

Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template – Accessible Version

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

1A. Name of Public Authority.

The Department for Communities, Housing Division.

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.

Proposals to strengthen legislation to prevent and address social housing tenancy fraud in Northern Ireland.

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to. (Please select only ONE option)

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.

A public consultation entitled: "Every House Matters: a new approach to tackling social housing tenancy fraud".

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

To seek views through a public consultation on proposals to raise awareness about what social housing tenancy fraud is about and why it is important to address; to strengthen legislative powers around tenancy fraud; and to put measures in place to support and protect those impacted by tenancy fraud.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service? (Please select only ONE option)

- 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.

An alternative definition of 'rural' has not been used, as the default definition of settlement with a population of less than 5,000 applies. This work relates to a region-wide public consultation which applies consistently across Northern Ireland and does not distinguish impacts based on geographic location.

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? **(Please select only ONE option)**

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.

As social housing exists in rural areas, the outworkings of the public consultation will likely impact on social housing tenants in these areas, whether they are victims or perpetrators of tenancy fraud or simply members of the community who wish to contribute to the social integrity of the area through reporting their suspicions of tenancy fraud.

However, these impacts will also be common to urban dwellers. No specific adverse impacts are anticipated for rural dwellers.

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.

The proposals will impact equally on all sections of the population.

For people living in social housing, the outworkings of this consultation will impact equally, in that victims of Tenancy Fraud will benefit from the measures being introduced and enforcement implications for all perpetrators of Tenancy Fraud will be equal in measure, regardless of the location (urban or rural).

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.

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? (Please select only ONE option)

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
- Consultation with Other Organisations
- Surveys or Questionnaires
- Published Statistics
- Research Papers
- 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.

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 intention of this consultation is to invite views from the public to improve measures to tackle tenancy fraud in Northern Ireland. Equal application of the outworkings will be applied to all victims and all perpetrators of tenancy fraud, regardless of where they live. Therefore, no specific steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas was required.

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 public consultation focuses on potential new measures to tackle tenancy fraud across the social housing sector, throughout Northern Ireland. We are inviting the public to provide views which will potentially inform changes to policy. When responses are received to the consultation and the policy is being developed, social and economic needs of people in rural areas will be considered further.

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? (Please select only ONE option)

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.

No rural specific issues emerged through this assessment. The work focuses on a public consultation intended to inform future policy development and applies on a Northern Ireland wide basis. It does not introduce place-based changes or proposals that would operate differently in rural settings.

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:

Ursula Weir

Position/Grade:

SO

Division/Branch:

Social Housing Policy

Signature:

Ursula Weir

Date:

26th Feb 2026

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Liam Lavery

Position/Grade:

G7

Division/Branch:

Social Housing Policy

Signature:

Liam Lavery

Date:

3rd March 2026