

Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)

News Update:

Autumn 2017

Welcome

It's an exciting time to be involved in Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in Wales. At the time of publication, the [Public Health \(Wales\) Act \(2017\)](#) has been given Royal Assent and this will strengthen the role of HIAs in Wales by requiring Welsh Ministers to make regulations about the circumstances in which public bodies in Wales must carry out HIAs. WHIASU is working closely with Welsh Government (WG) in the development of the regulations and the nature of assistance to be provided by Public Health Wales (PHW) to Public Bodies (PBs) to support them in using Health Impact Assessment. We are busy developing a new training and capacity building strategy for HIA in Wales - we'd love to hear from you if you have any feedback or learning to share.



Richard Owen, Associate Professor, Swansea University, in the Independent Newspaper June 5th 2017.
Read the full article [here](#)

We hope you enjoy reading this news letter which we hope will keep you up to date on HIA policy, practice and evidence in Wales and beyond. Please get in touch if you'd like to find out more - our [contact details](#) are at the end of the newsletter.

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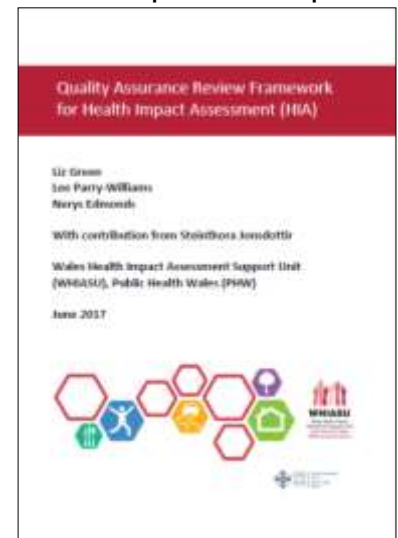
Quality Assurance Review Framework for Health Impact Assessment

WHIASU were delighted to publish a Quality Assurance Review Framework for Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in July of this year. The publication of the Framework is an important step forward in the journey of HIA and its development. It aims to strengthen the practice and use of HIA in Wales (and beyond) in order to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks to health and wellbeing of a wide range of cross sector policies, programmes, services and developments.

The WHIASU QA Review Framework¹ is the first broad appraisal tool developed for HIA globally and will make a significant contribution to the practice of HIA nationally and internationally. At an international level, very few tools exist to review the quality of HIAs. Those available are either not specific to HIA or are focused only on a specific type of project.

The implementation of the HIA regulations flowing from the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 will need to be supported by increasing the numbers of practitioners from health and other sectors who are skilled in conducting and quality assuring HIAs and this tool will be a useful aid. Please follow the links below to download the Framework and associated documents.

- [Guidance](#) on how to undertake a quality assurance review of a HIA using the framework
- [A matrix of criteria](#) which need to be demonstrated in a high quality, credible and robust HIA.
- [Explanatory notes](#) to inform the use of the criteria to review a HIA



¹ QA Review Framework

Planning Policy and Guidance Updates

National Development Framework for Wales

The Welsh Government Planning Directorate is working on the production of the [National Development Framework \(NDF\)](#). The NDF will set out a 20 year land use framework for Wales and replace the current Wales Spatial Plan.

The NDF, development is aligned with the goals and Sustainable Development principle as laid out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WFGA). Therefore **the impact on and contribution to health and wellbeing outcomes from the NDF is a key consideration**. During the development of the framework there will be a number of opportunities to engage and inform the process.

The NDF will:

- Set out where nationally important growth and infrastructure is needed and how the planning system - nationally, regionally and locally - can deliver it
- Provide direction for Strategic and Local Development Plans and support the determination of Developments of National Significance
- Sit alongside Planning Policy Wales, which sets out the Welsh Government's planning policies and will continue to provide the context for land use planning
- Support national economic, transport, environmental, housing, energy and cultural strategies and ensure they can be delivered through the planning system
- Be reviewed every 5 years



A recent consultation (closed 21st July 2017) focused on the draft Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) Scoping Report. The ISA will take a holistic view of the potential impacts of the NDF across all the WFGA goals. The scoping document outlined how all appropriate impact assessments, including Health Impact Assessment, had been considered and integrated into one sustainability appraisal framework. The consultation was an important opportunity to contribute additional health and wellbeing baseline data and evidence to inform the final ISA.

For more information about the NDF and its progress, or how you can contribute to ongoing developments and consultations to maximise the contribution to Health and Wellbeing outcomes use the contact details below:

Telephone: 0300 025 3744 or 0300 025 6657

Email: ndf@wales.gsi.gov.uk or ffdc@cymru.gsi.gov.uk

The new European Union Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2017

On May 16th 2017, a new piece of European planning sector legislation was transposed across the European Union.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process by which information is collected and consulted upon, in a systematic way, to inform an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects arising from a proposed development. The new EIA Directive (Reference 2014/52/EU) replaces the previous directive and aims to clarify and strengthen the process as well as the quality of its content.

As part of this, the reference to health and wellbeing has been amended and strengthened to ensure that **'population and human health'** are now considered within the Environmental Statement (the output of an EIA) rather than the previous reference to 'human health'. This does not immediately correlate that a standalone or integrated health impact assessment will be undertaken but **it can strengthen the consideration of wider population health and wellbeing within the process** (environmental health determinants are routinely considered) in Wales.

This gives public health organisations and wider stakeholders a useful and more robust **lever for engagement in the development planning process**. EIA guidance for Wales is currently being drafted and WHIASU and PHW partners have been part of this process.

Public Health England (PHE) recently published a short guide to the opportunities for local public health teams in England resulting from this change. You can download the guide [here](#).

Planning for Better Health and Wellbeing Briefing (Wales) 2016

The introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA) has reinforced a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to policy making in Wales. Alongside the WFGA there has also been the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Collectively these acts have raised the profile of the contribution the planning sector can make to addressing key public health priorities such as active travel, climate change and air quality and contributing to reducing health inequalities.



These developments in policy have provided the opportunity to reinforce the importance of the collaboration between the planning and public health systems. It led to the publication of 'Planning for Better Health and Well-being in Wales: A Briefing'. The Briefing was launched in December 2016 and was produced by the Town and Country Planning Association in collaboration with WHIASU and Public Health Wales.

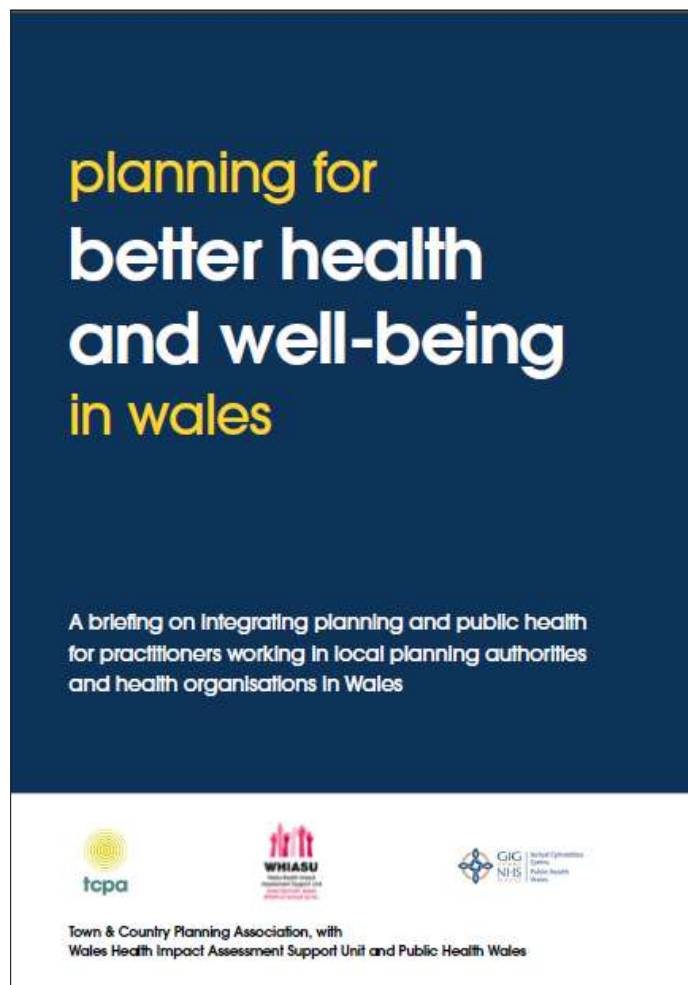
It aims to:

- Introduce planners to the public health system and public health professionals to the planning system and set out where key legislative and policy requirements overlap;
- Highlight opportunities at key stages within the two systems (such as the preparation of Local Development Plans) where greater integrated working between planners and public health professionals can help to deliver health, well-being and sustainability outcomes;
- Highlight opportunities to promote health and wellbeing; and
- Signpost useful resources, information and examples of good practice.

Whilst the briefing can be read as a whole document, it has been designed to enable practitioners to focus on specific elements including resources to support engagement and collaboration between the planning and public health systems. The briefing includes reference to Health Impact Assessment and highlights the opportunities to apply HIA to maximise the health and wellbeing outcomes and contribute to reducing health inequalities.

See **Figure 1** below which outlines a flowchart highlighting opportunities for increasing collaboration and impact on health and wellbeing through the planning system

The Briefing can be accessed [here](#).



An example of the resources available in the Planning for Better Health and Wellbeing briefing

Figure 1: Flowchart outlining opportunities for increasing collaboration and impact on health and wellbeing through the planning system.



Getting Wales Moving Report, March 2017

[The Getting Wales Moving Report](#) is a joint piece of work between PHW and Sports Wales. The report outlines recommendations to address sedentary behaviour collectively across Wales. Whilst not a specific planning document, it is highlighted here because the report recognises the

contribution of the planning sector to one of Public Health's priorities - which is to ensure every person in Wales thinks about physical activity as a normal part of their daily lives. There may be potential for the report to inform the proposed production of a national strategy on preventing and reducing obesity as set out in the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. Planning has a clear contribution to make in the creation of Active Places and Communities, Facilities and Outdoor Places and Active Travel which are three of the eight action areas outlined in the report. HIA is also referenced as a tool to support elements of the planning related action areas.

WHIASU Collaborations: Natural Resources Wales

To enable WHIASU to effectively deliver its key objectives which is to support the development and effective use of HIA in Wales within the context of a Health in All Policies approach to policy making, it requires strong working relationships with a range of partners. Partnership working is increasingly important and an integral aspect of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which is underpinned by the sustainable development principle. The recent passage of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 will create HIA as a statutory assessment within specific circumstances (to be defined through regulations). PHW and WHIASU are currently scoping what this will mean for the Unit. Partnership working will need to be further enhanced and developed in order to support the implementation of the new Act.

A previous WHIASU newsletter outlined WHIASU's partnership working with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) in Wales. The main focus of the work with CIEH is the delivery of HIA training and this continues to grow.



Another close partner is Natural Resource Wales (NRW). Initially work with NRW focused on supporting them to develop a 'Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment Screening Tool (WIA)'. This was part of preparation to deliver the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act as part of its role as a public body as defined in the Act. The WIA tool has been informed by the theory and approach developed within HIA.

Further collaboration has seen the delivery of Rapid HIA training to a number of NRW officers. There are a number of areas of work undertaken by NRW that will potentially be covered by the introduction of statutory HIA as outlined within the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. It is very likely that officers within NRW will be involved in different aspects of HIA such as: contributing as a stakeholder to HIAs; directly undertaking a HIA; or assessing the quality and findings of a completed HIA as part of a planning or permitting development. The training was the first step in providing insight into the theory and practice of HIA and building capacity within the organisation. Feedback included:

“Applicability to NRW and so many other aspects of our work. Potential impact to ensure critical checks are put in place for developments etc.”

“An important area of work and one we need to be more involved in”

“I had no previous knowledge on HIA, so this was a very good introduction into the process and legislative basis for it”

“Still not sure if I 100% understand it all, but a good start”

The last comment is an important one. WHIASU see the training sessions as the first step to understanding HIA through exploring the concepts, principles and processes involved and then building people’s experience and skills in undertaking HIA in practice. Nothing surpasses the concept of ‘learning by doing’ and this is something WHIASU offers through opportunities to get involved in observing, supporting and participating in HIAs and also mentoring support to carry out future HIAs in practice.

WHO Europe Ostrava Declaration 2017

The Sixth Ministerial Conference on ‘Environment and Health for the WHO European Region’ took place in Ostrava, Czech Republic on June 13-15th 2017. WHIASU contributed one of only two best practice case studies for a WHO European Region Office Ministerial Briefing Paper entitled ‘Environmental and Health Impact Assessments: Integrating health into Environmental Assessments - a tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals’. The outcome of the conference was the ‘[Ostrava Declaration](#)’

This includes a commitment to HIA in action 14 e:

[‘Ostrava Declaration’](#) (2017) Action 14 e

‘strengthen the knowledge and capacity of health and environmental professionals for health impact assessment through further education and training’.

WHIASU Conference presentations and Journal Articles

Conference Presentations

Liz Green, Principal Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Development Officer, WHIASU presented at the [International Association of Impact Assessment](#) (IAIA) Conference in Montreal. Liz was asked to deliver a presentation about the Unit’s work to support a consideration of health, wellbeing and inequalities within planning sectors - with a particular focus on the development of green infrastructure using a Health Impact Assessment approach. Liz also delivered a presentation about the application of HIA as a method for building ‘Health into All Policies’ (HIAP). This focused on a case study about the HIA of Welsh Government’s Draft Night Time Economy Framework which was undertaken throughout 2016.

Liz was invited to contribute to, and present at, a World Health Organisation (WHO) Europe Regional Office for Health expert meeting in Bonn in April. The 2 day meeting focussed on the integration of health and wellbeing into Environmental Assessments and specifically the creation of an online knowledge platform to support this.

Finally, Lee Parry-Williams, Senior Public Health Practitioner (Policy and Impact Assessment) and Liz Green both presented at the UK Faculty of Public Health Conference in May. Lee delivered a presentation entitled '[How Health Impact Assessment \(HIA\) equips the public health workforce to collaborate in addressing health inequalities](#)' whilst Liz focussed on the development and publication of the '[Planning for Better Health and Wellbeing](#)' resource for Wales. All presentations were positively received.

Journal Paper: Draft Night Time Economy Framework HIA

In December 2016, WHIASU published a Report for the [Health Impact Assessment \(HIA\) of Welsh Government's Draft Night Time Economy \(NTE\) Framework](#). This is the first ever HIA on the subject internationally or nationally. This HIA took place in collaboration with the Lead for Policing and Health in PHW and supported WG to refocus and redraft their NTE Framework.

There is no standard definition of the NTE but generally it encompasses the night time economy concerns the economic activity which occurs between the hours of 6pm to 6am. The HIA helped to move the emphasis away from the traditional approach of tightly controlling and policing the NTE to one of being health promoting and preventing. It was based on wide ranging stakeholder participation across Wales and empirical evidence. It highlighted the potential health and wellbeing impacts (both positive and negative) which the NTE can have and also identified a number of vulnerable groups who could be potentially affected by engaging in the NTE. It also supported the identification of best practice examples across Wales which could be replicated by other stakeholders.

Following on from this novel approach in a new area, the leads from Public Health Wales and WHIASU wrote and have had accepted a journal paper. Entitled 'Developing a Framework for Managing the Night-time Economy in Wales: a Health Impact Assessment approach' it details the HIA process taken and how it informed and shaped the redraft and the outcomes and added value which arose from it. It will be available in the Journal of Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal (IAPA) in 2017.

Quality improvement work on planning consultations in Public Health Wales

WHIASU is currently working collaboratively with colleagues from PHW Environmental Public Health Team, Cardiff and the Vale Local Public Health Team and the PHW Policy Team to explore how PHW and PHE can streamline and improve the coordination and impact of public health responses to a wide range of policy consultations and planning applications in order to increase our impact on health and wellbeing through the planning system in Wales. We hope to report more on this development in our next update.



Training dates

WHIASU will be delivering a number of introductory sessions on Health Impact Assessment and Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA) in September in conjunction with Public Health Wales Organisational Development team. Please follow the links for the full details and flyers which include registration details.

[Introduction to Health Impact Assessment](#)

September 21st, 930 -13.00, Optic Centre, St Asaph

September 25th, 930-1300, CQ2, Cardiff

[Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment: A Briefing](#)

September 25th, 2- 4pm, CQ2, Cardiff

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