Rural Impact Assessment Screening

Title of Policy  ☐  Strategy  ☒  Plan  ☐  or Service  ☐ :

Proposed Strategic Framework for Imaging Services in Health and Social Care

Existing Policy  ☐  Revised Policy  ☐  New Policy  ☒
## Rural Impact Assessment

### Step 1: Define the Issue

**Key questions to consider:**
- What are the objectives of the strategy, policy, plan or service?
- What impact do you intend it to have in rural areas?
- How is ‘rural’ defined for the purposes of this policy/strategy/service/plan?
- What would constitute a fair rural outcome in this case?

The key aim of this strategy is to provide a 10 year framework for the planning and delivery of safe, effective and sustainable imaging services for Northern Ireland.

A key message delivered by the framework is the identification of 8 guiding quality-based principles to underpin the design, configuration and delivery of medical imaging services which represent best practice for imaging services in Northern Ireland;

For the purposes of this strategy we have defined ‘rural’ as open countryside and settlements of less than 5000 people

It is not expected that implementation of this strategy will present any specific or differential rural impacts.

### Step 2: Understand the Issue

**Key questions to consider:**
- What is the current situation in rural areas?
- What evidence (statistics, data, research, stakeholder advice) do you have about the position in rural areas?
- If the relevant evidence is not available, can this be sourced?
- Do you have access to the views of rural stakeholders about the likely impact of the policy?
- Are there existing design features or mitigations already in place to take account of rural needs?

A review of imaging services commenced in 2014 with an initial task to scope the modalities and services to be considered.

Five clinical work streams were established to report on the current service, optimal service, gap analysis and future proofing/horizon scanning. These clinical work streams were: radiological imaging, interventional radiology, paediatric imaging, cardiac imaging and obstetric imaging.

In addition 4 underpinning work streams common to all clinical areas also reported on: workforce issues, ICT, Medical Physics and equipment management.

All of these supporting documents are to be made available on the Departments website alongside the consultation document and response questionnaire.

In addition the PCC has consulted on their membership’s views as to what an imaging service should deliver.

The Imaging Review Team held a large workshop inviting healthcare professionals and managers from across the 5 Trusts to consider the draft framework and no significant issues likely to cause a specific or differential rural impact were presented.
### Step 3: Develop and appraise options

**Key questions to consider:**
- Are there barriers to delivery in rural areas?
- If so, how can these be overcome or mitigated?
- Will it cost more to deliver in rural areas?
- What steps can be taken to achieve fair rural outcomes?

It is not expected that implementation of this strategy will present any specific or differential rural impacts.

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### Step 4: Prepare for Delivery

**Key questions to consider:**
- Do the necessary delivery mechanisms exist in rural areas?
- Have you considered alternative delivery mechanisms?
- What action has been taken to ensure fair rural outcomes?
- Is there flexibility for local delivery bodies to find local solutions?
- Are different solutions required in different areas?

Services are already in place within each HSC Trust. It is not expected that implementation of this strategy will present any specific or differential rural impacts.
### Step 5: Implementation and Monitoring

**Key questions to consider:**
- Have you set any rural specific indicators or targets to monitor?
- How will the outcomes be measured in rural areas?
- Are there any statistics or data that you will collect to monitor rural needs and impacts?

Services are already in place within each HSC Trust.
A high level implementation plan has been developed and further detailed work has either commenced or is planned to do so.
A proposed ‘imaging board’ will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of recommendations related to the framework and associated reports.
It is not expected that implementation of this strategy will present any specific or differential rural impacts.

### Step 6: Evaluation and Review

**Key questions to consider:**
- What processes are in place to evaluate and review the implementation of the policy, strategy, plan or service?
- Have rural needs been factored into the evaluation process?
- How will lessons learned in relation to rural outcomes be used to inform future policy making and delivery?

In addition to the proposed ‘imaging board’ monitoring and reporting on implementation of the recommendations of the review, there are other measures, such as inspections by the RQIA which will provide the Department with information on issues relating to imaging services.
In addition an accreditation body is currently working towards accrediting imaging services in Northern Ireland – another early recommendation of the review.

There are targets and indicators relating to diagnostic waiting times that provide statistical returns which monitor a number of critical imaging modalities.

Therefore it is not expected that implementation of this strategy will present any specific or differential rural impacts.
Summary of Screening decision:

1. Explain how due regard to rural needs has been met when developing, adopting, implementing or revising **policies, strategies and plans**?

   Due regard to rural needs has been considered in the development of this strategy but as geographical location is not a major factor overall it will not impact on the rural needs of the people of Northern Ireland. Any information to the contrary, gathered from the consultation exercise, will be examined to see if policy revision/stakeholder engagement is needed to address this.

2. Explain how due regard to rural needs has been met when **designing and delivering services**?

   The imaging review project board included representatives from all Trust imaging specialties, the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency and appropriate Department policy areas as well as patient representation. We will be publicly consulting from October to December 2017 which will include a broad engagement event. Consultation responses will be examined to identify any specific rural needs not already considered.

   If it is determined that the policy/plan/strategy/service is to have an impact on rural needs, what mitigating actions are being taken?

   Any information gathered from the consultation exercise will be examined to see if policy revision/stakeholder engagement is needed to address this.

3.
**Approval and Authorisation of Rural Proofing**

I confirm that due regard has been considered in the development of this policy and that it **will/will not** impact on the rural needs of the people in Northern Ireland.

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural proofing</td>
<td>Helena Brown</td>
<td>DP</td>
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<td>completed by</td>
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| Approved by     | Joe Magee | G7 | 23 Oct 2017   |
| Approved by     |           |    |               |