



# **The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016**

## **Rural Needs Impact Assessment**



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

**1A. Name of Public Authority - Department of Health**

**1B. Please provide the official title/ description of the Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative:**

Guidance on Information Sharing for Child Protection Purposes. Policy guidance which will replace existing Circular HSS CC 3/96 (Revised) – Sharing to Safeguard – September 2008 (amended May 2009). The guidance sits under *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*.

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

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

**1D. Please provide the aims and/or objectives of the Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:**

The aim of the guidance is to provide clear guidance to practitioners on the lawful sharing of information for child protection purposes. The guidance seeks to meet supporting recommendation 52 of the Marshall report on child sexual exploitation in Northern Ireland - that the revision of Circular HSS CC 3/96 is accompanied by clear guidance that will give workers the confidence to act appropriately. The guidance will replace Circular HSS CC 3/96 and address criticisms made against the Circular by the judge in JR57 that the Circular is confusing and contradictory and that it does not make it clear that the decision making process on sharing information about allegations of abuse must be a fair one. Procedures will subsequently be developed on a regional basis and multi-agency information sharing agreements put in place by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)

The outcomes of the guidance are that it will give practitioners the confidence to share information when appropriate and thereby enhance child protection and reduce abuse; and that it will reduce incidence of inappropriate sharing of sensitive information and thereby enhance data protection and individuals' privacy rights.

**1E. Which 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<sup>1</sup>

## 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

**Please explain:**

The policy's focus is on promoting the lawful sharing of information for protecting any child who has been identified at risk of significant harm. The policy is based on existing legislation and is primarily for practitioners in Health and Social Care Trusts, and other agencies working with children and families.

At this stage of the policy development there is nothing to indicate that the guidance will impact differently on the effectiveness and lawfulness of the sharing of information for child protection purposes in rural areas.

**If the response is NO after entering explanation GO TO Section 3**

**2B. 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 will impact people in rural areas differently:**

<sup>1</sup>If a definition of 'rural' is not applicable, the policy is unlikely to fall under the scope of the Act and you should be able to screen out at this stage



**2C. Please indicate the rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on (see list at note 1):**

## 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

Please explain:

Considerations of key statistics in relation to Child Protection, see 3B below.

If the response is **NO** please explain above and **GO TO Section 4**

**3B. Please indicate which methods or information sources were used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas (see note 2 for examples) and provide details including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc:**

Northern Ireland Mid-Year Population Estimates 2016 at Small Area Level, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, November, 2017) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/mid-year-estimates-population-change>)

Continuous Household Survey 2012/13 to 2016/17).) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/continuous-household-survey>)

Census Key Statistics for Small Area Table 603) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/census-2011>)

Households below average income (HBAI report)) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/households-below-average-income-report-urban-rural-statistics>)

Source: survey of school leavers 2016/17) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/education-urban-rural-statistics>)

Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-inequalities-northern-ireland-urban-rural-statistics>)

**3C. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified:**

No needs specific to rural areas around the sharing of information for child protection purposes have been identified.



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## 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 identified by the Public Authority:**

From the key statistics referenced at 3B, there is no evidence to suggest that people in rural areas will be differentially impacted by the guidance on lawful information sharing for child protection purposes.

No published urban/rural information on child protection figures could be sourced.

We do know, however, that for children who were in care (Looked After Children) in 2016, where geographical information was available in 2016, 75% were living in predominantly urban areas before entering care, with 19% originating from rural areas. The number of children in care from urban areas is proportionally higher than the proportion of the population of the Northern Ireland population living in predominantly urban areas, which is 58% (Children in Care in Northern Ireland 2015-16 Statistical Bulletin). While children are taken into care for a variety of reasons, the most common is to protect the child from abuse or neglect (Children in Care in Northern Ireland 2015-16). Neglect and physical abuse are the main reasons why children are included on the Child Protection Register. A child's name will be included on the Child Protection Register following an investigation under Article 66 of the Children Order – where there are concerns that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

## SECTION 5 – Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

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

Yes

No

Please explain:

No rural needs around the lawfulness of information sharing for child protection purposes have been identified.



## SECTION 6 – Documenting and Recording

6A. I confirm that details of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment will be recorded on the Public Authority’s Annual Monitoring Return and the RNIA Template retained by the Public Authority (please check box)

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Shona Graham
Position / Grade:	DP
Division/Branch	Family and Children’s Policy Directorate
Signature:	
Date:	
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Alasdair MacInnes
Position / Grade:	G7
Division / Branch	Child Protection Unit, Family and Children’s Policy Directorate
Signature:	
Date:	31/8/2018

**Note 1**

Rural Policy Areas (relates to question 2C):

- 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
- Other (Please specify)

**Note 2**

Examples of methods or information sources used (relates to question 3B):

- Consultation with Rural Stakeholders
- Consultation with Other Organisations
- Surveys or Questionnaires
- Other Methods or Information Sources (include details)
- Published Statistics
- Research Papers
- Other Publications