



Rural Residents' Forum

Rural Community Network (NI)
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For information on Rural Resident Forum members in your area, please visit RCN's website for further details



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Rural Voice

The Rural Residents' Forum (RRF) provides a rural voice on issues that affect rural dwellers and provides a consultation mechanism for Housing Executive on all policy, strategic and financial decisions affecting rural dwellers.



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Introduction

The Rural Residents' Forum was established in 2009 as part of the Housing Executive's Rural Homes and People Strategy.

The RRF meets approximately every six weeks and meetings are attended by Housing Executive staff from the Rural Unit and Community Involvement teams and is supported by Rural Community Network (RCN). The development of the Rural Residents' Forum has encouraged the involvement of rural residents and provided a facility to allow more detailed consideration of policies and proposals affecting rural communities.

In the past the Forum has considered issues including the Social Housing Reform Programme, community planning, rural homelessness, energy efficiency and rural proofing.

Purpose

The RRF:

- Acts as a rural panel to the Housing Executive highlighting the views/interests of rural residents without distinction of age, sex, race and political, religious or other opinion.
- Explores ways of developing closer links between Housing Executive and residents in rural areas.
- Provides feedback to rural residents in areas they represent through existing community communication channels.
- Provides advice and guidance on Housing Executive publications, strategies, policies and procedures as they affect rural areas.
- Provides pre-consultation assistance to Housing Executive when strategies, policies and procedures affecting rural areas are being developed.
- Seeks ways to improve communication about community development in rural areas.
- Provides feedback on DSD policy affecting the delivery of social housing in rural areas.
- Assists in the organisation of and participates in seminars / events where rural housing issues are being discussed.
- Provides a forum to constructively challenge the performance of Housing Executive and government departments in respect of policies which may impact on rural residents.

Meetings and Membership

Membership of the Forum is drawn from across Northern Ireland with two representatives from each County.

- The RRF has at least 12 community members of which no less than one third are Housing Executive tenants.
- A further three members may be co-opted.
- All members must live or work in a rural community (i.e. a settlement with a population of less than 5,000 or the open countryside).
- Members must be able to demonstrate a knowledge of and interest in social housing, community development and regeneration issues in rural communities.
- RRF meetings are facilitated by Rural Community Network.
- RCN, Supporting Communities and Housing Executive staff attend all meetings in a service/advisory capacity.
- Minutes and the secretarial support function are undertaken by RCN.