A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities

*(Revised) April 2018*

Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

Template

The purpose of this Review is to make a number of recommendations designed to enable people requiring specialist in-patient detoxification and residential rehabilitation addiction services in Northern Ireland to access the best evidenced based, compassionate assessment, care and treatment to support their recovery journey.

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

an Independent Review of Tier 4 In-Patient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation Services in Northern Ireland

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Developing a Policy Strategy Plan

Adopting a Policy Strategy Plan

Implementing a Policy Strategy Plan

Revising a Policy Strategy Plan Designing a Public Service

Delivering a Public Service

x

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

A Public Consultation on the Recommendations proposed by an Independent Review of Tier 4 In-Patient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation Services in Northern Ireland

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group, Department of Health

1A. Name of Public Authority.

**SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016**

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N/A

*Reasons why a definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of ‘rural’.*

N/A

*Details of alternative definition of ‘rural’ used.*

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition). Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.

X

1F. What definition of ‘rural’ is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

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The Tier 4 Review outlines the location of the existing Tier 4 in-patient detoxifications and residential rehabilitation services which serve both rural and urban communities across Northern Ireland.

The key findings and recommendations of the Tier 4 Review aim to improve the access to these services for those living in rural and urban areas and acknowledge the presence of other factors which may present challenges such as access to transport, and increased levels of stigma in rural areas.

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

Given that Northern Ireland (NI) is a predominately rural country, to meet this vision, there will be a need to consider a place-based approach to the commissioning and implementation of the recommendations. This approach will necessitate developing an understanding of the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community.

The Tier 4 Review sets out a range of key findings and recommendations with the aim of ensuring that people who need in-patient detoxification and/or residential rehabilitation services have access to the right, high quality treatment and support, at the right time and in the right place.

Strategic Priority two of the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan which informs the Tier 4 Review relates to ‘Pathways of Care and Models of Support’, and recognises the service access challenges faced by rural populations. Through this priority area, a focus will be placed as to how the provision of services to rural populations can be enhanced and it will inform the implementation of other aligned workstreams including the Tier 4 Review.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

X

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

**SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

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2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

Rural Businesses Rural Tourism Rural Housing

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas Education or Training in Rural Areas

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas

Poverty in Rural Areas Deprivation in Rural Areas

Rural Crime or Community Safety Rural Development

Agri-Environment

Other (Please state)

X

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

N/A

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3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders Published Statistics Consultation with Other Organisations Research Papers Surveys or Questionnaires Other Publications

Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).

X

X

X

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

X

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

**SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

Alcohol, smoking and drug related indicators have some of the largest health inequalities in NI. By way of example, alcohol specific mortality in the most deprived areas remained around four times that in the least deprived areas and drug related mortality was over four and half times that in the least deprived areas. While it is often assumed that rural areas are more deprived than urban there is no discernible data to show this and this in itself would not show a causal link between rural living and problems with alcohol and/or drug use.

- DoH Health Inequalities Report 2022 Health Inequalities Annual Report 2022 (health-ni.gov.uk)

- Much of HSC provision exists within large urban centres, however NI is a predominately rural country. In terms of physical connectivity, access to service is hindered by the availability of public transport in rural areas which is inferior to that in towns and cities. Given the same, rural dwellers may be less likely to access services if the programme is delivered at a time that has limited transport availability. This includes considerations around longer driving times and timing of appointments compared to public transport availability. This has a further effect for those with childcare or caring responsibilities.

- Although improving, both availability and wider speed of broadband speeds, are still much lower in rural than in urban areas, due in part to the disparity in infrastructure costs. This issue is particularly pronounced in NI, due to how the rural population is distributed. For some rural properties, access to a functional broadband connection remains an issue, with 19% of internet-enabled rural premises in NI still unable to achieve a ‘decent’ broadband speed in 2021. Access to broadband (and the associated financial costs) may impact on the person’s ability to engage with a service via video-call.

- Daera, Tackling rural poverty and social inclusion - 2016 - A new Framework (daera-ni.gov.uk)

- Key Rural issues NI 2021 Key Rural Issues 2021.pdf (daera-ni.gov.uk)

Social Factors

- People in rural areas tend to come from a culture of self-sufficiency which brings with it a reluctance to seek outside help, an issue exacerbated in areas associated with known stigma like that of substance use. Rural dwellers are also more likely to suffer higher levels of loneliness and social exclusion than their urban counterparts.

- NIA Research and Library Service Briefing Paper, 2010, Key health issues affecting rural communities (niassembly.gov.uk)

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3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

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This impact assessment acknowledges the service access issues faced by rural dwellers compared to their urban counterparts. Although this issue traditionally relates to the urban location of services, given the increasing prevalence of remote delivery, rural dwellers are now hampered by a disparity in broadband speeds which has the potential to further limit service access.

The Tier 4 Review, through the implementation of its recommendations will aim to improve the access to Tier 4 services for those living in rural areas through the development of a regionally sustainable network of specialist recovery and treatment – the **Regional Specialist Assessment Treatment and Recovery Service for Substance**

This assessment acknowledges the impact of stigma which may be more pronounced in rural areas given the perception that these communities are more closely bound and have longer family roots than their urban equivalents. These recommendations will support and be supported by the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan, in relation to the strategic Priority area of Stigma, with an aim to proactively contribute to developing a stigma free culture in NI.

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

**SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

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If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

The Tier 4 Review recognises the issues of equitable access and will place a focus as to how the provision of services to rural populations can be enhanced as a means to meet the stated objectives of the Review.

Through its development the Review has been informed by the urban and rural voices of people with living and lived experience of substance use.

NI wide engagement will be again be offered via a Public Consultation process. SPPG will review any additional considerations in respect of the rural populous as they are submitted.

This Review has also considered the strategic direction for mental health services and Integrated Care in Northern Ireland to ensure that the recommendations for future service provision for specialist in-patient detoxification and residential rehabilitation are aligned with new HSC planning arrangements and the Regional Single Mental Health Service in NI.

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

Yes No If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C.

X

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

**SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

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Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:

Position/Grade:

Division/Branch

Signature:

Date:

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Position/Grade:

Division/Branch:

Signature:

Date:

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

X

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

**SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording**

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.