

Summary of feedback – Consultation exercise – 8 May to 8 August 2025

Consultee	Feedback	University response	Action required
Member of the public	Charter for Effective Participation and Communication between Solicitors and Litigants in Person in Northern Ireland. Discrepancy raised regarding the NI Census (2021) disability data included on the equality screening proforma: The percentage of disabled people in NI according to the census is different to what the proforma states it to be. In answer to the screening question “Does the policy provide an opportunity to promote attitudes towards disabled people?” the answer should be ‘Yes’, as this charter goes a significant way to challenge the stigma surrounding disabled litigants in person.	The NI Census (2021) information stated on the equality screening proforma was checked and confirmed to be accurate: The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) shows that 24% of the NI population had a limiting long-term health problem or disability. The key differentiator here is that it does not represent the proportion of people who said they were disabled or had a long-term health condition; it represents those who declared that their day-to-day activities were limited because of this. Noted	No action required. Question 7 of the screening proforma has been reviewed and updated accordingly; the updated version of the Equality Screening Proforma has been made available for consultees to

			review on our website.
Member of the public	Charter for Effective Participation and Communication between Solicitors and Litigants in Person in Northern Ireland. Challenge made regarding the screening decision for this charter: Rather than screening out the policy with mitigation, the policy should be screened in for an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) due to its perceived significant impact on disabled litigants in person, and the potential to impact their access to justice. Therefore the screening pro-forma (decision) should be reviewed.	The Charter was screened out (with mitigation) because it is likely to have a positive impact in regard to Disability, Dependants and Sex (Men and Women Generally). The criteria applied when assessing 'Minor impact' included: c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunities for particular groups of disadvantaged people; d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations; e) Differential impact observed and opportunities exist to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.	The screening pro-forma has been updated to provide further clarity on screening decision.

Member of the public (Disability Action)	The Charter for Effective Participation and Communication between Solicitors and Litigants in Person in Northern Ireland. The Charter should be made available in easy-read format, so that it can be utilised to communicate complex legal information.	Noted	The document is under development and once finalised will be available in alternative formats.
Member of the public	The Charter for Effective Participation and Communication between Solicitors and Litigants in Person in Northern Ireland. It would be helpful if the Charter included case studies, to demonstrate how it can be used by disabled people.	Noted	This is something that could be added to the Charter in time, based on examples of lived experience, and when the data become available.
Member of the public	Charter for Effective Participation and Communication between Solicitors and Litigants in Person in Northern Ireland. The Charter's emphasis on empathy, civility and accessible communication can have many benefits not only for disabled LIPs but "every citizen"; The Charter does not only promote equality for those within the Section 75 categories, it offers essential scaffolding for	Noted	No action required.

	participation in a legal system that, by design or by default, excludes those without representation. However, the Charter in its current form does not yet fully reflect the communication, comprehension or cognitive barriers faced by disabled LIPs; suggestions made for additional information and clarification regarding disability to be added to the document. In answer to the screening question “Does the policy provide an opportunity to promote attitudes towards disabled people?” the answer should be ‘Yes’, as this charter goes a significant way to challenge the stigma surrounding disabled litigants in person; “No” is too narrow and underestimated the Charter’s social and cultural potential.	We welcome the suggestions provided in this feedback and will consider these in conjunction with the Law Society. Noted	Charter to be reviewed to consider these suggestions. Question 7 of the screening pro-forma has been reviewed and updated accordingly.
UCU	Draft Equality Scheme Action Plan UCU is pleased to see action across equality areas, however feels that the plan is quite broad and light touch. UCU suggests that in many areas there is a lack of clarity or specifics around what is currently delivered and how this will continue to be developed and expanded.	Noted. This overarching, high level action plan highlights key areas of focus for the next three years. It sets out some areas which are considered ‘business as usual’ alongside new and unique actions to deliver equality of opportunity and good relations. UU follows	No action required: Specifics of how the Equality Scheme and Disability Action

	UCU states that the plan further gives little consideration to disability related issues.	the ECNI guidance and format required to meet the statutory obligations, and the current Equality Scheme Action Plan is fully consistent with this guidance. The Equality Action Plan is underpinned by EDI's Operational Plan, and other equality action plans including the Disability Action Plan, Athena Swan Action Plan and emerging Race Action Plan. Noted. This is a live action plan which is underpinned by the University's Disability Action Plan. The Disability Action Plan sets out how the University intends to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public (University) life. The University's Disability Action Plan includes two new actions: Re-apply for EFDNI Disability Positive AAA* accreditation, and Disabled Staff and Students participate in 'Disability Pride' month.	Plan actions are delivered and are reported in our Section 75 Annual Progress Report. We anticipate that new and unique disability related actions will be added to the equality scheme action plan during its lifespan, whilst new actions to promote the two disability duties will likely be added to the University's Disability Action Plan.
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