consider the impact of our work in this area.

Note 4: Multiple protected characteristics is an opportunity to consider whether there are issues which affect people with most or all of the protected characteristics, or where there may be different impacts of the same issue on different characteristics (eg the same issue has a positive impact on people with one protected characteristic but a negative impact on people with another protected characteristic).

Q4. The ICO has a number of legal obligations in relation to the provision of Welsh language services. Is this work being delivered in Wales, or to the people of Wales, and if so will there be a need to consider the impact on the Welsh language?

No

*If you answer **Yes or Don't Know** to this question or would like further information, please contact the Welsh Regional office to discuss next steps via wales@ico.org.uk .*

Q5. In interests of best practice, you should consider whether this work may have a negative impact on or contravene any Human Rights. Click this link to find an overview of each of the human rights and further details about each. The Human Rights Act itself is available at this link. Please confirm that you have considered this and set out any actions you will take to mitigate any impacts.

Answer: No negative impacts identified.

Contributing towards the ICO's equality objectives

Q6. How does this work contribute towards the ICO's equality objectives? Please explain contributions, state ways contribution could be increased, or state 'no contribution'.

| Objective | Contribution to objective |
|--|--|
| Objective 1: We will represent the communities and societies we serve We believe that diverse teams make better decisions, boost creativity and innovation, enable greater professional growth and increase our understanding of the communities we regulate. As a workforce, we are | Offering paid carer's leave under the Special Leave Policy supports employees with caring responsibilities, helping us attract and retain colleagues from diverse backgrounds. This strengthens representation within our workforce and ensures we reflect the communities we serve. |

| Objective | Contribution to objective |
|--|--|
| the most effective and have the greatest impact when we are representative and consider different perspectives. | |
| <p>Objective 2: Our culture will be inclusive</p> <p>We're at our best when we support and look out for one another, and when we trust and empower each other to be ourselves. That applies whether it's within the workplace or in the work that we do.</p> <p>We have measures in place to support our diverse workforce, such as reasonable adjustments. However, we will do more to remove the barriers that are preventing people from developing and progressing.</p> | <p>Providing paid carer's leave removes a significant barrier faced by many employees, particularly women where caring responsibilities are more common. This promotes inclusion, equality of opportunity and supports career progression for all.</p> |
| <p>Objective 3: We will better understand the needs of everyone to deliver services that are accessible to all</p> <p>We target our regulatory interventions on the areas of greatest harm and to make a real difference to people's lives. Technological innovation by businesses means the landscape we regulate is constantly transforming. We know we're at our best when we understand the needs of all our customers, including those who experience vulnerability and communities of unmet need.</p> | <p>The Special Leave Policy does not contribute to this objective.</p> |

Monitoring and evaluation

Q7. What arrangements are in place, or will be put in place, to monitor and evaluate the impact of the work on equality?

Answer: The policy will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Q8. How long will these arrangements be in place?

Answer: Ongoing.

Q9. When do you intend to review this EqIA? This should usually be done upon any change that is made to the original piece of work that this EqIA is for.

Answer: A review will take place alongside any review or amendment to the Special Leave Policy.

Publication

Q10. As stated above and in the guidance, we intend to publish all completed EqIAs on the ICO's website. Please provide detail of any necessary redactions and the intended publication date.

You should also review the wording to ensure that it is as clear as possible for any staff or public to read.

Answer: No redactions required.

Governance and sign-off

The person who completes this document must be content that all potential equality issues have been identified and considered, that appropriate monitoring will be in place and the publication issues have been considered.

Please tick here to confirm that you have consulted with other colleagues and those it would largely impact where appropriate. ☒

Please state here who has completed the EqIA:

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| <i>Signed by:</i> RK, Policy Manager <i>Date:</i> 04 November 2025 |
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Approved by line manager:

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| <i>Signed by:</i> SM, Director of People Services <i>Date:</i> 05 November 2025 |
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You **must** send your completed form to corporategovernance@ico.org.uk for storage and publication.

The EDI Board provides overall assurance that the EqIA process is operating effectively, but it is not for them to review or approve EqIAs.

If you have identified any negative impacts to any protected characteristics that you cannot fully mitigate, please contact Inclusion and Wellbeing for advice via inclusionandwellbeingteam@ico.org.uk.

Section 75 The Northern Ireland Act

To meet the NI section 75 consultation requirement, we must incorporate the following into our EqIA process. Please read through the below and implement as appropriate whilst completing your EqIA

1. We will externally publish a list of all EqIA screenings we complete. We should publish these quarterly. The spreadsheet will be 'housed' on the ICO website [Equality and diversity | ICO](#) (these will include **all** EqIA screenings we complete)
2. Where an EqIA screen results in the need for a full EqIA on a policy, procedure or change that relates directly to the ICO carrying out its external statutory functions; we will consult with key stakeholders at the earliest opportunity for 12 weeks. By law we must consult with the Northern Ireland stakeholder list, but good practice would be to include other relevant stakeholders from across the UK. The author/approval manager will be best placed to determine who these should be.
3. We have clarified that if we don't receive a response from these stakeholders to a consultation, that is fine. We record no response and move on with the policy, procedure or change.
4. We have clarified that we do not need to consult under s75 for policies that only impact our staff. Whilst it's good practice to consult with staff, TU etc about changes that impact employees, ways of working etc, this type of internal change would not engage s75. We should of course complete an EqIA at the earliest opportunity, it's just that the s75 consultation requirement is unlikely to be engaged.
5. We have agreed that it would be for the manager who approves the EqIA to determine if a s75 consultation is needed. The Inclusion and Wellbeing team can provide support, but the author and manager will know their business area and will be best placed to assess if a new/change to a policy impacts external customer and stakeholders as part of our statutory function and should therefore be consulted on.
6. We have agreed that it should be for the author/approving manager to send the EqIA screening form or full EQIA form to corporate governance.

EqIA version control (to be updated by the person completing the EqIA)

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Version number | 1.0 |
| Status | Published |

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|------------------------------|---|
| Relevant or related policies | Equality Impact Assessment Guidance, Special Leave Policy |
| Author/owner | RK, Policy Manager |
| Approved by | Sam McVaigh, Director of People Services |
| Date of sign off | 05 November 2025 |
| Review date | 05 November 2028 |

| Version | Changes made | Date | Made by |
|---------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.0 | Special Leave Policy EqIA created | 13 August 2025 | Rosie Kellett, Policy Manager |
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Template version control (to be updated by the person updating the EqIA template)

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Version number | 2.4 |
| Status | Not approved |
| Relevant or related policies | Equality Impact Assessment Guidance |
| Author/owner | EDI Board (EqIA sub group) |
| Approved by | Suzanne Gordon |
| Date of sign off | 10 February 2023 |
| Review date | February 2024 |

| Version | Changes made | Date | Made by |
|---------|---|-------------|-------------------|
| 0.1 | Created new document. | June 2021 | Chris Braithwaite |
| 0.2 | Amendment of title to EqIA and minor amendments | July 2021 | Chris Braithwaite |
| 0.2a | Amended to put protected characteristics and objectives into a table as an option to consider | July 2021 | Chris Braithwaite |
| 0.3 | Added wording in relation to publishing the EqIA | August 2021 | Chris Braithwaite |

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|-----|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.0 | Links added and approved | September 2021 | Chris Braithwaite |
| 2.0 | Reviewed form and process | 8 August 2022 | DOC, AT, JT, RS (IWT) |
| 2.1 | DOC added in sections and review of content | 28 August | DOC |
| 2.2 | Amended changes after collaboration and feedback from the EDI Steering Group | 30 August 2022 | IWT |
| 2.3 | Updated to include best practice consideration of the Human Rights act | 26 January 2023 | Chris Braithwaite |
| 2.4 | Updated to include EDI objectives | 6 September 2023 | Roshini Mylvaganam |