

## 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 NI

#### 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.

This is a revised plan from the Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group to ensure that work is carried out within the sporting sector to provide assurance that those organisations who engage people in sport and physical activity are doing so in line with safeguarding standards and requirements. The ultimate objective of this plan is to ensure all children and adults can engage in sport in a safe environment free from the risk of harm or abuse.

#### 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 type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" 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.

Safeguarding in Sport Strategic Group Three Year Plan 2026-2029.

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

To provide a framework for the multi-agency group to work within, in order to deliver the vision of ensuring every child and adult can participate in sport and associated physical activities free from the risk of harm or abuse.

**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.*

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 plan will impact all demographic categories in Northern Ireland, including people from rural areas ensuring children and adults from across all of Northern Ireland are provided with safe sporting environments in both rural and urban areas. Outcomes that will impact people in rural areas include:

- Promoting positive safeguarding behaviours and attitudes towards rural people who require specific consideration around locality and availability of services; to ensure everyone can participate in sport safely and free from harm.
- Support to rural based governing bodies and clubs from across Northern Ireland providing a range of resources and training sessions.

**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.**

This is a strategic plan developed by a third party group made up of member bodies within the sporting sector of NI and ROI. The remit of the group is to ensure that all people from across the S75 demographics and those considered vulnerable including rural dwellers have the opportunity to engage in sport free from harm or abuse. Training courses will be delivered online to ensure that locality and transport are not an issue ensuring that rural and urban dwellers have equal opportunity to attend.

This will not impact rural areas differently.

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**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 type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input checked="" 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.**

- Sport NI Corporate Plan 2020-25 consultation evidence. Sport NI specifically consulted with DAERA, rural Councils, governing bodies, rural community and sporting group and S75 groups. [Corporate Plans | Sport NI](#)
- An EQIA on the corporate plan was completed: [Equality-Impact-Assessment-Sport-NI-Corporate-Plan.pdf](#) which considered rural needs.
- Continuous Household Survey: experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25, [Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland 2024/25 | Department for Communities](#)
- Children's Sport and Physical Activity, [CSPPA Reports – CSPPA.ie](#)
- Kids Life and Times and Young People Life and Times, ([Northern Ireland Kids Life and Times Survey: 2023](#) and [Young Life and Times Survey: Sport](#)).
- Young People's Behaviours and Attitudes Survey, [Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey 2022 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)
- NI Census and NISRA rural dashboard, [Home Page | NI Area Statistics | NISRA](#)
- DOH Health Inequalities Report and interactive dashboard, [Health Inequalities Annual Report 2025](#)
- CHS – wellbeing rural statistics, [Wellbeing: Urban-Rural Statistics | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)
- DSNI research library, [Disability Sport NI | Resource Library - Disability Sport NI](#)
- DAERA's Key Rural Issues Northern Ireland 2023 was also considered and <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/poverty-and-income-inequality-report-urban-rural-statistics>.
- [Rural Disability and Community Participation | Frontiers Research Topic](#)
- [Disability in rural areas: A matter of perception](#)
- [On making disability in rural places more visible: Challenges and opportunities \[Introduction to a special issue\] - ScienceDirect](#)
- [Intersectionality, childhood disability and rurality: What does rural life mean for disabled children and their families? - Flynn - 2025 - Sociologia Ruralis - Wiley Online Library](#)
- [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Update to 30th September 2025](#)

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

A summary of the social and economic needs are as follows:

- A need to address social isolation and loneliness,
- Diversity of opportunities in rural areas to be improved and distance to travel to sporting activities.
- Limited reach in the West of the province for sports provision.
- More strategic engagement between organisations required.
- Utilisation on the natural environment and coastal areas to be optimised.
- Volunteer capacity in rural areas needs improved.
- Lack of public transport and regularity in rural areas.
- Requirement to have opportunities in rural areas advertised better.
- Need for the availability of health and wellbeing services in rural areas.

The information provided highlights the issues facing people living in rural areas, compounded by the barriers experienced by vulnerable people living in those rural areas.

**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.**

This is a strategic plan, provided by a third party group made up of member bodies who play key roles in safeguarding for the sports sector. The fundamental aim of this group is to ensure all children and adults equally have the right to participate in sport and physical activity free from the risk of harm and abuse. Conferences and training sessions will be delivered online to ensure that locality and transport are not an issue ensuring that rural and urban dwellers have equal opportunity to attend.

This will not impact rural areas differently, however to improve communication of the proposed objectives and potential learning opportunities for rural dwellers, additional rural networks and agencies will be contacted by the appointed provider to ensure effective communication of the service provision and uptake, should it be required.

## 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.**

The strategic plan itself will provide a standard framework for the strategic group to operate within, however the promotion and communication of the plan will be increased to ensure rural clubs and dwellers are aware of it and the key outworkings of the plan to be implemented.

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.**

n/a

## 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>	Christine Rea
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Sport Developer
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Sport NI
<b>Signature:</b>	Christine Rea
<b>Date:</b>	10.12.25
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Rebecca Hope
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Interim Director of Sport
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Sport NI
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>R Hope</i>
<b>Date:</b>	16.02.26