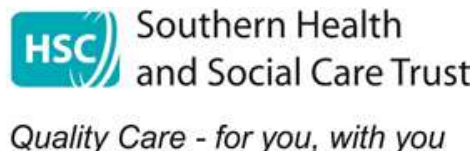


# OECD Conference

## Rural Proofing for Health



**Aidan Campbell Rural Community Network**  
**Cathy Lavery Southern HSC Trust**



# Rural Needs Toolkit for Health & Social Care

- Challenges for delivery of health & social care in rural Northern Ireland
- Background to the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland 2016
- Rural Needs Duty
- Rural Needs Toolkit Development
- Project launch and future plans

# Challenges for delivery of health & social care in rural Northern Ireland

- 36% of population live in rural communities in NI
- Rural dwellers have longer life expectancy but
- Rural older people are poorer & more removed from services than urban counterparts
- Social/affordable housing in rural areas is limited
- Rural housing stock is older, less well insulated & more expensive to heat
- Dependence on private car as public transport is limited
- Recruiting & retaining health & social care staff can be challenging
- Health service reform programme stalled as no NI Executive in place
- Pandemic recovery issues

# Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland 2016

- Legislation introduced to underpin “rural proofing”
- Imposes a duty on relevant duty holders to “*have due regard to rural needs*”
- Department’s guidance interprets this to mean that public authorities must consciously consider the needs of people in rural areas.
- Duty holders include all NI Executive Departments, local authorities & health and social care Trusts, the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-Being, the Regional Health and Social Care Board

# The Duty and Guidance

- Public authorities have a Duty to have due regard to rural needs when:  
“(a) Developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and  
(b) Designing and delivering public services.”
- A public authority must, in such manner as may be directed by the Department—  
(a) compile information on the exercise of its functions under section 1;  
(b) include that information in its annual report; and (c) send that information to the Department.

# Rural Needs Toolkit for Health & Social Care

- 5 Health & Social Care Trusts & NI Ambulance Service
- Partnership approach
- Toolkit a practical support to help planners fulfil rural needs duty
- Lessons learned from the English version but made relevant to NI context
- Aim to make it as relevant to health & social care sector as possible
- Provides a range of case study examples of good practice in rural proofing from NI and UK
- Signposts to further information and support

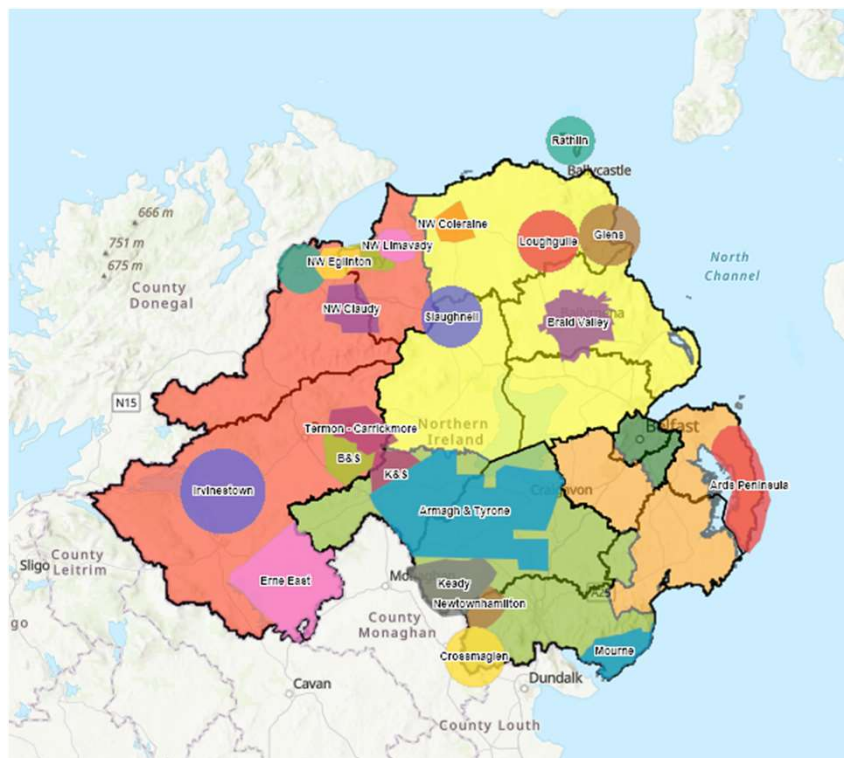
# Next steps

- Launch planned for 10 October 2022
- Endorsed by the Health Minister Robin Swann
- Involvement of the Department of Agriculture/Environment & Rural Affairs – who view this as a further tool for implementation of the duty
- Potential of an action learning set with NI Health Trusts and GB health trusts to learn more about implementation of the toolkit





# Case study example: Community First Responders



- 18 schemes over 300 volunteers
- Alerted to specific types of emergency incidents by NIAS including: chest pain, cardiac arrest, choking, potential stroke
- 4700 alerts sent across all schemes in 2021

*“Community First Responders are a vital link in the Chain of Survival and can be quite literally the difference between life and death”*



# Thanks for Listening

Further information:

- [National Centre for Rural Health & Care](#)
- [Guide to Rural Needs Act NI](#)
- [Rural Community Network NI](#)
- [Belfast HSC Trust](#)
- [Northern HSC Trust](#)
- [Southern HSC Trust](#)
- [South Eastern HSC Trust](#)
- [Western HSCT](#)
- [NI Ambulance Service](#)