Health Impact Assessment (HIA): Scoping Template

This resource can be used during the Scoping step of the HIA process. Guidance notes are provided at the end of this resource to support completion. Ideally, the scoping should be completed by more than one individual.

The scoping step determines the project management, governance, process, objectives, focus and scale of a HIA. It also contributes to fulfilling key values and principles that underpin the implementation of HIA including transparency, participation and robustness.

Date:

Conducted by:

Title and brief description of the policy, programme, project, or decision to be appraised:

What are the geographical boundaries of the project?

What are the time scales? (And when do crucial decisions need to be made?)

Should you establish a Steering Group and who should be involved?

Should the HIA be an in-house exercise or should someone be commissioned?

What financial and human resources are required/available?

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What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved?

What type of HIA is necessary and/or possible in the time available – rapid or comprehensive?

What kind of evidence will provide the best identification of potential impact on the determinants in scope and on which population groups? What methods will be used to gather the evidence?

Which stakeholders need to be involved and participate in the process?

Are there arrangements for quality assurance (QA) in place? Who is most appropriate to carry out the QA (internal or external)?

What arrangements are in place for reviewing the HIA process, reflecting on it and monitoring its influence and outcomes?

Guidance Notes

Geographical boundaries

It is important to agree the geographical boundaries of the HIA. There may be impacts that impinge on populations beyond those directly affected by the proposal so it is important to make a decision as to where you set any boundaries and the reasons for this. Always consider potential cumulative impact and if it is relevant in the particular assessment.

Timescales

It is essential to establish the decision-making time scales of the proposal to ensure that the HIA can have an opportunity to influence the final decision.

Steering Group

A steering group can provide an effective means of distributing tasks. The size will depend on the length and complexity of the project. More than 12 people could prove unwieldy. You should ensure that you have representatives of key stakeholders involved. This helps to promote wider participation in, and ownership of, the process. You should also try to get a mix of skills. Depending on the type and complexity of the proposal these skills may include community involvement or development, research, project management and policy analysis.

You may also wish to have people with specific knowledge. This is likely to include public health, but may also include specialist knowledge in the social sciences, epidemiology, environmental health or health economics. You should also remember that community representatives have particular insights as to how proposals will affect local people.

The timing of when you decide to set up a steering group will depend on circumstances. You should decide on a preliminary steering group at the end of the screening step.

Internal/commissioned/additional support

If HIAs are to be developed as a routine aspect of decision-making then they should not demand additional resources and can be fostered in a time effective and efficient way through collaboration. However, there may be some HIAs that require a more in-depth assessment or require a more extensive literature review component or you need to collect some new local data. Where this is necessary you may want to appoint someone to undertake some of the tasks involved. But this will incur a cost. Appointing someone external to the organisation is one option.

Resources

Clarify what resources are available i.e. additional funding and/ or people's time. You will need to develop an approach which makes the best use of the resources you have at your disposal.

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Roles and responsibilities

There will be a range of tasks involved, which should be agreed at this stage. These may include:

- HIA lead
- Evidence collection and appraisal
- Chairing of meetings
- Administrative/logistic tasks i.e. booking venues/invites
- Report writing
- Dissemination of findings
- Monitoring and evaluation

Any general roles of the steering group will also need to be agreed so that members are clear what is expected of them. For instance, members of the steering group may themselves be responsible for providing access to certain forms of information or evidence, or support accessing specific groups of people as part of gathering technical or qualitative evidence. They are also expected to review any drafts of the final report or set of recommendations.

HIA Process

It is important to be open and transparent and demonstrate fully what was planned/undertaken/ considered, what was not and why.

How in-depth your assessment is will depend on the timescales, the resources available and the complexity of the project. Rapid assessments can involve a single stakeholder meeting and a report. More comprehensive assessments can take months and involve systematic literature reviews, new data collection and expert analysis.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those affected by or have an interest in the proposal. Stakeholder and community involvement is important to enable them to contribute their knowledge and insight as part of the appraisal i.e. evidence drawn from their lived experience or knowledge. Undertaking a stakeholder mapping analysis maybe helpful.

Stakeholders should not be confused with potential steering group members who would be involved in overseeing or undertaking specific tasks within the HIA. They may be representatives from the same organisation but the expectations and involvement would differ between a stakeholder and a steering group member.

Methods to assess impacts and gather evidence

HIA uses three strands of evidence:
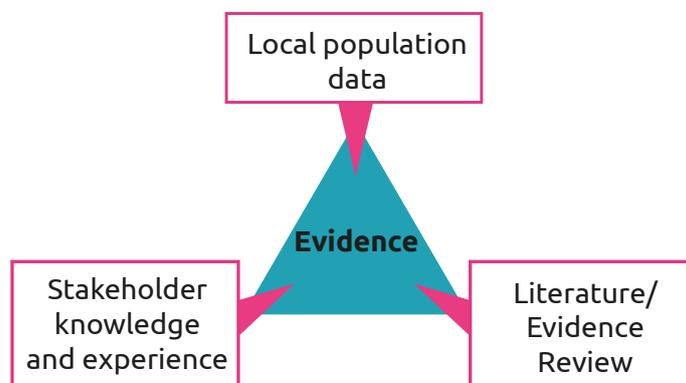
Depending on the nature of the proposal, the resources and time available you should have a basic understanding of the methods you wish to use to assess the potential impacts. The assessment will be informed by local population data and a literature/evidence review (local, national and international where appropriate). This is supplemented with qualitative evidence from stakeholders. This can be obtained through for example, stakeholder meetings, and interviews with key experts, focus groups or surveys.

When quality assuring / reviewing a HIA the breadth of evidence and the robustness of it need to be considered. This includes how appropriate the methods used to gather evidence are i.e the way stakeholder evidence is collected. Scoping should highlight this.

Quality Assurance (QA)

Depending on the context and nature of the HIA QA can be carried out either internally by the lead organisation or externally by independent stakeholders. The scoping can provide detail on the nature and process of QA if appropriate. The Wales 'Quality Assurance Review Framework for HIA' (WHIASU, 2017) is available at: **https://phwwhocc.co.uk/whiasu/resources/**

Review, reflection and monitoring

Reviewing and/or monitoring a HIA should be routinely carried out. This can enhance the learning from the process to inform future practice (process evaluation); and / or inform commissioners or stakeholders about the influence of the HIA (impact evaluation); or monitor how the HIA has had an impact (if any) on health and well-being outcomes as predicted, in respect to the determinants or populations identified within the HIA as those being particularly affected (outcome evaluation).