

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.

Department of Education

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.

The Covid-19 Childcare Support Fund (April – June 2020) - to financially support childcare providers to provide childcare for children of key workers and vulnerable children during the Covid-19 outbreak when childcare provision is, by and large, closed. The proposal also seeks to address the issue of sustainability for closed childcare settings to ensure that they can re-open after the Covid-19 crisis.

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

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

Covid-19 Childcare Support Fund – (1 April – 30 June 2020).

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

The Covid-19 Childcare Support Fund aims to ensure that registered childcare providers, including childminders, who remain open to care safely for a reduced number of eligible children during limited operating arrangements can do so without risking the sustainability of their setting/provision and to support the sustainability of childcare providers by developing a support measure for settings that have closed to ensure they can re-open now and if not needed now, after the crisis. This measure must interact effectively with other financial assistance measures announced by the Chancellor and administered by the Department for the Economy (DfE).

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.

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

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 Covid-19 Childcare Support Scheme will be available to all childcare providers including those in a rural community. The Covid-19 Childcare Support Fund aims to ensure that registered childcare providers, including childminders, who remain open to care safely for a reduced number of eligible children during limited operating arrangements can do so without risking the sustainability of their setting/provision and seeks to address the issue of sectoral sustainability by developing a support measure for settings that have closed to ensure they can re-open now and if not needed now, after the crisis. This measure must interact effectively with other financial assistance measures announced by the Chancellor and administered by the Department for the Economy (DfE)

Four elements have been developed within the overall emergency childcare package: support for childminders, the be-spoke Covid-19 Approved Home Childcare scheme, childcare settings which remained open; and a sustainability measure for childcare settings which have closed.

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.

Rural Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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.

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 checked="" 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.

A Childcare Reference Group has been established with representatives of childcare support organisations, which includes: the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA), Employers for Childcare (EfC), Play Board and Early Years Organisation (EYO)- an organisation for young children, representatives from Community and Voluntary sector, Altram, Private Day Care Committee, NI Day Care Owners, Employers forum and parents representative through Parentline. These organisations represent the views of providers in urban and rural areas/settings.

NICMA, EfC, EYO and PlayBoard have carried out numerous surveys, including one in May 2020, to identify and assess the needs of providers in urban and rural areas.

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 Covid-19 Childcare Support Fund is available to all childcare settings and providers regardless of location.

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.

Aware that there may be limited choice of childcare provider for parents in rural areas therefore this scheme will help those childcare providers that are in rural areas to remain open for key workers and vulnerable children, and sustain childcare providers in rural areas to ensure future childcare provision.

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.

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.

This is a universal support fund that is available to all childcare providers including those in rural areas.

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:	Melanie Maxwell
Position/Grade:	Acting Gr7
Division/Branch	Early Years/Childcare Strategy Unit
Signature:	M Maxwell
Date:	14 December 2020
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Tina Dempster
Position/Grade:	Acting G6
Division/Branch:	Early Years, Children and Youth Directorate – Childcare Unit
Signature:	
Date:	4 Jan 2021