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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Flexible Working Hours (FWH) Scheme provides authorised time worked beyond the weekly contracted hours to be 'banked' as 'credit' and taken as time off at a later date (within the four-week accounting period) to suit both the employee and the employer.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the importance of promoting the Health and Wellbeing of its employees and the FWH scheme contributes to this by providing a more flexible system of working hours for employees. There is, however, a guiding and overriding principle that this flexibility should be achieved without adverse effect on the overall efficiency of departments or their service, and without the need for additional employee to maintain service standards.
- 1.3 The FWH applies to all employees who are deemed eligible to work flexi hours.

2 AIM

The policy aims to:

- outline the purpose of the FWH Scheme;
- set out clearly the basic principles and conditions of the FWH Scheme;
- outline the procedure to be followed by employees participating in the FWH Scheme and their roles and responsibilities;
- provide employees with clear and consistent information in relation to the FWH Scheme.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1 The Policy applies to all employees who participate in the FWH Scheme.
- 3.2 Part-time employees may be included in the scheme, however the amount of flexi time accrued or debited will be pro rata, based on the FTE per week.
- 3.3 The Council reserves the right to determine those employees or groups of employees who, because of the nature of their work or service requirements will be included in the scheme.
- 3.4 The Council have the right to withdraw the provisions of the scheme from any section or individual employee who abuses the scheme or where the scheme is deemed not to be working satisfactorily. Similarly, amendments to this scheme may be made from time to time to meet service/delivery requirements. Abuse of the scheme may be regarded as misconduct which could ultimately lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee.
- 3.5 Data recorded via time and attendance software will be used to assist with reconciliation and verification of working hours, leave records, shift rotas etc.

- 3.6 All employees will be required to use the time and attendance system, and will be required to clock in/out using facial recognition clocking systems and/or mobile phone apps. IP addresses will be recorded for each clocking entry made by an employee, which will identify where the employee has clocked in/out as well as recording the time each clocking action occurred.
- 3.7 If a disciplinary issue arises, in the first instance, the employee may be spoken to informally by their manager. If a subsequent issue arise information from the time and attendance system, may be used, but cannot be the only authority of whether a disciplinary act has occurred.

4 BASIC PRINCIPLES AND CONDITIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that the FWH scheme operates satisfactorily and that the high service standards continue, a number of criteria must be satisfied:
- (a) A minimum number of employee in each Department must be in attendance throughout the normal office hours of 9.00 am – 5.00 pm. This should be agreed between employee and management. On occasions, particularly during periods of pressure, management may require the number in attendance to be increased and will determine this in conjunction with employees.
 - (b) Teams/sections must agree in advance, their method of operating the FWH scheme, in order to ensure effective service delivery during operational hours. Individual arrangements can be reviewed at any time by agreement with other team members within their department.
 - (c) There is, in the opinion of the line manager, sufficient work available for those members of employees who start earlier than the normal start time or remain later than the normal finishing time.
- 4.2 The Council reserves the right after consultation with employee representatives to determine those employees or groups of employees who, because of the nature of their work, will only be required to work standard office hours, i.e. 9.00 am – 5.00 pm or will have the opportunity to participate in the Scheme in a modified form.
- 4.3 The introduction of FWH shall not have an adverse impact on an employee's position in relation to his/her conditions of service.
- 4.4 Employees who do not wish to participate in FWH Scheme can request to opt out, at the discretion of their line manager. However, all employees must clock in and out regardless of whether they participate in the FWH Scheme or not.

5 THE SCHEME

5.1 Core and flexible hours

In the table below standard core hours are set out for employee to whom this scheme applies and should be used for normal working arrangements.

From	To	Flexible/Core
*8.00 am	10.00 am	Flexible
10.00 am	12.00 pm	Core
12.00 pm	2.00 pm	Flexible (Lunch)
2.00 pm	4.00 pm	Core
4.00 pm	*6.00 pm	Flexible

**Employees who avail of the legacy Craigavon flexi policy will continue to avail of flexi from 7.30am – 6.30 pm. New employees*

The clocking system will not account for hours worked outside these time bands.

In line with Council's duty of care to provide appropriate breaks to employees throughout the working day, and in line with the Working Time Regulations (NI) 2016, all employees must take a minimum lunch period of 30 minutes per day, if required to work continuously for more than six hours the break should be taken during the six-hour period; not at the beginning or end of it - no exceptions will be considered. A minimum of 30 minutes must be deducted for lunch breaks, including when having 'working lunch' meetings.

It is essential that employees clock in/out for lunch time breaks. If employees are unable to, or forget to, clock in/out, the system will automatically deduct two hours. In this instance an adjustment must be made to reflect the actual time taken.

5.3 Accounting period

The accounting period will be four weeks and the same accounting period is used for all employee. Employees who join the scheme during an accounting period will simply record flexi time for the remainder of that period. At the end of each accounting period, there is a reconciliation between hours recorded and standard hours

5.4 Credit balance

An employee may carry over up to maximum of 15 hours excess hours (pro rata for part time employee) recorded from one accounting period to the next. Any excess of more than 15 hours will be lost. In exceptional circumstances, which requires approval from the line manager, excess hours may be carried forward to the next accounting period. If an employee has an excess carry over for 3 months or more this will be reviewed by the line manager.

5.5 Debit balance

An employee may not normally carry forward more than the maximum deficit of 15 hours (pro rata for part time employee), from one accounting period to the next. Where an employee has a deficit in excess of the limit at the end of the accounting period, the line manager will judge the case on its merits and may allow the additional debit to be carried forward to the next 4 week accounting period. In

serious cases, such as repeated excess debit of 3 months or more, the line manager may deduct the excess from the employee's annual leave entitlement or toil balance.

In the event of an employee leaving the organisation, any deficit balance will be recouped from the overall monies owing to them.

5.6 Method of recording hours

The method of recording hours worked will be via the Council's approved time and attendance system. The Council reserves the right to implement/ amend the method of recording hours/ equipment.

5.7 Absence from duty

Employees on annual leave, statutory holidays, sickness absence or other leave will be credited the time relating to their standard working day. An employee taking a half day of leave shall only be absent during one core period.

Part days worked due to sickness absence:

Employees who work part of his/her target hours for a day but goes home sick during his/her working day will be credited the difference between the total hours actually worked and his/her target hours for that day

example:-

employee's target hours = 7 hours 30 minutes

the employee works 2 hours and then goes home sick

Correction to be submitted = 5 hours 30 minutes

If time in lieu is taken, a correction should be made on the time and attendance system, which should correspond with the Toil record.

Corrections made on the time and attendance system may be subject to audit processes as appropriate.

5.8 Medical appointments

Reasonable credit time will be allowed for medical appointments i.e. Doctor, Dentist, Hospital etc. with prior approval of the line manager, however, employee are expected to make arrangements for such visits outside core time as far as possible and in line with the Leave Entitlement Policy.

5.9 Authorisation of flexi leave

Flexi leave must have the prior approval of the employee's line manager. The maximum number of flexi leave occasions during the core times in any accounting period shall be a maximum of four core periods or two days.

5.11 Travel

Where an employee is travelling directly from their home to an assignment without calling at the office, the starting time should be calculated as follows:

- (a) the time at which he/she passes the office, if it is on route to the assignment;

- (b) the time at which he/she arrives at the assignment, if the assignment lies en route to the office,
- (c) the time at which he/she leaves home, if the assignment lies in the opposite direction to that in which he/she travels from home to the office.

Finishing time will be similarly calculated.

Officers who leave work on “business absence” and who do not return to work that day will be given credit up to 5.00 pm, however an adjustment should be made to reflect the actual finishing time.

5.12 Infringements

An infringement constitutes a break in core time. A break in core time of up to five minutes i.e., arrivals up to 10.05 am and up to 2.05 pm will not normally be treated as an infringement. However, persistent breaks in core time of this nature may result in suspension or removal from the FWH Scheme and/or disciplinary action.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Line Managers

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- sufficient employees are in place to ensure the effective delivery of the service;
- flexi-Time/TOIL/overtime/annual leave are approved in line with policy and absence records are accurate and kept up to date;
- where non-compliance is identified, appropriate action is taken;
- employees correctly reconcile their time and attendance record with their annual leave record and TOIL record (if applicable) regularly, and at the end of each leave year, before submitting annual leave/ TOIL records to HR.

6.2 Human Resources

Human Resources will ensure that:

- existing and new employees are made aware of and understand the rules and procedures within the FWH Scheme;
- line managers understand the rules and procedures associated with the policy;
- compliance with the policy is adhered to;
- the time and attendance software’s administrative system is regularly and consistently managed;
- the time and attendance system is monitored for abuse and/or failure by employees and/or managers to maintain records accurately and promptly
- Employee and Managers are adequately trained to enable them to use the system.

6.3 All employees

All employees must:

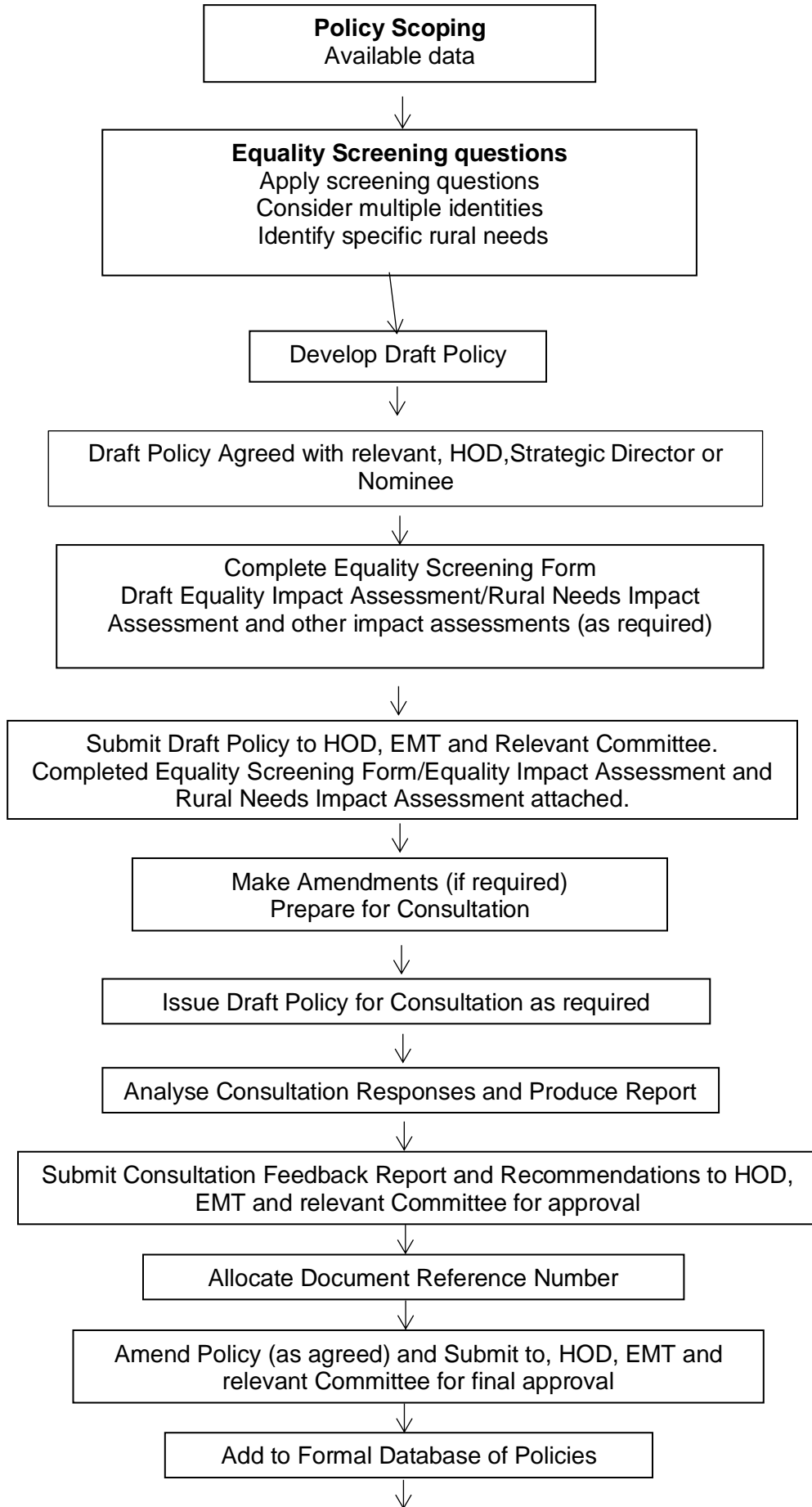
- be fully aware and comply with the requirements of the FWH scheme;

- make the required adjustments and maintain their record in a timely manner, including clocking in and out at lunch time, and submitting accurate adjustments (with appropriate evidence where relevant) when required, to line managers for authorisation.
- reconcile their time and attendance record with their annual leave record and TOIL record (if applicable) regularly, and at the end of each leave year, before submitting annual leave/ TOIL records to HR.

7 REVIEW

The successful operation of the Scheme will depend largely on the co-operation of all employees including those at supervisory level. The scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis in light of any changes in legislation or service needs.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT FLOW CHART



Policy Screening Form

Policy Scoping

Policy Title: Flexible Working Hours Scheme

Brief Description of Policy (please attach copy if available). Please state if it is a new, existing or amended policy.

Introduction of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council to clearly set out the rules applicable to flexi working hours and the procedure to be followed by employees participating in the scheme.

Intended aims/outcomes. What is the policy trying to achieve?

The policy aims to:

- outline the purpose of the FWH Scheme;
- set out clearly the basic principles and conditions of the FWH Scheme;
- outline the procedure to be followed by employees participating in the FWH Scheme and their roles and responsibilities;
- provide employees with clear and consistent information in relation to the FWH Scheme.

Policy Framework

Has the policy been developed in response to statutory requirements, legal advice or on the basis of any other professional advice? Does this affect the discretion available to Council to amend the policy?

N/A

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, please outline.

N/A

Who initiated or wrote the policy (if Council decision, please state). Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

Who initiated or wrote policy?	Who is responsible for implementation?
Aisling Knipe	The Council is responsible for implementation

Are there any factors which might contribute to or detract from the implementation of the policy (e.g. financial, legislative, other)?

N/A

Main stakeholders in relation to the policy

Please list main stakeholders affected by the policy (e.g. employee, service users, other statutory bodies, community or voluntary sector, private sector)

The procedure applies to all employees of the Council.

Are there any other policies with a bearing on this policy? If so, please identify them and how they impact on this policy.

N/A

Available Evidence

Council should ensure that its screening decisions are informed by relevant data. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

Section 75 category	Evidence
Religious belief	There is no evidence/information that the policy has an impact on any Section 75 category.
Political opinion	
Racial group	
Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information gathered above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories in relation to this particular policy/decision?

Section 75 category	Needs, experiences and priorities
Religious belief	There is no evidence/information that the policy has an impact on any Section 75 category.
Political opinion	
Racial group	

Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 categories?

Category	Policy Impact	Level of impact (Major/minor/none)
Religious belief	There are no specific impacts on any of the equality categories.	None
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependents		

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief	There are no specific impacts on any of the equality categories.	No
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependents		

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?

Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact (major/minor/none)
Religious belief		None
Political opinion		
Racial group		

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		
Racial group		

Multiple Identity

Generally speaking, people fall into more than one Section 75 category (for example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; young lesbian, gay and bisexual people). Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant s75 categories concerned.

No specific impacts have been identified for people with multiple identity. The policy will affect all employees regardless of what equality category they fall within.

Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

Is there an opportunity for the policy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

N/A

Is there an opportunity for the policy to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

N/A – internal use only policy.

Screening Decision

A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY

Please identify reasons for this below

N/A

B: MINOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AS IMPACT CAN BE ELIMINATED OR MITIGATED

Where the impact is likely to be minor, you should consider if the policy can be mitigated or an alternative policy introduced. If so, an EQIA may not be considered necessary. You must indicate the reasons for this decision below, together with details of measures to mitigate the adverse impact or the alternative policy proposed.

N/A

C: MAJOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA REQUIRED

If the decision is to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

Timetabling and Prioritising

If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment, please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3 with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people’s daily lives	

The total rating score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the council in timetabling its EQIAs.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? If yes, please give details.

Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help the authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy. It is recommended that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced to mitigate adverse impact, monitoring be undertaken on a broader basis to identify any impact (positive or adverse).

Further information on monitoring is available in the Equality Commission’s guidance on monitoring (www.equalityni.org).

Identify how the impact of the policy is to be monitored

As this is a new ABC policy it will be reviewed in 6 months.

Approval and Authorisation

A copy of the screening form for each policy screened should be signed off by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The screening recommendation should be reported to the relevant Committee/Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Aisling Knipe	HR Operations Manager	02.10.2020
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date

Please forward a copy of the completed policy and form to:

mary.hanna@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

who will ensure these are made available on the Council’s website.

The above officer is also responsible for issuing reports on a quarterly basis on those policies “screened out for EQIA”. This allows stakeholders who disagree with this

recommendation to submit their views. In the event of any stakeholder disagreeing with the decision to screen out any policy, the screening exercise will be reviewed.

RURAL NEEDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT (RNIA)



SECTION 1

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

1A. Name of Public Authority

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

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

Local Authority

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

Developing a	Policy	x	Strategy		Plan	
Adopting a	Policy	x	Strategy		Plan	
Implementing a	Policy	x	Strategy		Plan	
Revising a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Designing a Public Service						
Designing 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

SECTION 2

Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

Flexible Working Hours Scheme

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

The policy aims to:

- outline the purpose of the FWH Scheme;
- set out clearly the basic principles and conditions of the FWH Scheme;
- outline the procedure to be followed by employees participating in the FWH Scheme and their roles and responsibilities;
- provide employees with clear and consistent information in relation to the FWH Scheme.

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.	x

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.

n/a

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.

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.

--

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.

This is an internal policy applicable to employees only and has no 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		Published Statistics	
Consultation with Other Organisations		Research Papers	
Surveys or Questionnaires		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.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

This is an internal policy applicable to employees only.

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

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

If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

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.

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.

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:	Aisling Knipe
Position/Grade:	HR Operations Manager
Department/Directorate	HR & OD
Signature:	
Date:	20.10.2020
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	
Position/Grade:	
Department/Directorate	
Signature:	
Date:	20.10.2020