

**Strategic Planning and Corporate
Services Group**
Strategic Support Directorate



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Minister's Office
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 774 45117
Email: paul.mcgranaghan@daera-ni.gov.uk

**FROM: PAUL MCGRANAGHAN
DAERA DALO**

DATE: 09 FEBRUARY 2026

**TO: DR. JANICE THOMPSON
AERA COMMITTEE CLERK**

**The Mandatory Use of Closed-Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses Regulations
(Northern Ireland) 2026**

Summary: The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs intends to make a Statutory Rule (SR), 'The Mandatory Use of Closed-Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026'. This would make it compulsory for all licenced slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland to have CCTV installed where live animals are present, keep recordings for 90 days and to allow access to the footage for authorised persons to view, copy or seize.

The draft Statutory Rule received Executive approval at its meeting on 22 January 2026.

Business Area: Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

- Issue:** To advise the AERA Committee of DAERA's intention to make a new regulation which will mandate the use of Closed-Circuit Television in slaughterhouses which handle live animals.
- Restrictions:** None.
- Action Required:** To note and consider the contents of this SL1, the attached draft Statutory Rule and Explanatory Memorandum.
- Officials Attending:** Neal Gartland, Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division
Christopher Andrews, Deputy Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division
Barry McGarvey, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer, DAERA Veterinary Public Health Programme
Chris Wade, Farmed Animal Welfare Policy Lead

Background

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ("DAERA") proposes to make the above named Statutory Rule under powers conferred on it by Article 11 (1) and (3) of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

The Rule will be laid before the Assembly under the affirmative resolution procedure. A copy of the Statutory Rule is attached at **Annex A**, and the associated Explanatory Memorandum is at **Annex B**.

Purpose of legislation/policy background

In 2015, the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC), an expert committee that provides Great Britain and Northern Ireland independent scientific support and advice on the protection of animals at the time of killing, published their opinion on CCTV in slaughterhouses. The report determined that CCTV would serve as a deterrent to animal mistreatment, enhance staff training and operational practices, and provide opportunities for studying the movement and behaviour of animals at various stages of the slaughter process. The FAWC recommended that all approved slaughterhouses should install CCTV in all areas where live animals are present.

The policy has three objectives that will further safeguard existing high animal welfare standards in slaughterhouses:

- i. CCTV cameras be installed in all approved slaughterhouses in areas where live animals are unloaded, kept, handled, stunned and killed;
- ii. Recorded images to be kept by the slaughterhouse operator for a 90-day minimum period; and
- iii. Recorded images to be available to authorised persons to view, copy or seize.

Previous Engagement with the Committee

The Committee previously received two written briefings on this issue: prior to the public consultation; and before the publication of the summary of responses and the Department's way forward.

Financial Implications

There will be no direct costs to the Department as a result of introducing this legislation. There may be notional costs in terms of increased staff time, as increased access to CCTV coverage across slaughterhouses and higher quality footage may mean that there is clearer and indisputable evidence for enforcement action.

There will be costs to business operators who are currently without CCTV coverage in all areas that live animals are present in their slaughterhouses.

Consultation

Section 11 (5) of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that before making regulations under section 11 (1) of the Act, the Department must consult such persons appearing to it to represent any relevant interests as it considers appropriate. An eight-week public consultation was carried out between 26 March 2025 and 20 May 2025.

The consultation received 22 responses from a range of representative bodies, business organisations and individuals. The proposal received very favourable feedback, with 91% of respondents in agreement that mandatory CCTV should be introduced within slaughterhouses.

Compliance with Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

The Regulations do not have any human rights implications, nor are they incompatible with the Northern Ireland Protocol to the EU withdrawal agreement. The Regulations are therefore deemed to comply with the requirements of section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Consideration by the Executive

The SR is crosscutting with the Department of Justice and, accordingly, Executive approval was sought. The Executive considered the SR at its meeting on 22 January and agreed to its introduction.

Equality Impact

In accordance with requirements under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and the DAERA Equality Scheme, the equality implications of the Statutory Rule have been assessed. It is the Department's assessment that there are no equality, human rights or good relations issues associated with the Statutory Rule proposed including Section 75 groups as the legal requirements will impact slaughterhouse operators only.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[®]
We invest in people Standard

Regulatory Impact

A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) was completed by the Department that reviewed possible costs to slaughterhouses, the Department, direct and indirect costs of implementation and costs to Government. The RIA also highlighted benefits to animal welfare, public perception and training needs of staff by introducing CCTV into slaughterhouses. The use of CCTV will allow Official Veterinarians further opportunities to observe the processes carried out in the slaughterhouses that they would previously have struggled to access, thereby providing a means to ensure animal welfare standards are upheld within slaughterhouses.

Rural Needs Impact

A Rural Needs Impact Assessment was undertaken and no specific impacts on the needs of people in rural areas have been identified in relation to the SR. Having considered feedback provided to public consultation on these matters, it has been determined that no amendments are required.

Data Protection Impact

A full data protection impact assessment was not conducted because the new requirements only affect work areas, with footage accessed solely by authorised officials for regulatory compliance via standard CCTV systems. The regulations specify camera placement for animal welfare monitoring and enforcement only, access permissions for authorised officers only, and retention periods, resulting in low residual risk. Slaughterhouse operators must manage any potential risks of misuse, and the Department will produce guidance including key practical steps to ensure GDPR and Data Protection Act compliance.

Child Rights Impact

The policy does not engage children or young people directly, and no significant direct or indirect impacts on children's rights have been identified. Accordingly, a full Child Rights Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

Position in Great Britain

Northern Ireland is the only jurisdiction in the UK that has not implemented the recommendations of the 2015 FAWC report. The Statutory Rule, when made and operational, will broadly mirror what has been introduced by the English, Scottish and Welsh Governments.

Offences and Penalties

The legislation will establish offences including failure to: install required CCTV equipment; obstruct access to CCTV recordings; provide false or misleading information; or fail to supply documents or images that are required to be stored under the regulation for 90 days. An individual found guilty of an offence is subject, upon summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, currently £5000.

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.

EU Implications

Welfare standards at the time of killing in Northern Ireland are regulated by European legislation. While Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009, Protection of Animals at the Time of Killing, does not mandate the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses, the Welfare at the Time of Killing (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2014 provides limited authority for the seizure of CCTV footage. This power may be exercised only when there is reasonable suspicion of inadequate welfare practices.

Spain is currently the only European Member State with legislation requiring mandatory video surveillance in slaughterhouses, with the Netherlands having carried out a public consultation on this issue in 2024. The Republic of Ireland has maintained the existing standards outlined in Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 regarding the protection of animals at the time of killing, and there are currently no indications of plans to mandate the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses. Although previous impact assessments by the European Commission have referenced this topic, there have not been any formal announcements regarding plans to introduce mandatory CCTV in EU slaughterhouses.

Proposed timing of consideration of the SL1

The SL1 is being submitted to Committee in accordance with the minimum four-week timeframe, The Department seeks the Committee consideration prior to its Oral Presentation on 19 March 2026.

Proposed Operational Date

It is proposed that Articles 1- 4 of the rule will come into operation on 5 May 2026, with the remaining Articles coming into force six months later on 5 November 2026, to allow for sufficient time for the industry to comply with these new regulations.

The draft of the proposed Statutory Rule and Explanatory Memorandum are attached, and you will wish to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

This SL1 is being copied to the Human Rights Commission, Equality Commission and Assembly and Legislation Section of The Executive Office.

Yours sincerely,



Paul McGranaghan
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

ENC.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

**Cc: Assembly & Legislation Section (Executive Office)
Human Rights Commission
Equality Commission**

**Annex A: Draft Statutory Rule
Annex B: Explanatory Memorandum**

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[®]
We invest in people Standard