

## Appendix I - 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.

Sport 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.

Women in Sport Engagement & Delivery Plan 2024–2026

#### 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 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 checked="" 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.

Sport, Culture and Integrity Manager

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

Revised policy

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

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.*

To promote full inclusion of women and girls in all levels and forms of sport and physical activity, by:

- Increasing sports participation
- Developing female leadership and coaching pathways
- Creating safer, more inclusive environments
- Tackling structural and cultural barriers
- Improving gender-sensitive data and insights

*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.**

A strategic plan aiming to improve gender equality across sport by addressing participation gaps, leadership underrepresentation, visibility, safety, and access for women and girls. The plan embeds gender equity across programme design, delivery, governance, and data.

To promote full inclusion of women and girls in all levels and forms of sport and physical activity, by:

- Increasing sports participation
- Developing female leadership and coaching pathways
- Creating safer, more inclusive environments
- Tackling structural and cultural barriers
- Improving gender-sensitive data and insights

**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.**

N/a

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

Rural Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text" value="Social Inclusion in rural areas"/>

**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 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?**

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 Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

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

Engagement included surveys of young people, interviews with rural sports clubs, and consultation with Women's Rural Network. Key needs identified:

- Scarcity of female coaches and teams in rural settings.
- Lack of safe, female-friendly facilities and training times.
- Transport challenges, especially after school.
- Cultural norms limiting girls' and women's sport participation.
- Health and well-being benefits underserved in rural female groups.

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

Empowerment of rural women in Northern Ireland – impacts on poverty, development and current challenges.

In reviewing the available data it is apparent that there are many issues and challenges that rural women face within Northern Ireland. Some of these include:

- The persistence of the 'pay gap' between men and women;
- Under representation of women on decision making bodies and in elected office;
- Rural land is still largely owned, managed and worked by men – what opportunities for women?;
- Single pensioner and lone parent households being two of the main household groupings that have the highest risk of poverty, both of which are predominantly female;
- The ageing rural population – people living for longer and needing care and services. Also a gender impact as women live longer and are more likely to be carers than men;
- Centralisation of services and jobs – high transport costs in accessing education, health and employment;
- Lack of access to affordable and flexible childcare – particularly difficult within dispersed rural communities;
- Benefit traps: the impact of changes in benefits (such as working families tax credit and child care tax credit within the UK) have the potential risk of reinforcing poverty;
- Female poverty can often be 'hidden' as most research focuses on households rather than genders within households;
- Poor access to training opportunities and a reliance on networks to get into work, and non-unionisation of the rural workforce;
- The 'Rural Idyll' image continues to be prevalent - involves cultural assumptions and values. For example, being 'independent' is seen as a characteristic of rural dwellers; which can mean that individuals are reluctant to access welfare services and benefits. Also has the potential to restrict the roles that women play e.g. role as the mother or housewife;

<https://data.nisra.gov.uk/>

<https://www.womensregionalconsortiumni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Womens-Experiences-of-the-Cost-of-Living-Crisis-in-NI-2.pdf>

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

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

N/A

## 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.

- **Infrastructure:** developing female-friendly changing rooms and ensuring community hall access.
- **Timetabling:** accommodating after-school practices and weekend sessions.
- **Coaching support:** funding coach development and female role models.
- **Transport:** organizing ride-share schemes or minibuses.
- **Outreach work:** campaigns to challenge stereotypes and encourage participation.

## 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.**

Resulting policy amendments include:

- Grant programme for rural sports club facilities to improve female access.
- Investment in female-led coaching bursaries targeting rural coaches.
- Funding for transport support schemes to practices and competitions.
- Pilot mentoring network connecting rural female athletes with peers and role models.
- Inclusion of women's sports measures in local development plans to track participation equity.

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.**

## SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

**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.**

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

☒

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Ian Weir
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Deputy Principal
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Sport NI
<b>Signature:</b>	Ian Weir
<b>Date:</b>	19.09.25
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Rebecca Hope
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Interim Director of Sport (G6)
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Sport NI
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>R Hope</i>
<b>Date:</b>	22.09.25