

Rural Needs Impact Assessment

Section 1: Define activity subject to Section 1(1) of Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Short title describing activity being undertaken that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016:

Proposal to temporarily transfer regional provision of perinatal paediatric pathology service from Belfast HSC Trust to Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

The primary purpose of the perinatal paediatric autopsy service is to conduct post mortem examinations (also known as autopsies) on children and babies to establish the factors contributing to their death, detecting and diagnosing obstetric and paediatric conditions if possible. A post mortem examination of a baby's body and of the placenta (afterbirth) may help to determine the cause of death. A post mortem may also discover whether there was a problem that could affect future pregnancies. Belfast Trust is commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board to provide this perinatal paediatric pathology service on a regional basis across Northern Ireland since 2008. Perinatal/paediatric autopsies are performed by a Paediatric Pathologist who specialises in identifying conditions that affect babies, and who examines babies to find out why they died.

1B. Are you Developing, Adopting, Implementing or Revising a Policy a Strategy or a Plan? (Underline or Circle)

Or are you delivering or designing a public service? (Underline or Circle)

What is official title of this Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public service (if any)? **Proposal to temporarily transfer regional provision of perinatal paediatric pathology service from Belfast HSC Trust to Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.**

1C. Give details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service:

Paediatric pathology is a very small specialist area. In 2016, the Royal College of Pathologists in a survey of the workforce identified 64 consultant posts across the UK, 13 of which are currently vacant.

The one remaining perinatal paediatric pathologist has indicated their intention to leave the Trust in February 2019. It is essential that plans are now put in place to ensure that a stable high quality paediatric perinatal pathology service will be available to the population of Northern Ireland in the foreseeable future.

1D. What definition of 'rural' is the Trust using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service:

Rural can be classified by those settlements with populations of less than 5,000 together with the open countryside.

Section 2 - Understanding impact of Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas? Yes

(If response is NO Go To Section 2E)

2B. How is it likely to impact on people in rural areas?

The Trust is funded for 3 full time perinatal paediatric pathologists, but since June 2016 the service has only had 1 full time perinatal paediatric pathologist in post due to staff turnover.

In response, Belfast Trust with the support of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) have previously put in place contingency arrangements and attempted to recruit but unfortunately with no sustainable, long-term success.

Meaning this service will be relocated and will have an impact for parents/carers travelling in urban and rural area.

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? NA

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas		Community Safety or Rural Crime		Agriculture-Environment	
Education or Training in Rural Areas		Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	✓	Other, please state below;	
Rural Development		Broadband/Mobile Communications in Rural Areas			
Poverty or Deprivation in Rural Areas		Rural Business, Tourism or Housing			

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

If you completed 2E above GO TO Section 6

SECTION 3 - Identifying Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Trust taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service? NO (if the response is NO, GO TO Section 3D)

3B. Which of following methods or information sources were used by the Trust to identify these needs?

3C. What social and economic needs of the people in rural areas have been identified?

3D Please explain why no steps were taken by the Trust to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

While continuing to explore all avenues to maintain the service in Northern Ireland, the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency and the Trust are now seeking to consolidate provision of perinatal pathology services for the region by a service provider in the UK on a temporary basis. (Microscopic examination and reporting of placentas is already provided outside Northern Ireland in Alder Hey NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool due to limited perinatal paediatric pathologist capacity). The Trust fully understands the concerns and sensitivities around this service and would wish to provide assurances that while we explore how best to deliver this service in the future, at all times the dignity of patients and their families will be fully respected.

SECTION 4 - Considering Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. What issues were considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas? NA

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the policy, strategy, plan or public service been changed by consideration of the rural needs identified?
No (if the response is NO, GO TO Section 5C)

5B. If yes, how have rural needs influenced the policy, strategy plan or public service?

5C. If no, why have the rural needs identified not influenced the policy, strategy, plan or public service?
REFER TO 3D

Section 6: Documentation:

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Trust 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.



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