



Paper No. SET/32/19	
	Tick One ✓
For discussion	
For approval	
For information/noting	✓

Date of Trust Board Meeting: 29 May 2019

Confidential or Public Agenda: Public

Agenda item: Update – Implications of the Rural Needs Act 2016 for SET

1.0 Introduction

The Rural Needs Act 2016 means that from 1 June 2018 the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has a legal duty to ensure due regard is paid to the consideration of the social and economic needs of service users in rural areas when designing and delivering our services.

2.0 Background information

The Rural Needs Act 2016 has implications for the way the Trust undertakes certain activities.

- The key implication is that it imposes a statutory duty on the Trust to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing and revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and implementing public services
- This information can be recorded in the Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template, please see Appendix 1, link below:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/guide-to-rural-needs-act-ni-appendix-1.pdf
- The Act also requires the Trust to compile information on the way it carries out the due regard duty. This information must be sent to DAERA annually. This will be added to an Annual Report to be published by DAERA and laid before the Assembly. Please see Appendix 2 link below:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/guide-to-rural-needs-act-ni-appendix-2.pdf
- The information is also required to be published in SE Trust Annual Report. Failure to comply could, in principle, result in a Judicial Review.
- It is important that as a Trust we understand what the Act requires us to do and that this is communicated to the relevant staff in SE Trust.
- DAERA has produced revised guidance to assist public authorities in

carrying out their duties under the Act.

The resources and support available are:

- Supplementary guidance material available from DAERA.
- Tailored e-learning programme (currently being updated).
- DAERA website www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/rural-needs
- Rural Development Council (RDC) website <http://www.rdc.org.uk/Rural-Needs>
- RDC Training sessions for relevant service leads, policy authors and planning managers (Although initial training has already taken place, additional training sessions are anticipated for 2019).

Since inception of the Rural Needs Act legislation in June 2018, advice and guidance with completion of Rural Needs Act screening templates has been provided to service leads and relevant staff by the Equality Department in the Trust on an interim basis. This will now be led by the Strategic and Capital Development Department.

A Trust Rural Needs Task and Finish Group has been established. This group is chaired by the Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics. This group is progressing plans for processing, monitoring and reporting arrangements in relation to the legislative requirements for the Rural Needs Act.

Planning is underway for the internal launch of the Rural Needs Act legislation and guidance for staff. As stated previously, it is anticipated that further training will take place in 2019 for relevant staff and will also be offered to all Directors and Assistant Directors.

3.0 Brief summary of key points contained in the paper/s

The Rural Needs Act 2016 means that the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has a legal duty to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies, plans, and when designing and delivering public services. This imposes a statutory duty on the Trust to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing and revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and implementing public services.

Progressing, monitoring and reporting of adherence to Rural Needs Act legislation will be led by the Strategic and Capital Development Department. Planning is underway for the internal launch of the Rural Needs Act legislation and guidance for staff as well as additional training sessions.

4.0 Recommendation/s for the Trust Board (please state if the paper/s is for information/noting or for approval by Board members)

For Information/noting.

Lead Director: Roisin Coulter
Designation: Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics
Date: 29 May 2019