

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.

The Department of Justice (DOJ).

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.

DoJ has a statutory responsibility to bring forward new legislation to improve the operation of the NI Police Pension scheme for its members. From 1 April 2024, the Police Pension Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (2015 scheme) were amended to minimise the potential of legal challenge by the removal of restrictions surrounding eligibility for ill health retirement; all members having paid a reduced contribution rate up to that point, now pay a full member contribution rate from that date.

These regulations will now provide those members of the 2015 scheme (previously excluded from applying for ill health retirement until 1 April 2024) with the option to buy back their 2.5% employee contribution shortfall, for the period from which they joined the 2015 scheme until 31 March 2024 and by doing so further minimise the potential of legal challenge.

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 checked="" 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.

Police Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025

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

The introduction of the Police Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 will ensure the long-term sustainability of the scheme and ensure equality for its members. These Regulations will permit the Scheme Manager (NI Policing Board) and Scheme Administrator (PSNI) the legislative support to operate the scheme effectively.

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.

The DOJ considers that implementation of the proposals would not have any significant adverse or differential impact on people living in rural communities compared with those in an urban setting.

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.

N/A

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. None

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"/>

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.

The introduction of the Police Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 will provide an option to those members previously impacted by the inability to retire under ill health, the opportunity to do so following the payment of the shortfall in member contributions during the period for which they were members of the 2015 scheme, prior to 1 April 2024. The option will apply irrespective of geographic base. Therefore, DOJ considers that implementation of the proposals will not have any significant adverse or differential impact on people living in rural communities compared with those in an urban setting.

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 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 Public Authority?

N/A

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?

The DOJ considers that implementation of the proposals would not have any significant adverse or differential impact on people living in rural communities compared with those in an urban setting.

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.

N/A

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.

The DOJ considers that implementation of the proposals would not have any significant adverse or differential impact on people living in rural communities compared with those in an urban setting.

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:	Antonia Hoskins
Position/Grade:	Deputy Principal
Division/Branch	Police Human Resources Policy Branch
Signature:	
Date:	28 May 2025
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Pauline Muldoon
Position/Grade:	Head Police Human Resources Policy Branch/Grade 7
Division/Branch:	Police Human Resources Policy Branch
Signature:	
Date:	28 May 2025