

Rural Needs Impact Assessment

Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Name of Organisation:

Invest Northern Ireland

Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Productivity Improvement Service

Step 1: Define the Issue

Key questions to consider:

- *What are the objectives of the strategy, policy plan or service?*
- *What impact do you intend it to have in rural areas?*
- *How is 'rural' defined for the purposes of this policy/strategy/service/plan?*
- *What would constitute a fair rural outcome in this case?*

The Productivity Improvement Service works directly with Invest NI customers to deliver tailored support to introduce productivity improvements and effective Supply Chain Management in order to improve operational productivity. We focus on developing capability within the businesses we are engaged with to facilitate sustainable improvements. We offer advice, on-site project scoping, project management, mentoring and coaching. We also deliver workshops which can either be generic or bespoke depending on the company needs.

Depending on needs our engagement can include any of the following:

- Advice
- Diagnostic
- Awareness raising
- Training
- On-site support, Coaching & Mentoring tailored to business needs
- Access to best practice

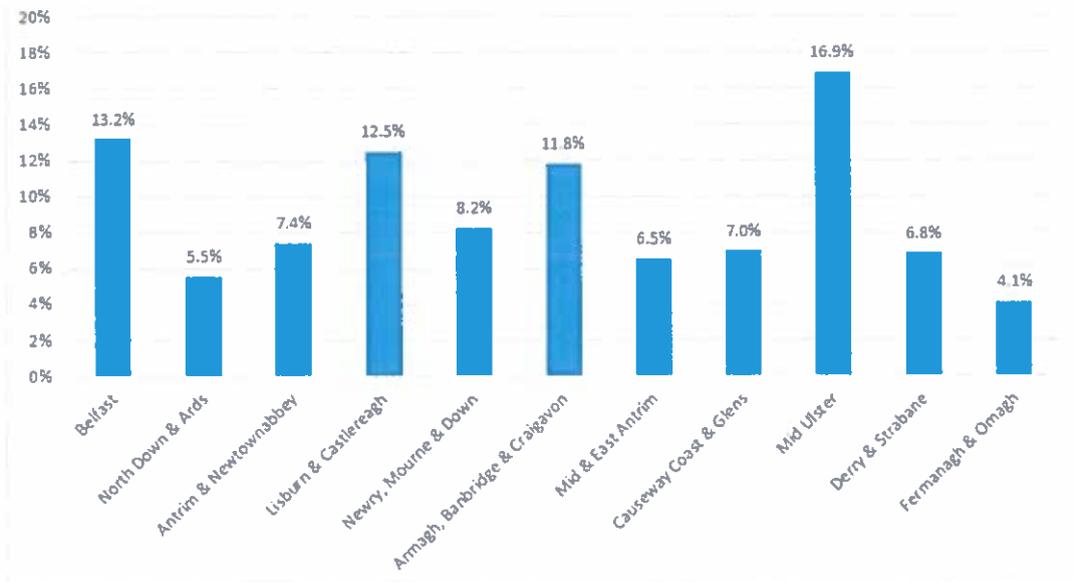
This service is available to all Invest NI customers.

Step 2: Understand the situation

Key questions to consider:

- *What is the current situation in rural areas?*
- *What evidence (statistics, data, research, stakeholder advice) do you have about the position in rural areas?*
- *If the relevant evidence is not available, can this be sourced?*
- *Do you have access to the views of rural stakeholders about the likely impact of the policy?*
- *Are there existing design features or mitigations already in place to take account of rural needs?*

The service is available to all Invest NI customers, to date in excess of 1000 referrals have been received. The following depicts the geographical spread for these referrals (depicted by Super Council area):



On an on-going basis the Productivity Improvement Service will typically be engaged with approx. 110–120 Invest NI customers on a 1-1 basis. The engagement with Invest NI customers will fluctuate over a period of time, however the current geographical spread (% of total by County) of this is:

Antrim	Armagh	Down	Fermanagh	Tyrone	Londonderry
33%	20%	17%	9%	11%	10%

Part of the service involves the delivery of a range of workshops, awareness raising events, where these are not delivered in-house on company premises these will be arranged to be held either on a regional basis or in a central location (i.e. Belfast International Airport vicinity).

Step 3: Develop and appraise options

Key questions to consider:

- *Are there barriers to delivery in rural areas?*
- *If so, how can these be overcome or mitigated?*
- *Will it cost more to deliver in rural areas?*
- *What steps can be taken to achieve fair rural outcomes?*

As the spread of customers and referrals demonstrates there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas.

The only additional cost for delivery in rural areas may be additional mileage expenses incurred by the team.

Step 4: Prepare for Delivery

Key questions to consider:

- *Do the necessary delivery mechanisms exist in rural areas?*
- *Have you considered alternative delivery mechanisms?*
- *What action has been taken to ensure fair rural outcomes?*
- *Is there flexibility for local delivery bodies to find local solutions?*
- *Are different solutions required in different areas?*

The service has previously been successfully delivered in regional locations, with high levels of uptake and satisfaction.

It is planned to continue with this approach.

Step 5: Implementation & Monitoring

Key questions to consider:

- *Have you set any rural specific indicators or targets to monitor?*
- *How will the outcomes be measured in rural areas?*
- *Are there any statistics or data that you will collect to monitor rural needs and impacts?*

It is planned that the service will be available to all Invest NI customers and a range of regional locations used throughout Northern Ireland, ensuring accessibility for participants irrespective of location.

Metrics for availability and uptake will continue to be monitored, these will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to identify if any corrective action is required.

Step 6: Evaluation & Review*Key questions to consider:*

- *What processes are in place to evaluate and review the implementation of the policy, strategy, plan or service?*
- *Have rural needs been factored into the evaluation process?*
- *How will lessons learned in relation to rural outcomes be used to inform future policy making and delivery?*

The programme is evaluated and reviewed on an ongoing basis, in particular taking into account levels of participation and feedback from participants. Reasonable adjustments, for example in the timing and location of workshops are considered in conjunction with Invest NI colleagues and customers in a rural setting.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	John McClune
Position:	Lean Process Manager
Signature:	
Date completed:	17/12.18

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Position:	Director
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Date completed:	17.12.18

