

APPENDIX 6

The rural proofing checklist – 2009/10

Consider all the questions below. Will your initiative encounter the challenges presented by rural circumstances? Answering 'Yes' indicates a potential negative impact which should be highlighted and, where appropriate, adjustments should be made. Some potential solutions are indicated to help you consider appropriate adjustments. *Please refer to the guidance note 'Frequently Asked Questions' before completing the checklist.*

Name of policy/ strategy:

Date checklist completed:

Completed by:

	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>1. Will the policy have a negative affect on the availability or delivery of services for people living in rural areas?</p> <p><u>For example</u>, might it encourage closure or centralisation, and will this have an unequal/negative effect in rural areas where services are already limited?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: improve transport/ accessibility to compensate for the centralisation of services; encourage other funds for threatened rural services; provide more money to rural outlets to maintain service standards.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>

	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>2. Will access to the service be restricted for people living in rural areas? (If yes, how will the service be made available to people living in rural areas?)</p> <p><u>For example</u>, will the policy result in the need for increased travel, or have a negative impact on the ease and/ or cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where journey times tend to be longer,</p>			

<p>public transport is poor, more people rely on a car and travel options are limited or expensive?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: reduce the need to travel by using mobile services, local delivery or telephone / internet; ease travel by coordinating or improving transport links (e.g. additional services, on-demand transport, community transport/ community car schemes, taxi vouchers); reduce the costs of travel by subsidising services or individuals (remembering that there may be no public transport service between many locations; share premises or staff with other service providers to maintain or create a rural outlet ('joint provision').</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>
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	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>3. Will the cost of delivery be higher in rural areas (where customers are more widely dispersed or it is hard to be cost-effective)? (If yes, how will this extra cost be met or lessened?)</p> <p><i>For example, will longer travel times or distances to clients add to the cost of service provision? Will services need to be run out of smaller outlets, reducing cost-effectiveness?</i></p> <p><i>Rural solutions: allow for higher unit delivery costs when calculating costs (e.g. a 'sparsity' factor) or when specifying cost-efficiency criteria; encourage joint provision to reduce costs.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>
<p>4. Will the policy have a negative effect on the availability of affordable housing in rural areas?</p> <p><i>For example, have all the knock-on consequences been considered which might affect or reduce the</i></p>			<p>Summary of likely negative impacts:</p>

<p>number of houses available or make it more difficult for people to find a housing solution in rural areas?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: consider provision of alternative affordable rural housing solutions.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>
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	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>5. Will the policy be delivered by the private sector, or through a public-private partnership or local institution that may limit provision in rural areas?</p> <p><u>For example</u>, will the smaller, scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas, where private, public and voluntary sector organisations tend to be smaller and have less capacity? If funds or services are to be allocated via a bidding process, will small organisations be able to compete fairly?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: consider the use of regulation, including universal service obligations; set rural delivery targets; draw up contracts that prevent cherry picking of the most profitable (urban) markets; encourage commercial providers with incentives; offset higher rural costs (e.g. through rate relief); provide specific support for capacity building; allow longer timescales for bidding; simplify the bidding process; allow an increased level of public or voluntary sector input to compensate for limited private sector input.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>

	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>6. Does the policy rely on infrastructure for delivery (e.g. mobile phone coverage, broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) that may be limited in rural areas?</p> <p><u>For example</u>, how will the policy work in rural areas where the existing infrastructure is typically less developed (e.g. no mobile phone coverage), or where infrastructure does not exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas), and / or where upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of better infrastructure; encourage or coordinate demand to make supply viable; use the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply; provide other ways of accessing the service. Use local radio and existing local communication networks to disseminate information.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>

	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>7. Will the policy have a negative impact on rural businesses, or land-based businesses, (including the self-employed) and therefore, on rural economies and environments?</p> <p><u>For example</u>, will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a larger part of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more important in rural areas – farming, forestry, tourism? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected (including those running part-time businesses)?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: ensure the needs of small businesses are specifically addressed; take support, advice and training out to businesses; where possible avoid too much red tape that will unduly affect small firms. Consider opportunities for innovative local service delivery mechanisms which may also boost local employment and income; identify 'win-win' solutions which deliver economic, social and environmental benefits (e.g. identify local delivery solutions; consider incentives for environmentally friendly practices; promote local supply chains; allow for and encourage a wide range of rural enterprises).</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>

	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>8. Will the policy have a negative impact on employment in rural areas?</p> <p><u>For example</u>, will any full or part-time posts be lost as a result? Will the existing jobs become less attractive and therefore harder to fill in a rural location? What will be the impact on other services provided in the area?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: consider if part-time jobs can be 'rolled up' to create a more sustainable post; look for a local delivery solution; consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>

	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>9. Will the policy have a negative impact on people who are disadvantaged in rural areas? (If the policy is targeted at addressing disadvantage, how will it target rural disadvantage, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods?)</p>			

<p>For example, do the indicators used for identifying need measure rural deprivation issues (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?</p> <p><i>Rural solutions: use small area statistics to identify pockets of hardship; adjust the indicators or their weighting to accommodate both urban and rural aspects of deprivation; choose larger areas for targeting to pick up scattered disadvantage; target population groups rather than areas.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>
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	Yes	No	Summary of likely negative impacts:
<p>10. Does the policy assume 'one size fits all', and fail to take into account the different size and specific circumstances of smaller rural schools and other isolated rural service facilities?</p> <p><i>For example, would centralisation of a service reduce local purchasing and job opportunities in the rural area, or create increase travel time and energy costs?</i></p> <p><i>Rural solutions: consider the possibility of creating localised and alternative solutions in rural areas.</i></p>			<p>Summary of adjustments made:</p>

Steps to take

1. Ensure you are clear about the objectives of the proposed policy, its intended impacts or outcomes (including which areas, groups or organisations should benefit) and the means of delivery.
2. Run through each question in the checklist, identifying where the proposed policy is likely to have a different impact in rural areas, focusing on potential negative impacts.
3. Where there is uncertainty or a potentially different (worse) impact, this should be investigated further (and included in the overall assessment of the costs and benefits of the policy).
4. Where the impact in rural areas will be significantly different, explore policy options to produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/ reduce any undesirable impacts. This exercise may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas.

Feed the results of your appraisal, including solutions, into the decision-making process and ensure a record is kept, to be included in your Department's annual proofing report.