

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.

Adult Safeguarding Service for Sports Sector

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

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	☐		

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.

n/a

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

The objectives of this service are: Work with funded partners to ensure they are meeting appropriate safeguarding standard¹ and providing Sport NI with assurance regarding compliance. (Minimum 40 partners, e.g. governing bodies of sports); Adult safeguarding-specific training for partner workforce; Adult safeguarding-specific training for partner boards; Adult safeguarding-specific training for Sport NI staff and Board Members; Share learning, best practice, and case studies across the sector; Advisory Service for adult protection in sport-focused enquiry service for governing bodies, sporting sector, general public and Sport NI; Work closely with CPSU in terms of safeguarding the sector as a whole; Policy development for sector; Provision of information resources for sharing with the sector; For clarity this is not direct delivery of safeguarding in so far as management of disclosures and concerns for vulnerable groups, but it is a service to build a best practice safeguarding sporting environment through guidance, resources and information for governing bodies of sport and other organisations. Therefore, a direct impact on S75 groups is not envisioned but this service, in its guidance and advice provided, will ask organisations to consider their needs.

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. Outcomes that will impact people in rural areas include:

- Provision of an adult safeguarding in sports service so rural people can access guidance, advice, signposting to services for help.
- Ability to use a professional service provider to raise concerns and receive advice on specific matter.
- 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 courses.

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 service provided by a third party who will provide advice and guidance to sports organisations or members of the public with concerns regarding safeguarding matters. The dedicated service is contactable through telephone or email for direct enquiries and resources will be available on online platforms i.e. web site and social media channels. 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	☐
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)	

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	☒	Published Statistics	☒
Consultation with Other Organisations	☒	Research Papers	☒
Surveys or Questionnaires	☒	Other Publications	☐
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			☐

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 service, provided by a third party, who will provide advice and guidance to sports organisations or members of the public with concerns regarding safeguarding matters. The dedicated service is contactable through telephone or email for direct enquiries and resources will be available on online platforms i.e. web site and social media channels. 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. However to improve communication of the service to 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 service itself will be provide a standard offering however the promotion and communication of the service will be increased to ensure rural clubs and dwellers are aware of it and the best practice 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.

☒

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Christine Rea
Position/Grade:	Sports Developer/Staff Officer
Division/Branch	Sport NI
Signature:	Christine Rea
Date:	02 12 25
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Rebecca Hope
Position/Grade:	Interim Director of Sport / G6
Division/Branch:	Sport NI
Signature:	R Hope
Date:	30.07.26