

## Appendix B - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

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

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Public Health Agency

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

Development of the Public Health Agency's Corporate Plan 2025-2030

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

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 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.

Public Health Agency Corporate Plan 2025-2030

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

The Public Health Agency (PHA) Corporate Plan 2025-2030 sets out the strategic direction for the next five years. It details our vision, ambitions and evidence-based strategic priorities for the period 2025-2030.

The Plan is being developed during a period of reform both for our organisation and for Health and Social Care (HSC) and in a time of significant financial constraint. However, we have embraced the opportunity provided by this time of change and constraint to set out our vision and ambitions for health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland and reiterate our call for a continued focus on improving health and reducing health inequalities across HSC and wider society.

The key foundations for our work are reflected across a wide range of departmental policies and strategies that influence and determine the work of PHA, most notable are *Making Life Better*, the Northern Ireland Public Health Framework and *Delivering Together 2026*

The PHA empowers citizens of Northern Ireland to improve their health. In partnership with others, we actively focus on preventing disease and injuries, promoting good physical and mental health, and providing information to support informed decision making. The approach is integral to the Department of Health's broader role of improving the health of citizens of N. Ireland. This is a solid foundation on which to embed a population health approach over the next 5 years during which we will continue our focus on:

- i. **Reducing health inequalities** and its impact on personal and community wellbeing.
- ii. Delivering programmes for **screening, vaccinations and immunisation** against preventable disease.
- iii. Using the most **up to date knowledge and evidence** and participate in research and development activities to increase our understanding of 'what works'.
- iv. Providing **advice and expertise to partners** across the health and social care system, as well as to other sectors.
- v. Fulfilling all our **statutory responsibilities** as set down in legislation and policy, and advocate for systemic change to address intractable "wicked" problems that impact on the quality of life of our population.
- vi. **Communicating and sharing information** to get the message across to everyone about how to stay healthy and well.
- vii. **Looking outwards internationally** to bring fresh thinking and innovation of new methods through digitalisation and effective approaches to Northern Ireland public health initiatives.
- viii. **Advocating for an inequality strategy** that must involve government who hold the "levers of change", e.g., legislation, tax, reform, particularly in core, chronic, intractable areas such as early years, obesity, healthy behaviour change (smoking/vaping).
- ix. **Anticipating population health challenges** e.g. anti-microbial resistance, climate change impacts which will get out of control if action is not taken in the 2020s.

## Our Focus

The strategic themes detailed below encompass core areas of focus for our organisation as we work towards our vision of a healthier Northern Ireland.

Over the next five years, as we work to fulfil our purpose and advance towards our vision we will focus on delivering a number of key public health priorities for Northern Ireland around our 4 strategic themes:

1. Protecting health – protecting the population from serious health threats, such as infectious disease outbreaks or major incidents.
2. Starting well – laying the foundations for a healthy life from pre-birth, infancy, early years, childhood to adolescent years.
3. Living well – ensuring that people have the opportunity to live and work in a healthy way.
4. Ageing well – supporting people to age healthily throughout their lives.

In working to achieve the priorities set out in this plan, we commit to:

- tackling and reducing health inequalities being at the heart of everything we do;
- championing a whole system, cross-government approach to tackle the challenges and barriers to improving health and reducing health inequalities;
- providing professional public health advice to the planning and commissioning of safe, effective, equitable, high quality health care;
- listening to, involving, and working together with individuals, families, local communities, HSC and other key partners in all our work;
- ensuring planning, guidance and decisions are based on best available evidence and driven by data, research and experience;
- improving equity of access to prevention and early intervention information, services and interventions etc for those who need them;

## 1F. What definition of 'rural' is the PHA using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

The Public Health Agency's Corporate Plan 2025-2030 will impact on all citizens of NI in both urban and rural areas. Public Health is a shared agenda which requires everyone to take ownership of the factors within their personal control to improve and protect their health and wellbeing. It is the responsibility of government and the health and social care system to put in place the measures and programmes that protect and improve health and wellbeing at a societal level.

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

☒

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

☐

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

☐

*Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

N/A

*Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.*

N/A

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

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

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

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

The PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030 is high level document which sets out the strategic direction for the organisation and recognises the PHA's commitment to supporting and developing its staff. As the PHA takes forward the Corporate Plan and works to achieve outcomes, the actions, work and programmes will be screened individually through a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). It is at this more detailed level that the PHA will understand, identify and consider how the development of a policy, strategy, plan or public service will impact on people in rural areas.

As part of the planning, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of HSC Services, service users, carers and the public (including people from rural areas) had the opportunity to have their voices heard in a meaningful way, ensuring that their knowledge, expertise and views were listened to through the public consultation.

This helped inform the RNIA and important factors were highlighted with examples including; farm families who experience barriers to accessing healthcare services and exhibit low help-seeking behaviour or do not prioritise their health and wellbeing. These rural groups are also referenced as a priority when considering reducing the levels of loneliness and social isolation as well as consideration for older people and those facing digital poverty when considering development within digital capacity.

These are just a few of the examples from the responses received which will be shared with the relevant teams and staff within the PHA to consider these factors when individually screening actions, work and programmes.

**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.**

Around 670,000 people, i.e. over a third (36%) of the population live in rural areas in Northern Ireland (NI) – total population as per NISRA census 2021 is 1.92million.

As the PHA takes forward the Corporate Plan and works to achieve each outcome, the actions, work and programmes will be screened individually through a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). It is at this more detailed level that the PHA will understand, identify and consider how the development of a policy, strategy, plan or public service will impact on people in rural areas.

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

Rural Business

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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 of 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)

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

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

N/A

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

**3A. Has the PHA 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?**

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

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

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**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.**

N/A

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

N/A

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

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

As the PHA takes forward the Corporate Plan and works to achieve each outcome, the actions, work and programmes will be screened individually through a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). It is at this more detailed level that the PHA will understand, identify and consider how the development of a policy, strategy, plan or public service will impact on people in rural areas.

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

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

As the PHA takes forward the Corporate Plan and works to achieve each outcome, the actions, work and programmes will be screened individually through a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). It is at this more detailed level that the PHA will understand, identify and consider how the development of a policy, strategy, plan or public service will impact on people in rural areas.

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

**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?**

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

**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.**

N/A

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

**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.**

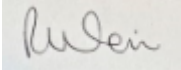

As the PHA takes forward the Corporate Plan and works to achieve each outcome, the actions, work and programmes will be screened individually through a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). It is at this more detailed level that the PHA will understand, identify and consider how the development of a policy, strategy, plan or public service will impact on people in rural areas.

## **SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording**

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

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

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<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Rosslyn Weir
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<b>Directorate:</b>	PHA Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	07 March 2025
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Stephen Murray
<b>Grade:</b>	Assistant Director Planning and Business Services
<b>Directorate:</b>	PHA Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	07 March 2025