



DEVON HEALTH FORUM

Health and Well-Being Screening Checklist

A guide to using Health Impact Assessment in your organisation

Developed by The Devon Health Forum

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Please record information on the policy you are screening in the table below:

Name of Policy	
Status of Policy (in development/implemented)	
Screened by	
Date Screened	
Decision Taken	
Documents circulated to	

What is Health Impact Assessment? (HIA)

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process used to help identify the effects a policy or project may have on the health and well-being of local people. Even if an area of work is likely to have positive health benefits for the local population, there may be unintended negative health impacts. By assessing these issues early on, the opportunity arises to try and ensure maximum health benefits and to minimise negative impacts before they happen.

Tackling Health Inequalities

People's health and well-being is influenced by many factors, such as income, employment, education, housing and transport. Despite improvements in life expectancy nationally, there are wide differences in people's health outcomes; with a larger burden of ill health falling on people with poor incomes, who often find themselves excluded from the opportunities many of us take for granted. Tackling these health inequalities is a major Government priority and HIA can offer a good starting point for helping organisations assess and understand how their work impacts on health inequalities locally. By assessing how different groups of people may be affected by a policy or project, HIA can contribute to better decision-making that helps prevent health inequalities from arising in the future.

Why use this screening checklist?

HIA can be carried out at several levels, and it is recognised that it is impossible to do comprehensive assessments of all the work an organisation does. This screening checklist is a 'rapid appraisal' of the health impacts of a policy and will only take about 1½ - 2 hours to complete. If it is felt that the health impacts are potentially serious, a more detailed HIA should be undertaken, and this checklist will help prioritise the need for this further work.

The checklist explores the determinants of a healthy neighbourhood and will encourage identification of the factors within a policy that can improve the quality of life for local people and tackle health inequalities. The checklist has been produced by The Devon Health Forum, a partnership involving many organisations whose work impacts on the health and well being of local communities. The checklist reflects the Forum's purpose - to find effective ways to work together to ensure a coherent, co-ordinated approach to changing the effect of the wider determinants of health for the better.

Who should use it?

The screening checklist is aimed at anyone involved in developing policies, programmes or projects which affect local people. This may mean a policy or strategy writer, or a project lead involved in the more detailed planning of a specific project. For simplicity, in the checklist the word 'policy' is used to reflect policy, programme or project.

How to use it

The best time to use this checklist is before a policy is implemented (prospectively) so that the results are available to influence decisions and changes can potentially be made. The checklist is made up of a series of questions, in two stages:

- **Stage one** offers a 'rapid appraisal' of the predicted health impacts based on 14 short questions. It may be useful to refer to the determinants of health which are listed on page ???? to help answer the questions.
- **Stage two** is designed to help decide whether a more comprehensive HIA is needed and explores the issues involved in this decision.

To ensure wide discussion of the health impacts, it is recommended that several people apply this checklist to a policy. Special expertise in health is not needed; just knowledge of the policy and judgement of its effects on the health of a population. More detailed health information about the local population can be accessed from the relevant Primary Care Trust.

As this checklist is designed to be applied to all kinds of policies, some of the questions may not be relevant to the policy you are screening. Just leave these blank, as this will not have an impact on the overall appraisal. If you find that there is insufficient evidence about a particular health impact, be as objective as you can using your best judgement about information and record this in your decision-making.

What happens after the 'rapid appraisal'?

After completing the 14 questions, you will be asked to explore your findings in the table on page ???? to help decide whether an in-depth HIA is needed. If this is the case, general guidance on the next steps to take is included in this checklist. You will also find sources of useful information on methods of carrying out HIA on page ?????

If you find that your responses indicate further HIA is not necessary, you should document your decision why on page ????? and outline what steps you will take to mitigate negative health impacts and enhance any positive health impacts of the policy.

As a guide, a more detailed HIA could involve:

'Intermediate' HIA

- Reasonable time period
- A review of available evidence
- A focus group to record the opinions of stakeholders
- Reviewing completed HIAs of similar policies
- For some appraisals the collection new data

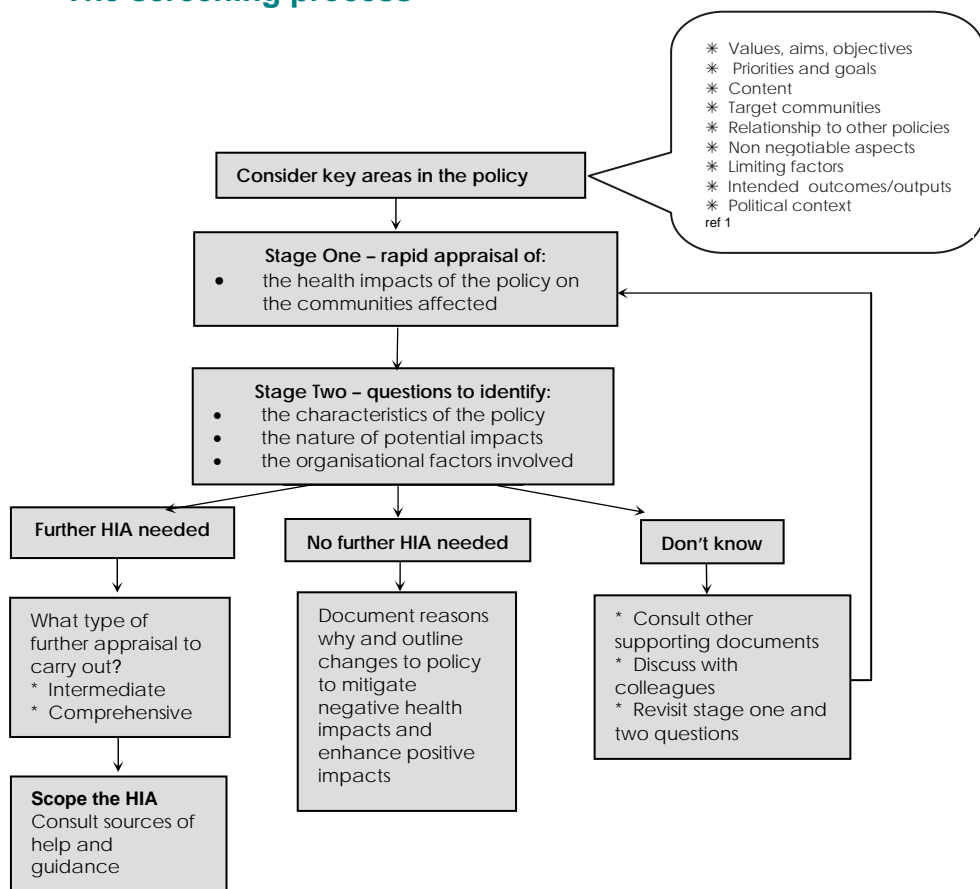
'Comprehensive' HIA

- A more rigorous exercise over several months
- An extensive literature search of available evidence
- Investigation of each health impact in detail
- Several methods to consult a wide range of stakeholders
- A review of completed HIAs of similar proposals
- Collecting new evidence/information relevant to the policy

The benefits of undertaking further HIA work are numerous; you will have more time to search through a wide range of evidence and be able to collect new information which is directly relevant to your policy. In addition, a key part of a more in-depth HIA is to find out the views of communities affected by a policy; thereby getting to the heart of what matters to them. By listening and acting on their views you will give them the opportunity to influence the decisions that affect their everyday lives and you may find that creative and realistic suggestions come forward to tackle negative health impacts and enhance positive health impacts.

A flow chart of the screening process is shown below, outlining the steps to take:

The screening process



Health Determinants

When you consider the policy against the screening questions, you may find it useful to refer to this table to identify how the determinants of health are affected.

Categories of influences on health	Health determinants
Biological Factors	Age, sex, genetic factors
Personal/family circumstances	Family structure, education, occupation, unemployment, income, risk-taking behaviour, diet, smoking, alcohol, substance misuse, exercise, leisure time, means of transport (cycle/car ownership)
Social environment	Culture, peer pressure, discrimination, social support (friendly neighbours, social groups/feeling isolated), community, religion
Physical environment	Air, water, housing conditions, working conditions, noise, smell, view, public safety, civic design, shops (location/range), communications (road / rail), land use, waste disposal, energy, local environmental features
Public services	Access and quality of GP surgeries and hospitals, child care, social services, housing / leisure / employment / social security services; public transport, police, voluntary and community agencies and services
Public policy	Economic / social / environmental / health trends, local / national priorities, policies and programmes

Based on The Merseyside Guidelines for Health Impact Assessment, adapted from Lalonde (1974) and Labonte (1993)

Stage One – Rapid Appraisal

The following 14 questions prompt you to identify potential health impacts of the policy. Identify the population groups that may be affected (examples are included in the list below) and identify distinct groups, especially if these people experience health inequalities. Describe the health impact using the symbol '+', '-' or '?' for a positive or negative impact. Use the 'Action' column to describe what action you could take to reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. You may find it useful to refer to the determinants of health on page ????. An example is included at the top of the table as a guide.

Population groups (for example)

Whole population	Young offenders	Low income households
Children aged 0 – 14	Travellers	Unemployed people
People aged 15 – 25	Black and ethnic minority populations	People with mental health problems
Rural Households	Parents/Guardians	Disabled people
Older People	Homeless	Care leavers

Will the policy have an effect on:	Populations affected	Description of health impact (+ or - ?)	Action
Example – screening an Economic Development Strategy 1. Income levels and the distribution of wealth <i>It is recognised that there is a potential link between people's income and health – wealthier people tend to be healthier. Will the policy reduce inequalities in income?</i>	Parents / Guardians Whole population in targeted wards	+ Support for employers offering integrated childcare services, making it easier for parents to work + Initiatives to respond to deprivation related issues - People resenting being 'labelled' as living in a deprived area once initiatives are targeted there from 'outside'	* Promote support offered to encourage this approach to others * Involving local residents at all stages of initiatives to shape what's really needed
1. Income levels and the distribution of wealth <i>It is recognised that there is a potential link between people's income and health – wealthier people tend to be healthier. Will the policy reduce inequalities in income?</i>			
2. Employment <i>Employment gives us income, a sense of purpose and structure to our lives– which all affect health. Will the policy improve employment opportunities for all parts of the community?</i>			
3. Healthy beginnings for children <i>Children need positive environments in which to develop and grow; and parents and guardians need to be able provide the foundations to make this happen. Will the policy support healthy beginnings for children?</i>			

<p>4. Personal supportive networks <i>People benefit from relationships with friends, colleagues and community groups in terms of the sense of place and belonging it gives us. Will the policy promote community networks and greater social inclusion?</i></p>			
<p>5. Peoples feeling of control over their own lives and decisions <i>If people feel they have a choice in the decisions affecting their employment, income, living conditions and support systems etc, this may have a positive effect on their health. Will the policy affect people's ability to make their own decisions?</i></p>			
<p>6. Physical safety, level of and fear of crime in communities <i>Worries about physical safety and security may have a negative impact on health. Will the policy promote physical safety in communities and tackle the fear of crime?</i></p>			
<p>7. Educational opportunities for all age ranges <i>Acquisition of new skills can offer an individual a sense of achievement and well-being. Improved education is linked to factors affecting quality of life and well-being. Is education (such as basic skills or numeracy/literacy) accessible to all parts of the community?</i></p>			
<p>8. Health related or risk taking behaviour <i>Lifestyle has a large impact on health including physical activity/active lifestyles, diet and access to healthy food, smoking, use of drugs, alcohol consumption, and sexual activity. Will the policy promote healthy lifestyles?</i></p>			

<p>9. The provision of quality housing <i>The link between housing and health is well recognised, with poor housing particularly associated with ill health in children. Housing affects mental and physical health and a decent home is acknowledged as important for our health. Will the policy affect the quality and provision of local housing?</i></p>			
<p>10. The natural environment <i>The natural environment impacts on health in terms of air quality, water quality, noise pollution, smells and waste or through the protection wildlife and landscapes. Will the policy affect the natural environment in a way that will impact on health?</i></p>			
<p>11. The built environment <i>The nature of the built environment affects how people feel about where they live and work. Will the policy work to conserve urban green spaces and amenities and support building programmes which are sustainable?</i></p>			
<p>12. Modes of transport and supporting infrastructure <i>Transport has many obvious health impacts; traffic congestion and pollution; accidents; access; connectivity etc. Will the policy affect public transport, car usage, promote walking/cycling and address issues for those without a car?</i></p>			
<p>13. The provision of fair, equitable access to public services <i>People expect fair access to public services such as health, social and welfare services, transport and leisure opportunities. Will the policy improve access, especially for disadvantaged groups?</i></p>			

14. Health inequalities among different groups
Inequalities in health are widespread. Will the policy work to decrease health inequalities experienced by different groups of people in the community.

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Stage Two - Is further HIA recommended?

You should now be more aware of the potential health impacts of the policy. The table below will help you decide whether a more in-depth HIA is needed, by considering the characteristics of the policy, organisational factors and the nature of potential health impacts. Please circle the most appropriate response to the following questions.

Favouring further HIA	Characteristics of the policy	Not favouring further HIA
Yes	Is the policy important to your organisation? (i.e. cost, size, scope, statutory duties)	No
Yes	Is the policy likely to cause significant disruption to the populations identified? (balance positive long term effects and short term disruptions)	No
Yes	Is the policy potentially contentious/sensitive?	No
Yes	Is the policy already being appraised by another type of impact assessment? (i.e., Sustainability Appraisal)	No
	Organisational Factors	
Yes	Is there discussion at the policy level in your organisation about the potential health impacts of this policy?	No
Yes	Is there community concern about this policy?	No
Yes	Will some issues be missed in the planning process, which would be highlighted by carrying out a HIA?	No
Yes	Will the organisations or individuals with a stake in this policy be committed to the process of a HIA?	No
No	Are there barriers (political or institutional) which will prevent a HIA from being carried out?	Yes
Yes	Can you influence the outcome of the policy with the results of a HIA?	No
	The nature of the potential health impacts	
Yes/Don't know	Are there potentially serious negative impacts which require further research?	No
No	Is there already valid evidence which describes the health impacts of this kind of policy?	Yes
High High	Is there likelihood that the health impacts of this policy might be intensified for disadvantaged groups? Positive health impacts Negative health impacts	Mod/low Mod/low

If you are still unsure whether to undertake a more in-depth HIA, revisit the policy and discuss these issues with colleagues. Please follow the information below to record your decision:

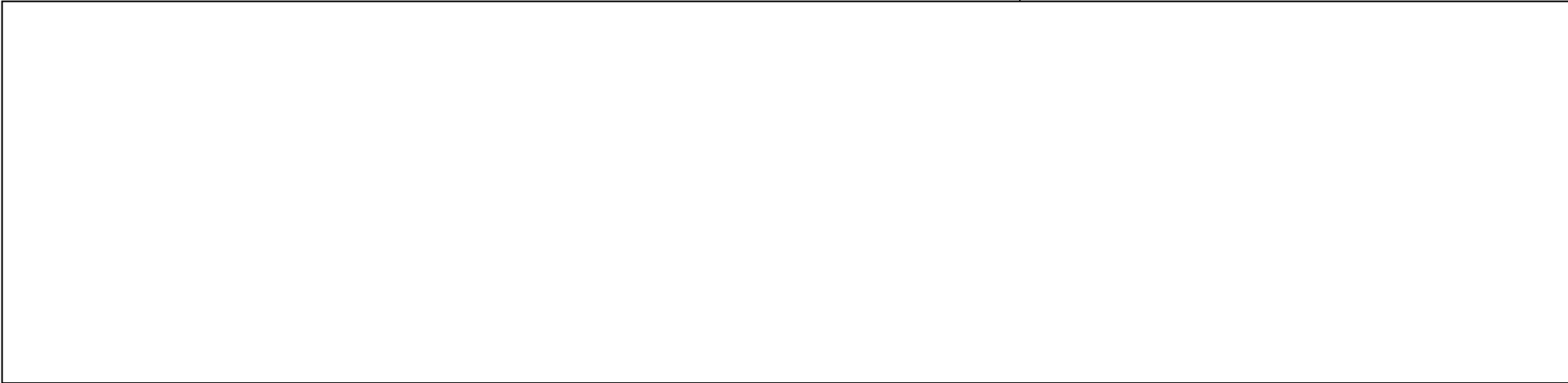
**More answers in the left column?
Consider undertaking an in-depth HIA**

Please outline your reasons for recommending an in-depth HIA, describing the potential health impacts and the communities that could be affected.

**More answers in the right column?
In-depth HIA not necessary**

Please outline your reasons i.e. Are the potential health impacts low and are you aware of ways to tackle them?

What changes can you make to reduce negative health impacts and enhance positive health impacts? Which communities are affected?



What next?

Please retain a copy of this checklist and your decision, and circulate to other people who have an interest in this policy. If you have made recommendations on changes that should be made to the policy, these need to be agreed, implemented and monitored. You may wish to draw up an action plan as an addition to this screening tool, which could summarise the health impacts in more detail and assign timescales and responsibilities for implementing action.

At the end of the screening process, you may decide that more in-depth HIA is necessary. This may be because there are potential serious health impacts which require further investigation, or there is a lack of current evidence about the anticipated health impacts. There are typically five key stages involved in planning the HIA to ensure the work is focused:

1. **Screening** This screening checklist represents the first stage in the HIA process, screening policies to rapidly identify the potential health impacts and decide whether further HIA work is necessary.

2. **Scoping** The aim of 'scoping' is to set out a blueprint for the design of the HIA and the steps involved. The main aspects which need to be agreed are:
 - Membership of the steering group and how the HIA will be managed
 - What type of HIA would be most appropriate and methods to be used
 - The boundaries for the appraisal in terms of geography, resources, timescales and which issues are to be researched
 - The work plan with associated timescales
 - Which health impacts are of most concern
 - Which population group(s), stakeholders and partners will be included in the appraisal
 - Research and consultation methods to be used
 - The outputs from the HIA and who is responsible for implementing recommendations
 - The methods of monitoring and evaluation to be used

3. **Appraisal** Carrying out the actual appraisal is the third core step in HIA. The key tasks involved are:
 - Examining the key areas of the policy, in order to inform the identification of health impacts and establishing what recommendations can realistically be made. Areas to analyse include the policy's content, values, aims, targets, outputs, target populations, political context and potential limiting factors.

- Profiling the communities affected in order to define a baseline against which future health trends and outcomes could be monitored. Information which could be collected includes the characteristics of the population (age, sex, socio-economic status), identification of vulnerable groups, health status and morbidity levels, health behaviour indicators (i.e. through survey data if available such as smoking levels), access to services and land uses in the area.
- Review the available evidence/literature.
- Investigate each health impact and assess the severity and the likelihood of the impact occurring. This will involve a literature search to establish what evidence already exists and whether this can inform the HIA. Particular consideration should be given to vulnerable groups in the population and how each health impact is likely to affect them.
- Consult stakeholders about their views and perceptions of the policy and what impact it will have. This could involve workshops, surveys and interviews to gather opinions. Stakeholders include the communities that will be affected by the policy, as well as the key partners and agencies which have a stake in the policy.
- Review completed HIAs on similar proposals in order to learn from previous work and add to your own evidence base about health impacts.

4. **Recommendations** Once the research has been carried out, a report would normally be written which outlines the health impacts of the policy and recommends options for reducing negative impacts and enhancing positive health impacts. It may be necessary to prioritise the health impacts in terms of their priority for management. Any recommendations should be realistic and prioritised by the steering group.

5. **Monitor and evaluate** This is an important part of HIA. There are two main areas to monitor and evaluate, namely the process and outcome of the HIA. Processes refer to aspects such as the management of the HIA, the thoroughness of the literature search, the decision-making process and the extent to which stakeholders were appropriately involved. Outcome issues include assessing whether the predictions about health impacts actually occurred, whether added value has been achieved through HIA and establishing whether there has been a change in health outcomes as a result of the policy. It is also important to assess the recommendations whether recommendations made are actually implemented.

Only a brief summary of the key steps in HIA is outlined here, however if you would like to read more detailed guidance, the following websites offer a wealth of information:

www.hiagateway.org.uk

Containing wide ranging resources, including guidance and definitions of HIA, reports on HIAs carried out nationally, toolkits, evidence and links

www.healthforum.org.uk

Reports of HIAs carried out in Devon, as well as information on the key stages of HIA.

www.londonhealth.gov.uk/hia.htm#Top

www.londonhealth.gov.uk/hia.htm

The London Health Commissions webpages on HIA, offering detailed guidance to carrying out HIA, case studies and useful publications.

<http://www.ohn.gov.uk/ohn/making/impact.htm>

Our Healthier Nation website containing definitions of HIA, guidance on how to carry out HIA and case studies from around the country.

<http://www.ihia.org.uk/>

The International Health Impact Assessment Consortium website containing the Merseyside Guidelines developed by the University of Liverpool, amongst others. The site offers a ten-minute guide to HIA.

<http://www.euro.who.int/healthimpact>

The website of the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe, containing methods and tools for carrying out HIA.

<http://www.whiasu.cardiff.ac.uk>

The Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit website, hosted by the Cardiff University. This site contains useful information on evidence bases, as well as tools, case studies and guides to HIA.

Evidence on Health Issues

If you are undertaking a literature search to help define the health impacts of your policy or establish key facts about a community, the following sources of evidence and information may be helpful:

www.swpho.org.uk

South West Public Health Observatory website containing information on health inequalities, reports and health data for the southwest.

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/lifeindevon/>

Devon County Council's webpages containing facts and figures about life in Devon including aspects such as quality of life and community profiles.

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/>

The National Statistics website containing information such as populations levels, crime levels, health and housing. The site also contains the Census 2001 data.

www.phel.gov.uk/ www.nelh.nhs.uk

The Public Health Electronic Library for Health (PheL) provides knowledge and know how to promote health, prevent disease and reduce health inequalities.

<http://healthpromis.hda-online.org.uk/>

HealthPromis focuses on evidence-based public health, health promotion and health inequalities.

www.jrf.org.uk

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is one of the largest independent social policy research and development charities in the UK. This website contains a wealth of research on wide ranging health and social issues.

www.bmj.com

British Medical Journal website containing articles published in the weekly *BMJ*.

In addition, the Primary Care Trust locality profiles are also available from the Director of Public Health at your local Primary Care Trust. These profiles contain information on demographics, primary care, socio-economic information and emergency admissions etc. for North and East Devon and may prove useful in identifying community profiles.

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