South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Paper No: SET/171/26	
Trust Board Meeting: 30 September 2026	
Public Agenda Item 4.13	

Title of Paper:	**Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report 2025/26**		
For Decision	~~**For Assurance**~~	~~**For Information**~~	~~**For Discussion**~~

1.0	**Background:**
	The Trust is required to produce an annual monitoring return to ensure compliance with Rural Needs Act 2016 The Rural Needs Act 2016 means that from 1 June 2018, the 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 developing, adopting, implementing and revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and implementing public services. The information for 2025/26 has been requested for return to DEARA by 2 October 2026. DAERA have introduced a new digital platform for public authorities to submit their annual monitoring information.
2.0	**Key Issues:**
	The appendix attached document (**SET/172/26**) evidence of Trust completing the Rural Needs Screening Templates demonstrating due regards to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the relevant policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service. Trust Board are asked to approve the paper for submission to DAERA.
3.0	**Link to Strategic Objectives:**
	Our People ☒ Population Health & Health Inequalities ☐ Delivering Care Closer to Home ☐ Hospital Care ☐ Safety, Quality and Experience of Care ☐
4.0	**Resource Implications (inc Organisational, Financial, Human Resources):**
	1. Organisational
	N/A
	2. Financial
	N/A
	3. Human Resources
	N/A
	4. Environmental Factors Yes ☐ No ☒

5.0	**Impact on Safety, Quality and Experience (SQE):**
	1. Safety
	N/A
	2. Quality
	N/A
	3. Experience
	N/A
6.0	**Key Risks and Proposals to Mitigate:**
	1. Key Risks
	N/A
	2. Proposals to Mitigate
	N/A
7.0	**Risk Register:**
	It is listed on BAF? Yes ☐ No ☒ Is it listed on CRR? Yes ☐ No ☒

Lead Director:	**Claire Smyth, Director of People and Organisational Development**
Date:	**23 September 2026**

Reasons for Paper Presentation

Decision	*Used when an item requires a formal agreement or endorsement by the meeting / committee members. Examples are approving minutes, budgets, proposals or policies.*
Assurance	*Used when an item can be measured against a certain criteria / standard. Examples are a project is on course with delivery or financial targets are being met.*
Information	*Used when an item is presented for the purpose of updating or informing the attendees without requiring a decision or action, such as reports, updates, or announcements.*
Discussion	*Used when an item is listed primarily for open discussion, brainstorming or gathering input from the members without requiring an immediate decision.*