

## **Investigation of a complaint made under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

**The Northern Ireland Office**

**September 2021**

### **Recommendations**

In light of the finding on the complaint, the Equality Commission recommends that:

- the NIO reviews its approach to equality assessment of the planned legislation for legacy matters, to ensure that it applies its Equality Scheme arrangements of screening and EQIA for their stated purpose and as early as possible in the policy development process.
- NIO staff, including policy leads and senior managers, are aware of and can articulate the purpose of the Equality Scheme arrangements when asked.
- the NIO reviews its processes to complete and sign off a screening form so that it can be presented as the NIO's assessment of the potential equality impacts of proposals to inform the decision maker and what is then announced in terms of legislative proposals.

In light of the wider circumstances of this matter that contributed to the finding, the Commission also recommends that:

- the NIO fulfills its commitment made in the Consultation Report of 2019 that it will conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment of the matter.
- the NIO is mindful of the way it communicates with any enquirer on their statutory equality and good relations duties, and Equality Scheme arrangements, ensuring that communication is accurate, clear and consistent.