

Creating a Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit

RSN seminar 30th June 2020

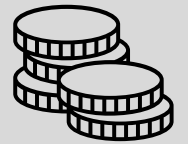
Brian Wilson, Rural England CIC

What is rural proofing?

“A systematic approach which identifies any notable rural differentials likely to impact on service effectiveness and outcomes. It enables thinking about appropriate solutions, mitigations and opportunities.”

Helping to address rural challenges which affect both service users and service providers:

- Distance from services
- Lost economies of scale
- Downtime and costs
- Infrastructure gaps



Other reasons to rural proof



Rural proofing can also help to:

- Optimise service outcomes
- Achieve equitable benefits
- Assist locality-based approaches
- Design out unintended gaps in service provision
- Identify opportunities to innovate
- Support good practice in policy making

Stages of the Toolkit project



Who is the Toolkit aimed at?

Those responsible for planning and designing health and care strategies, plans and service delivery at the local level.

They may be commissioners, providers or other partnership bodies.

It may also prove useful for bodies who represent health and care service users, who may wish to champion rural proofing.

Examples:

- Sustainability & Transformation Partnerships
- Integrated Care System partners
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Primary Care Networks
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Teams
- Public Health Directorates
- Adult Social Care Directorates

Rural needs and circumstances: Challenges and opportunities

Challenges:

- Population age profile with more in older cohorts
- Longer travel times to reach health facilities
- Few public transport options for patients, visitors and staff
- Gaps in broadband and mobile connectivity

Opportunities:

- Longer average life expectancy of population
- Mental ill-health (generally) less prevalent
- Score better on some (though not all) public health measures
- Higher propensity for volunteer and community action

Warning: rural areas are not homogenous, will have varying needs and may require different solutions

Health agenda: Rural challenges and opportunities

Challenges:

- Reconfiguring main hospital sites with specialist centres
- Recruiting, retaining and developing the workforce
- Improving provision of mental health services
- Delivering health and care at home to vulnerable patients
- Identifying and targeting health inequalities

Opportunities:

- Offering more services outside main hospital settings e.g. health hubs
- Working by locality-based, integrated primary and community care teams
- Increasing take-up of digital or online services
- Encouraging more people to live healthier lifestyles

Structure of the Toolkit

Six main themes:

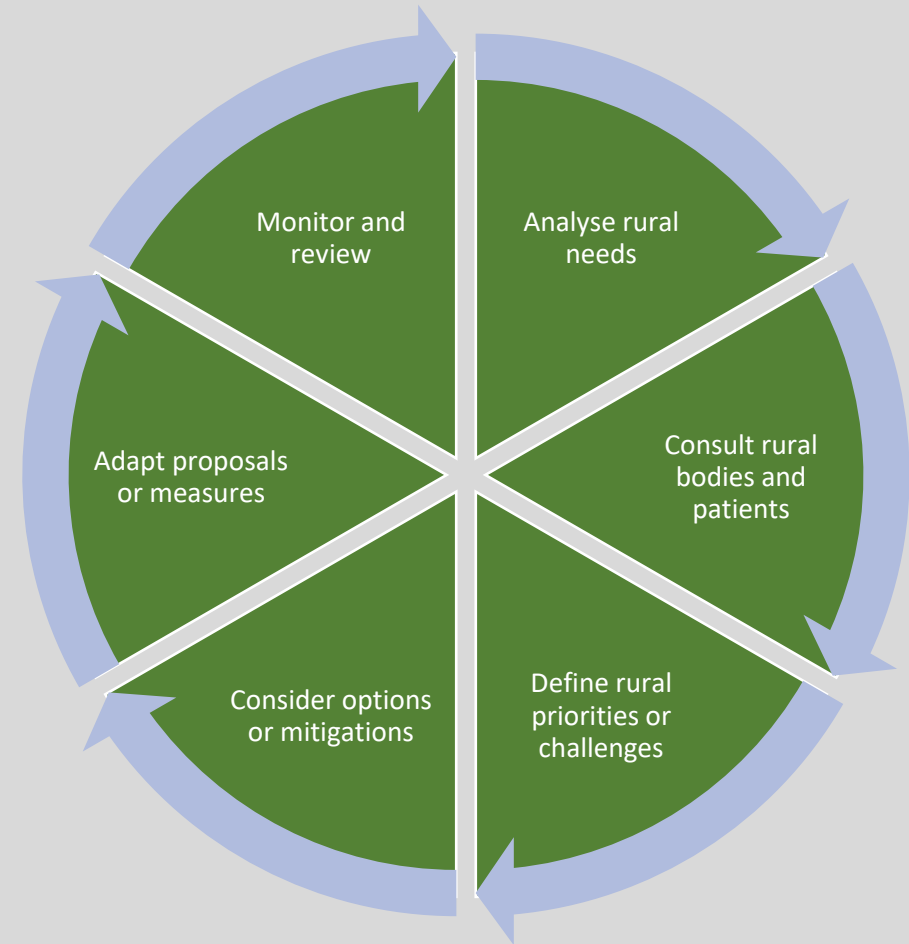
- 1. Main hospital services**
- 2. Primary and community health services**
- 3. Mental health services**
- 4. Preventative and public health services**
- 5. Social care services**
- 6. Workforce**

Cross-cutting themes:

- *Accessibility and transport*
- *IT and digital*
- *Role of the voluntary and community sector*
- *Patient and public involvement*
- *Collaboration and service integration*
- *Health inequalities and data*
- *Estates*

Experience shows that rural proofing works best when:

- It is embedded within an existing strategy or plan making process
- It is used from the outset of that process
- It is applied throughout that process
- It is evidence based e.g. uses data analysis, service user feedback
- It is championed by someone, ideally at senior level
- It should remain proportionate



Rural proofing in a typical strategy of plan making cycle



www.ruralengland.org

Thank you for listening. Any questions?