

From the Director of Rural Affairs
Dr Jason Foy



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23rd May 2025

Dear Colleague

INPUT TO THE RURAL NEEDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

I am writing to you to request your public authority's input to the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report 1 April 2024 to 31 March 25.

As you will be aware Section 3(1) of the [Rural Needs Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) (the Act) requires public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act to:

- a) compile information on the exercise of their functions under Section 1 of the Act;
- b) publish that information in the public authority's own annual report; and
- c) send a copy of that information to DAERA.

Section 3(2) of the Act requires DAERA to publish the information sent to it in an annual report and to lay a copy of the annual report before the Assembly.

I should therefore be grateful if you would arrange for your organisation to send its Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Return for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report no later than **Friday 20 June 2025**.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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Please note that returns should be made using the [Template for Information To Be Compiled \(Appendix 2\)](#), which is available on the DAERA website, and should be submitted in **MS Word format** (not pdf) to rural.needs@daera-ni.gov.uk.

DAERA provides a range of resources on the [Rural Needs](#) section of its website to support public authorities including the official guidance document '[A Guide to the Rural Needs Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016 for Public Authorities \(Revised\)](#)'.

You will be aware of the statutory duty on public authorities under Section 1(1) of the Act to have due regard to rural needs when developing, implementing, adopting or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services.

A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) is the process recommended in the guide to assist public authorities in fulfilling their due regard duty when engaged in these activities.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your organisation's input to the [Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024](#) which was published on the DAERA website on 4 April 2025. Our department recognises and values the role of the Rural Needs Co-ordinator in each public authority in ensuring compliance with the statutory obligations on public authorities and of DAERA under the Act.

If you, or your team, would like further information or advice, please contact DAERA's Rural Needs Team on 028 9052 0884/028 2566 5704 or at rural.needs@daera-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



DR JASON FOY
Director of Rural Affairs

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