



## Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be compiled

### Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

*(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).*

Name of Public Authority:

Reporting Period: April 20  to March 20

#### Background

The Western Trust is committed to its reporting and monitoring obligations in accordance with Rural Needs Act (NI) (2016). The Trust has carried out the following activity to comply with and mainstream the duties.

- Health & Social Care Trusts (HSC) have worked collaboratively to ensure that the rural needs assessment template is user-friendly and relevant to HSC business. The key components of the template issued by DAERA have been used in compliance with the legislative obligations.

- The Directorate of Performance and Service Improvement is responsible for central co-ordination of the monitoring report on behalf of the Trust.
- In response to the COVID pandemic in 2020 and the requirement for social distancing etc. DAERA's Train the Trainer program, due to take place in 2020, was cancelled. HSC continue to liaise, including with DAERA on this.
- Advice and guidance is available within the Trust for staff completing rural needs assessments.
- HSC Trusts are presently working with the National Centre for Rural Health and Care to Develop a Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit for HSCNI.

The Trust is committed to promoting and upholding its duties in relation to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and will have due regard to rural needs in the development of all our policy and public service delivery decisions. The Trust is mindful that the level of 'regard' due will depend on the circumstances and, in particular, on the relevance of rural needs to the decision or function in question. The greater the relevance and potential impact for people in rural needs, the greater the regard required by the duty. In the table below, the Trust has provided detail on those policies which were considered as having a bearing on rural needs and therefore subject to a rural needs assessment. In preparing this monitoring template the Trust considered policies in respect of the social and economic needs of persons in rural areas and for the majority, no rural needs were identified. Many of these policies are clinical or technical in nature and have no bearing on rural needs.

The following table includes information on policies where a Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been completed;

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI)</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
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2016 <sup>1</sup> .		
<b>Western Health and Social Care Trust Rebuild Plan – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>	Health and Social Care	<p>With this Rebuild Plan the Trust sets out a high level overview of the services that we plan to maintain and rebuild during April to June 2021. This plan is for those services which experience significant impact as a result of the pandemic and sets out the actions being proposed to further increase capacity and/or access from April 2021. The Trusts ability to deliver against this plan is linked to the effect of any subsequent surges during this period</p> <p>The actions within the rebuild plan will have an impact on people living in urban and rural areas. Impacts on people living in rural areas may include, cost of travel to services which are centrally based in urban areas, the ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to those clinics which may be centrally based, the availability of transport, access to adequate broadband and mobile connection in rural areas, for remote access to services.</p> <p>Departments within the Trust continue to offer appointments in a range of formats including via virtual telephone and digital communication. We are also increasing/reintroducing face to face contacts where appropriately risk assessed. This blended model of service provision adopted by some service areas, has in some instances had a positive impact on some service users and carers as it will have reduced the need to travel for appointments.</p>
<b>WHSCT Service Delivery Plan 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 – 31 August 2021</b>	Health and Social Care	<p>The purpose of this Service Delivery Plan is to describe the actions the Western Trust will take during July and August 2021 to continue to meet the needs of our people and communities and to address the impact the</p>

		<p>pandemic has had on all our services, particularly on waiting times to access assessment and treatment, services for children, older people and those who have mental health needs. In doing so, we will continue to take a carefully considered and balanced approach, ensuring that our plans take into account lessons learned over the past year whilst also acknowledging that we will continue to live with COVID-19 for some time and the ongoing need to implement restrictions and precautions for the safety of our patients, service users and staff will continue to affect how we can deliver our services. Many of our services were suspended or reduced, including many elective procedures, allowing us to protect emergency and urgent services and these are now being re-established. The focus of the HSC continues to be on delivering all elective services in an environment that is safe for both staff and patients.</p> <p>It has become clear that COVID-19 has had a particularly detrimental impact on many who were already facing disadvantage and experiencing health inequalities. We will continue to work in partnership across health and social care, with GP colleagues and government departments and organisations in statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. This includes continued partnership working with local councils to support delivery of Community Plans, continued focus through our Pathfinder programme on the development of an integrated population health plan aimed at promoting access and meeting the health and care needs of people living in Fermanagh and West Tyrone, ongoing coordination of the Department for Communities Neighbourhood Renewal Groups and support for programmes that reduce health inequalities, and continued focus through our PHA commissioned programmes of work on disadvantaged and hard to reach groups. We will also continue to communicate regularly with elected representatives to provide updates and information on key issues. We will keep or surge plans under review and work regionally on any surge preparations required.</p>
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<p><b>WHSCT Service Delivery Plan + Winter Pressures October 2021 onwards</b></p>	<p>Health and Social Care</p>	<p>Annually the Western Health &amp; Social Care Trust prepares a seasonal resilience plan outlining measures to address the predicted increase in demand for unscheduled care services each winter. Traditionally, this is a period when overall demand for care services increases and is frequently significantly greater than the capacity of our hospital and community to respond. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial adverse impact on services across all areas of the Trust with capacity in many areas still below pre-COVID levels.</p> <p>The Trust has adopted DOH system principles in preparing the surge plan as outlined in the Regional COVID-19 Pandemic Surge Planning Strategic Framework (1 September 2020); patient safety remains the overriding priority. The plan includes activity projections for October – December</p>

		<p>2021 across a range of services.</p> <p>As we enter the winter months the Trust is committed to taking a carefully considered and balanced approach to the delivery of services taking into account lessons learned over the past 18 months in responding to the pandemic whilst also recognising the wider impact the pandemic continues to have on our service users and local community and our staff. The global pandemic continues to present the health and social care system with unprecedented challenges which impact on how services can be safely delivered. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, the Trust is committed to planning and working as a collective with the whole HSC system over the coming months.</p> <p>This plan focuses on three areas describing how the Trust will deliver increased resilience through this challenging autumn and winter period:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Winter Pressures for both adults and paediatrics</b> including our estimated bed projections, actions to secure the appropriate level of suitably trained staff and our response to the influenza virus.</li><li>2. <b>COVID-19 (4<sup>th</sup> surge)</b> – this sets out across key service areas the actions required to meet the demands of the pandemic whilst continuing to apply the key regional planning principles of equity of access for the treatment of patients, minimizing the transmission of COVID-19 and protecting the most urgent services.</li><li>3. <b>The delivery of key regional priorities</b> for unscheduled care, elective care, cancer services, adult social care, children’s services, mental health and physical disability services.</li></ol> <p><b>Impact of Combined Winter and COVID-19 Pressures</b> Regional modelling has predicted a fourth wave of COVID-19 will coincide with this year’s winter period and is also likely to overlap with outbreaks of other respiratory viruses such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and</p>
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		<p>influenza with the potential to substantially impact on both adult and children’s health services. Winter pressures traditionally have a significant impact on our hospital and community services. The predicted resurgence of COVID-19 combined with the increased activity associated with winter pressures will place immense demands on the entire system and will have a wide-reaching impact on our ability to provide services across the Trust.</p> <p>In making any decisions, we will maintain a focus on patient and staff safety including maintaining social distancing and infection prevention control measures across all our care settings and we will also engage with staff as appropriate. This plan incorporates short term actions to begin tackling our health inequalities, although it is recognised that this is a long term continuous process.</p> <p>These plans impact on people throughout the whole of the Western Trust area. For those in rural areas the impact may include cost of travel to centrally based areas to access services, the ability to travel and the availability of transport. The blended model of service provision currently ongoing throughout the Trust includes face to face contact and/or, where appropriate, telephone/virtual appointments. In some instances a positive impact has been a reduction in travel to appointments when telephone/virtual appointments are used. The Trust remains mindful that both broadband and/or telephone connection in some rural areas remains an issue however face to face appointments remain an option.</p>
<p><b>Service Delivery Plan 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022</b></p>	<p>Health and Social Care</p>	<p>This Service Delivery/Resilience Plan describes the actions the Trust will take during January to March 2022 to respond to the increased pressures that customarily occur during the Winter period and any further surge of COVID-19. The key focus of the plan is to describe how the Trust will deliver increased resilience through this challenging autumn and winter period across three areas which are detailed below;</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Responding to Winter Pressures (Adults and Paediatrics)</b> - this includes estimated bed projections over this period based on an agreed regional methodology, planned actions to secure the appropriate level of suitably trained staff and planned response to increased incidence of the influenza virus</li><li>• <b>COVID-19 (4<sup>th</sup> surge)</b> – this sets out the actions required across a number of service areas to meet the demands of the pandemic whilst continuing to apply the agreed regional planning principles of equity of access for the treatment of patients, minimizing the transmission of COVID-19 and protecting the most urgent services.</li><li>• <b>Delivery of Key Regional Priorities</b> - this section sets out the Trust's plans to address the a range of regional priorities and covers unscheduled care, elective care, cancer services, adult social care, children's services, mental health and physical disability services.</li></ul> <p>The next few months are expected to continue to be extremely challenging with the on-going threat of further surge alongside winter pressures and the potential for further local outbreaks and is a rapidly evolving and concerning situation for all who plan and deliver services. A major challenge for the Trust relates to workforce in respect of securing and maintaining safe staffing levels across all areas, ensuring safe environments for patients and staff aligned to current COVID-19 guidance and policy, and funding to support the necessary actions required to address our challenges.</p> <p>Access to all our services continues to be impacted by the pandemic and this is expected to persist during January to March 2022. Addressing patient and staff safety through social distancing, infection prevention control and testing measures remains a priority for the Trust. We will continue to prioritise and focus on treating the most urgent cases first, and</p>
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		<p>as a result, some patients will have to wait longer than we would like. The Trust also acknowledges the role of the Belfast Trust in the provision of a range of regional specialist services and the challenges it will face in continuing to provide these on behalf of the region</p> <p>This plan incorporates short term actions to begin tackling our health inequalities, although it is recognised that this is a long term continuous process.</p> <p>We will continue to work in partnership with our stakeholders and key partners including Primary Care, Voluntary and Community Sector, Independent Sector and Trades Unions in the development and implementation of our plans.</p> <p>The plan impacts on people throughout the whole of the Western Trust area. For those in rural areas the impact may include cost of travel to centrally based areas to access services, the ability to travel and the availability of transport. The blended model of service provision currently ongoing throughout the Trust includes face to face contact and/or, where appropriate, telephone/virtual appointments. In some instances a positive impact has been a reduction in travel to appointments when telephone/virtual appointments are used. The Trust remains mindful that both broadband and/or telephone connection in some rural areas remains an issue however face to face appointments remain an option.</p>
<p><b>No More Silos – Western Plan</b></p>	<p>Health and Social Care</p>	<p>The No More Silos (NMS) Action Plan sets out 10 key actions for consideration, to ensure that urgent &amp; emergency care services across primary and secondary care can be maintained and improved in an environment that is safe for patients and for staff. This is both in terms of the pressures we are facing this winter (particularly if there is an increase in COVID 19 cases); and the systemic issues faced by emergency care generally.</p>

		<p>This initiative will include, Phone First Service, the first point of contact and triage to services which will have direct access to direct and book appropriate patients into alternate pathways including secondary care services and into our minor injury streams, depends on the service users/patients having access to adequate landline or mobile technology.</p> <p>The current plans to provide equity within the Trust between the Northern and Southern sectors through the Hospital at Home service will cover the Fermanagh and West Tyrone areas, once established further expansion of the service will allow coverage of all rural areas within the Southern Sector.</p> <p>The impact of this plan on service users living in rural areas will be cost of travel and travel time to services which are centrally based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area, the availability of public or community transportation for these journeys and access to adequate mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services.</p>
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## NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.