

# Rural Needs Impact Assessment



## Rural Needs Impact Assessment Template

This assessment has been revised and further informed by the public consultation on the proposed model for DHRS which closed on 24 October 2018. Revisions to this document are highlighted with red text.

### Name of Organisation

Community Safety Division, Department of Justice

### Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service

Domestic Homicide Reviews

#### 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?*

In 2016 the Department, in partnership with the Department of Health, published the ***Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland*** Strategy. The Strategy takes a zero tolerance approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse and provides a framework for delivery. This can only be achieved through providing robust services and effective partnership working. The Department committed within the Strategy's first action plan to develop an appropriate model to review the circumstances of a domestic homicide, consider organisational and service responses and seek out opportunities for learning. The Department has since developed, with the help of key statutory and voluntary sector partners, a proposed model and sought views on it through a public consultation. **The public consultation ran from 4 July 2018 to 28 September 2018. 36 responses were received and officials met with four groups to provide further information on the proposed DHR model. A number of respondents stated that the DHR process should have due regard to equality, diversity and issues in relation to rural needs. This Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been revised to include evidence provided by respondents in relation to rural needs. Additions are highlighted in red.**

DHRs were introduced in England and Wales in 2011 under **Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crimes and Victims Act 2004** and the Department intends to commence these provisions in Northern Ireland. The scope of the 2004 Act provides for:

*a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence or abuse or neglect by:*

- (i) a person that they were related to (familial relationship);*
- (ii) a person with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship (this would cover a current or past relationship at the time of death); or*
- (iii) a member of the same household.*

We would propose that for Northern Ireland, the purpose of the DHR would be to:

- (i) Review the way in which local professionals and organisations that came into contact with the victim work individually and together to safeguard victims;
- (ii) Review the way in which local professionals and organisations that came into contact with the perpetrator work individually and together to tackle harmful behaviour and safeguard

- (iii) Seek out opportunities for learning regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually, and together, to safeguard victims and address offending behaviour;
- (iv) Identify clearly the lessons that are to be learned and the actions that are needed to change practice as a result, how and within what timescales this will be progressed, what is expected to change as a result (this will include early learning that may be implemented ahead of a DHR formally concluding and being reported on) and how this will be measured. This relates to learning both within and between organisations and agencies;
- (v) Apply identified lessons to service responses, including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate;
- (vi) Prevent domestic violence and homicides and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims through improved working (including strengthened partnership working) and ensure that domestic abuse (and associated abusive behaviour) is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity;
- (vii) Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse; and
- (viii) Highlight good practice.

The review process should aim to ensure that relevant organisations maintain, refine, or change service policies and procedures as appropriate and that there is effective dissemination and implementation of lessons learned, so that change can be actioned, as well as promotion and wider sharing of good practice.

Domestic violence and abuse and domestic homicide is not limited to urban or rural areas but is applicable to both. We have considered the most appropriate definition of rural as being settlements with fewer than 5,000 residents together with the open countryside as rural. We would however wish to recognise that individuals may live in small towns and need to drive in excess of 30 minutes to access certain services.

We would anticipate, to achieve a fair rural outcome, that the domestic homicide review process would apply equally to individuals who live in an urban area and those who live in a rural area (this would include the victims themselves). Similarly the DHR process will acknowledge the rural community and environment the victims lived in. For example those who reside in rural communities may live far from services, shelter, jobs, health care, neighbors, family and friends. These factors may be pertinent to the review and would need to be considered as part of the process. Also the unique culture, attitudes and resources would also need to be considered as part of the DHR process as would the lack of privacy and anonymity that is often present within rural communities (everybody knows everybody). This naturally includes the positive values that may underpin such a community. Also to enable learning to be sought individuals conducting the DHR may need to travel to engage with individuals and organisations that are relevant to the DHR process but are located in rural areas. **The Consortium for the Regional Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas (the Women's Regional Consortium) responded to the public consultation and welcomed that the consultation document included rural needs in the consideration of equality and diversity issues. Additions to this assessment have been mainly drawn from their contribution. It highlighted that Northern Ireland has a large rural population (around 670,000 people live in rural areas amounting to 37% of the population) and stressed the importance of rural needs being given specific consideration in the DHR process.**

There may be issues accessing services such as transport and childcare in rural areas. The panel may

## Step 2: Understand the situation

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?*

Across Northern Ireland there is a range of statutory and internal review processes in place. However, none specifically focus on, or relate to, the homicide of an adult as a direct result of domestic violence and abuse.

As has been recognised in the **Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy** (para 2.1 refers) '*Domestic and sexual violence and abuse occurs right across society. It knows no boundaries with regard to age, gender identity, marital status, race, ethnicity or religious group, sexual orientation, social class, disability or geography.*'

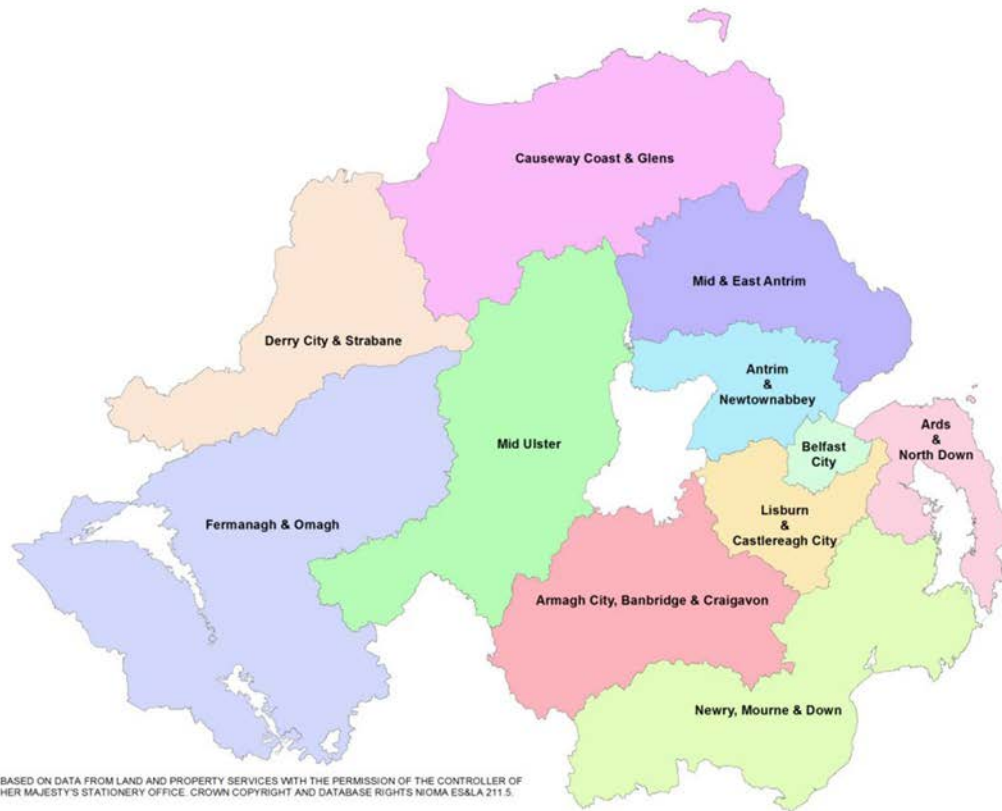
**Police Service of Northern Ireland Trends** - Using the *Police Service of Northern Ireland, Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2016/17* as a source document we have provided below a map of the policing districts in Northern Ireland and also extracted data relating to domestic motivated incidents and crimes by policing district. This has been compared to Map 1: within *A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities* which indicates rural settlements and wider countryside.

[<https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/>]

The prevalence data indicates domestic motivated incidents and crimes are higher in policing districts that have significant urban areas (e.g. Belfast, Derry City and Strabane). However, those policing districts that encompass a more rural area (Mid Ulster, Fermanagh and Omagh) have significant levels of incidents/crimes. The difference in incidents and prevalence is likely to be more reflective of population levels than location. However, to confirm this we have also considered the research conducted through Bristol University which is outlined on page 5. We have also considered population data at Page 6.

The PSNI have completed an analysis of the prevalence of domestic abuse crimes in Urban and rural areas (outlined on page 6), showing higher prevalence in Urban areas.

With regard to the implementation of domestic homicide reviews we would consider that the network of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships may be a key network to engage with. For further information on PCSPs see: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/policing-and-community-safety-partnerships>.



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**Domestic motivate incidents and crimes - 2016/17**

Policing district <sup>1,2</sup>	2016/17 incidents	2016/17 crimes
Belfast City <sup>3</sup> : of which	7,803	3,836
East	1,592	840
North	2,988	1,332
South	1,177	677
West	2,046	987
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	1,627	779
Ards & North Down	2,349	987
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,142	1,147
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	2,915	1,568
Mid Ulster	1,500	752
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,691	766
Derry City & Strabane	2,783	1,316
Causeway Coast & Glens	2,187	959
Mid & East Antrim	2,267	927
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,902	896
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>29,166</b>	<b>13,933</b>

<sup>1</sup> Crimes are geographically recorded by the police based on the location in which the incident occurred.

<sup>2</sup> As part of the Review of Public Administration which came into effect on 1 April 2015, PSNI moved from eight to eleven policing districts, with the new policing model becoming fully operational at the end of September 2015. The level of geographic information required to allocate incident/crime records to the new boundaries was insufficient for the financial years 2004/05 to 2006/07 for domestic abuse incidents. For domestic abuse crimes the geographic information required to allocate the breach of non-molestation order offences for 2004/05 to the new policing structure was not available. For this reason, comparison at policing district level is only available for the financial years dating back to 2007/08 for incidents and 2005/06 for crimes.

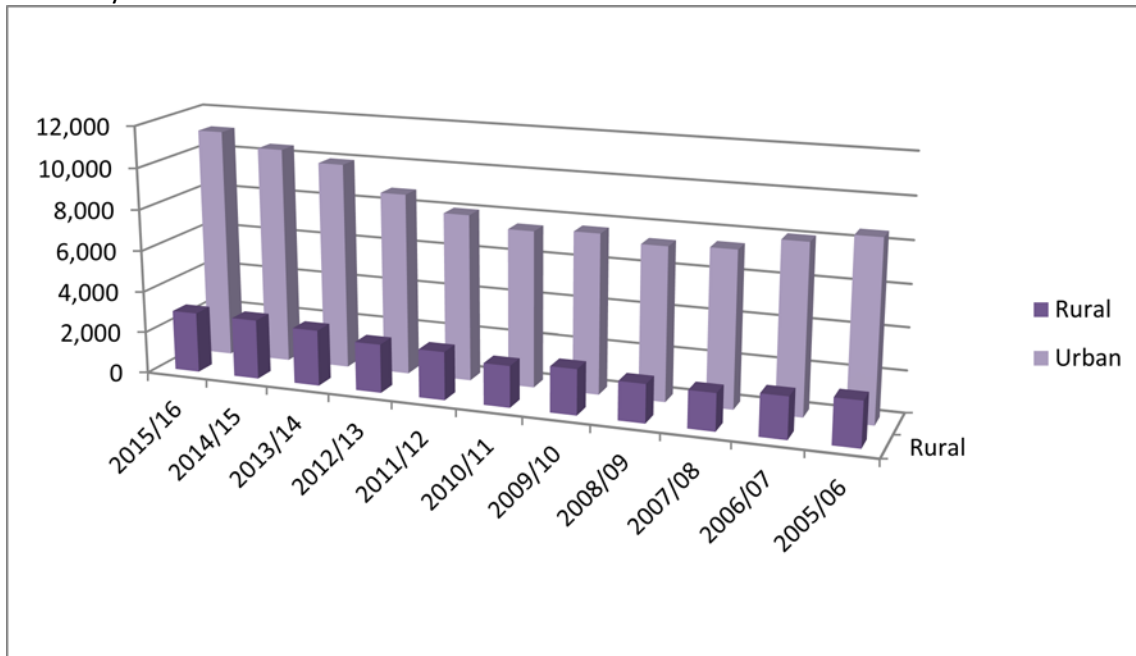
<sup>3</sup> Belfast City, whilst being only one policing district, accounts for between 24 and 30 per cent of all domestic abuse motivated incidents/crimes recorded in Northern Ireland. It includes four local policing teams based in Strandtown (East), Tennent Street (North), Lisburn Road (South), and Woodbourne (West). Figures for each of these local policing teams are provided in the table to assist with district level comparisons.

**PSNI analysis of the prevalence of domestic abuse crimes in Urban and Rural areas**

Domestic Abuse Crimes (excluding fraud) (administrative geographies)											
Urban/Rural Settlement (2015)	2015/16 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2014/15 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2013/14 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2012/13 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2011/12 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2010/11 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2009/10 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2008/09 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2007/08 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2006/07 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation	2005/06 Crimes Recorded with a Domestic Abuse Motivation
Urban	11,135	10,473	9,968	8,760	8,024	7,516	7,670	7,342	7,465	8,083	8,553
Rural	2,897	2,854	2,674	2,339	2,314	1,991	2,187	1,846	1,785	1,992	2,169
<i>Not allocated (postcode available)</i>	6	10	6	5	5	3	7	4	5	4	10
<i>Not allocated (missing postcode)</i>	35	20	8	4	13	13	15	5	20	20	27
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>14,073</b>	<b>13,357</b>	<b>12,656</b>	<b>11,108</b>	<b>10,356</b>	<b>9,523</b>	<b>9,879</b>	<b>9,197</b>	<b>9,275</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>10,759</b>

**Notes:**  
 The Central Postcode Directory (CPD) as of November 2016 was used to distribute records for each year to the Settlement Urban or Rural Indicator (2015), based on available postcodes. Unknown/missing postcodes are identified as 'not allocated' and are included in the Northern Ireland totals.  
 The 2005/06 to 2015/16 datasets have between 99.75% and 99.96% postcode coverage. The data may be subject to future revision due to improvements in the postcode data or amendments to the CPD

The analysis above is charted below:



The latest data from NISRA, provided on **Urban/Rural population figures**, is from the **2011 NI Census**.

The attached link to table CT0054NI contains figures for 'All Usual Residents' split by Urban / Rural:

<http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/SearchResults.aspx?sk=CT0054NI>

Census data highlights that 1.16m usual residents (64.2%) are classified as Urban and 648k (35.8%) are classified as Rural. In progressing the domestic homicide reviews and other associated policies we will consider factors that may impact on rural needs/areas.

As referenced later in the document we would propose that Rural Needs will be considered and equitably addressed.

**Research** – Outlined below are extracts from the research conducted by Dr Melanie McCarry and Dr Emma Williamson in May 2009.

*‘All the groups were asked about their views on how violence against women might impact differently on rural and urban women. It was interesting that some of the benefits of living in rural locations were also seen as limitations when it came to addressing violence against women. Community support, justice, and censure were seen as benefits to living in a rural community. However, the fact that ‘everybody knows everybody else’s business’ was identified as one of the main barriers for women who might seek help if violence/abuse was an issue for them. All of the groups identified that rural areas had some services but that transport, accessibility, and confidentiality were the three most important issues affecting rural women affected by violence and abuse.’*

#### **‘Experiences of Rural and Urban Women**

*Of the 53% of rural women and 56.2% of urban women who had experienced violence/abuse, 93.4% and 92.6% respectively agreed to tell us more about their experiences. As such, the following data refers to a smaller sample than actually reported experiencing violence and abuse.*

**Table 8: Lifetime experiences of violence and abuse.**

	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Urban %</b>
<i>emotional abuse*</i>	34.3	33.6
<i>minor physical abuse*</i>	32.6	32
<i>psychological abuse*</i>	29.1	29.3
<i>controlling behaviour*</i>	24.6	24.4
<i>serious physical abuse*</i>	19.3	17.4
<i>financial control</i>	16.4	14.3
<i>enforced isolation*</i>	17	15.4
<i>sexual violence</i>	14	13.2
<i>attempted rape**</i>	10.5	10.6
<i>stalked/followed**</i>	13.2	15
<i>rape**</i>	11.6	11.9
<i>prevented from working</i>	6.3	4.3
<i>physical abuse with a weapon</i>	7.2	6.1

*\* examples of these sorts of behaviours were provided.*

*\*\* all forms of violence against women except these were related to ex or current partners.’*

#### **Some key findings:**

- *Rural women perceive that violence against women happens more in urban areas.*
- *Over 70% of respondents (urban and rural women) said that violence against women is not openly discussed in their communities.*
- *Over half of respondents had experiences of violence and abuse.*
- *Rural and urban women are equally as likely to experience violence and abuse.*
- *The most common type of violence/abuse for all women was emotional abuse, minor physical violence, psychological abuse and controlling behaviour.*
- *Some of the interviewees stated that the emotional abuse they experienced was worse than the physical violence because it is not as recognised and cannot be seen.*
- *Some of the interviewees stated that the emotional abuse they experienced was worse than the physical violence because it is not as recognised and cannot be seen.*
- *Respondents identified a lack of services to address the impact of violence against women including services that deal with non-physical violence and abuse (including emotional and psychological violence and abuse).*
- *Rural women expressed concern about the confidential nature of services they received in their communities.*
- *Women were more likely to disclose experiences of violence and abuse to friends and family members rather than to statutory or third sector agencies.*

Full research: [McCarry, M. and Williamson, E. \(2009\) Violence Against Women in Rural and Urban Areas. Bristol: University of Bristol.](#)



**Consultation responses**

Respondents to the consultation noted that there are additional barriers for victims of domestic abuse in rural areas. Respondents explained that there are many factors at play in small, local communities which make it harder for women to leave a domestic abuse situation. Some of these come from the fact that people (both the victim and the perpetrator) are often well known in rural communities. Women may be reluctant to be open about domestic abuse because of perceived shame, desire to keep their personal business private or because of their (or the perpetrator's) standing in the community.

Respondents also considered that there are issues around the lack of services in rural communities, meaning that it is much more difficult for rural women to report issues and take action. In developing its consultation response, the Women's Regional Consortium carried out a consultation exercise with members. One participant noted that "rural women that have no private transport or access to public transport are more isolated. Travel is more costly."

It was noted that, in general women suffering domestic abuse are reluctant to disrupt their children's lives by leaving the family home, school and local communities. This can be even more difficult for rural women who may not only have to uproot their home and family, but even their whole way of life, potentially moving to an urban area to access services such as social housing or refuge. It was considered that these issues may make rural women more susceptible to a homicide situation as they feel even more pressured to stay in the family home.

### 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?*

We anticipate that there will not be barriers to delivery in that the domestic homicide review process will apply to all areas of Northern Ireland, both urban and rural.

We do consider that there will be a need to ensure that individuals and organisations in rural areas have the appropriate opportunity to contribute to the DHR process, for example the DHR Panel and Chair may be required to travel to facilitate appropriate engagement. Respondents supported **this view and suggested that the process should consider alternate ways of working to account for rural needs to ensure that everyone can actively participate in the DHR process.**

We will ensure that **rural needs** are recognised within the guidance in relation to the process and when recruiting/tendering for a chair. It is unlikely to be a significant factor in terms of costs.

**Respondents considered that organisations representing rural areas should be included in the DHR process, where appropriate. We recognise the importance of these organisations contributing in the DHR process and guidance and practice will be developed in line with this.**

Consideration will also be required in terms of disseminating good practice and learning in both urban and rural communities across the sectors, as appropriate. This will be applicable to the range of disciplines involved in the DHR process, e.g. Social Care, Policing, Housing, support provision etc.

It is anticipated that the implementation of the domestic homicide review process will, in the main, be delivered within existing budget allocations with regards to the majority of the process. Costs will be incurred in relation to the recruitment/procurement of the role of an independent DHR Chair and administrative support for key elements of the DHR governance arrangements. However, this cost would not be specific to rural areas but would apply to the process as a whole.

Although not a barrier, it should be noted that the context of the rural environment in which a potential victim and perpetrator live may have relevance with regards to the domestic abuse and homicide. For example, victim's social isolation may be compounded by geographical isolation. The context of domestic violence and abuse in a rural setting will be recognised and referenced in the guidance and training associated with the domestic homicide review process.

The impact on the third sector will be considered separately through a regulatory impact assessment.

## 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?*

As highlighted previously the domestic homicide review process will apply equally across Northern Ireland. An alternative delivery mechanism, other than that outlined in statute, would not be appropriate. This has been confirmed following the assessment of a number of options, as summarised below:

- 1) **Status Quo** - capture lessons learned through the current serious case review/case management review processes – Rejected - would not deliver objectives nor cater for domestic violence and abuse specific cases.
- 2) **'Piggy back' on the review processes** already in place to capture lessons specifically related to domestic violence and abuse – Shortlisted then rejected – although it may meet majority of objectives there is limited focus on domestic violence and abuse cases and some may be missed as domestic violence/abuse does not prompt existing reviews.
- 3) Develop an appropriate **model for DHRs** - for adult domestic motivated homicides as per Statute – Shortlisted and identified as preferred option – meets objectives and will be specific to domestic violence and abuse cases.
- 4) Develop an appropriate **model for DHRs (including children)** – Rejected – outside scope of the legislation. Homicide of children also already robustly covered here.

To ensure a fair rural outcome, as previously stated we consider specific action may be needed, for example the DHR Chair and Panel travelling to rural areas to facilitation engagement with the DHR process. As referenced earlier we will ensure that this is recognised within relevant guidance and when recruiting/tendering for a chair. **We will also ensure that organisations representing rural areas will be involved in the process, if relevant.**

Guidance and training etc. to police will recognise the context that a rural location may have on domestic abuse and the impact on the victim in terms of accessing service etc.

With regards to the outcome of the DHR process we anticipate that some learning will relate to local initiatives and services, in that regard delivery of improvements through local delivery bodies will be key. It will also be vital that local delivery bodies participate fully in the process and, where appropriate, share learning gained locally on a regional level to promote and embed a culture of learning in relation to DHRs and domestic violence and abuse services.

## Step 5: Implementation & 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?*

With regards to implementation and evaluation:

- Initially - a 'test' case will be used to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed model (likely within first three months of recruitment of a DHR Chair and establishment of a panel)
- Monitoring will be embedded into the process and will happen after each DHR.
- Progress will be reported every two years.
- It is anticipated that an evaluation of the DHR model will be conducted after 3 years.

We have not set any specific rural indicators and targets in relation to monitoring of the DHR process. We would however require evidence to do with service improvements and implementation at a local and regional level. This will be dictated by the outcome of each DHR. Therefore rural measures etc. could emerge from DHR findings.

Measurement of 'success' will be established as part of the DHR process (for each case). Cumulative measurement will be managed and reported a minimum of every two years by the DHR Chair.

We do not anticipate that we will collect statistics that may reflect the rural impact. We will however engage with local delivery partners as they will inform all aspects of the DHR process.

**Step 6: Evaluation & 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?*

Nothing of substance to add to what has been provided previously. Once the DHR model has been confirmed the evaluation and review process will be further considered in the DHR guidance document. It is likely to remain similar to the approach outlined above and rural needs/impact will feature within the guidance as will the dissemination of local/rural learning and outcomes.

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