



EA Rural Needs Annual Report 2018-19

September 2019

Accessibility statement

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered.

Please contact equality.unit@eani.org.uk

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1.0 Introduction

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services. The duties of the Act applied to EA from 1 June 2018.

As a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for the Economy (DfE), we are responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education and educational services are available to meet the needs of children and young people, and for ensuring the provision of efficient and effective youth services.

We are keenly aware of the unique position EA holds within the education sector in NI. With a budget of approximately £1.9 billion, EA is Northern Ireland's largest employer with over 44,500 staff including 8,100 teachers, 23,300 school-based staff and around 13,100 non-school-based staff (including transport staff, youth workers and HQ staff).

EA's duties and responsibilities include:

- providing a wide range of functions for the funding and delivery of local education and youth services;
- ensuring there are sufficient schools providing primary and post-primary education to meet the needs of all the people in Northern Ireland;
- providing all the finance for controlled schools (i.e. grant-aided schools under the direct control and management of EA);
- equipping, maintaining and meeting other running costs of maintained schools (i.e. grant-aided schools which are not under the direct control and management of EA);
- providing milk and meals, free books, and free transport for eligible pupils;
- enforcing school attendance;
- securing the provision of youth service facilities;
- securing an efficient primary and secondary education; and
- managing the third level student grant function for the Department of the Economy.

To this end, we are able to demonstrate our commitment to the rural needs duties and have provided details of how we have implemented and shown deliverables in terms of addressing the needs of rural stakeholders and helping to deliver better outcomes for rural dwellers.

Signed by:



Sara Long, Chief Executive, EA

2.0 Key Actions from 2018-19

EA delivered against the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, in 2018-19 by:

- Developing a range of tools for staff and guidance to support our senior officers in ensuring that the needs of people living in rural communities are considered when we are making decisions and delivering our services. A **Rural Needs Policy** was developed during May 2018, equality screened and approved at the June 2018 Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- Meeting the requirements of the Act by embedding the requirements of the 'rural assessment' into the Section 75 Equality and Human Rights Screening Template that our officers use. Questions added are detailed in Appendix 2.
- Reviewing our current screening guidance documentation and updating it to include a rural needs assessment.
- Facilitating dedicated **rural needs awareness training** that over 100 senior EA officers attended. This training covered details of the Act and how to deliver it. The training was kindly facilitated by the Rural Development Council on behalf of DAERA and has since been integrated into our mainstream policy screening training.
- Organising and hosting a **Joint Consultative Forum Event** in November 2018 which focused exclusively on rural issues. The event was attended by representatives from the Statutory, Community, Voluntary and Trade Union Sectors. At this event, participants heard about a number of EA Services dealing specifically with the needs of rural stakeholders, such as EA Youth Service, Digital Transformation and Transport initiatives.
- Conducting research, with approximately one third of young people in NI living in rural areas we undertook **Rural Needs Research** on the needs of young people living in rural communities, through the EA Youth Service. The research has highlighted concerns with rural respondents around a lack of public transport, social isolation and loneliness, mental health and wellbeing, mobility and deprivation.
- Appointing our first ever **Disability Champion at Board** level. This champion has a strong interest in the needs of rural communities and has been raising awareness of the needs of those in rural communities as part of this wider role.

3.0 Training Delivered during 2018-19 in relation to the Rural Needs Act

Board members workshop on Rural Needs – 26 April 2018

	Training	Date	Number of Attendees
1	Rural Needs Act - Awareness Session	02/05/2018	53
2	Rural Needs Act - Awareness Session	15/05/2018	49
3	Equality Screening/Rural Needs Training	16/10/2018	24
4	Equality Screening/Rural Needs Training	23/10/2018	12
5	Equality Screening/Rural Needs Training	24/10/2018	10
6	Equality Screening/Rural Needs Training	11/12/2018	7
7	Equality Screening/Rural Needs Training	16/01/2019	16
8	Equality Screening/Rural Needs Training	27/02/2019	9
Totals for 2018 – 19			180

4.0 Who to contact

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5.0 Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Screening Questions incorporated to assess rural needs

APPENDIX 2: Template for Information to be compiled (DAERA)

This document will be made available on our website:

www.eani.org.uk

APPENDIX 1 – Screening Questions incorporated to assess rural needs

1.4 Is the policy likely to impact people living in rural areas?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please complete the rural sections of the template

2.2. Quantitative Data

What is the profile of the people that are impacted by this policy or decision?

Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people impacted by this policy or decision. Note, if the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.

Rural Impacts	
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2.3. Qualitative Data

What are the social and economic impacts of the policy of people living in rural areas?

Please consider positive and negative impacts around issues such as access to education or youth provision, transport, broadband accessibility and employment impacts

Rural Impacts	
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2.4. Policy / Decision changes

Based on the rural impacts that you have identified, what changes (mitigation) can you make to the policy?

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