Scoping template - determining the governance, process, objectives and focus for the HIA

Scoping determines the project management, governance, process, objectives, focus and scale of the assessment to be undertaken. It will identify a range of elements including the terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, stakeholder involvement, the scale/type of assessment and evidence required.

It will inform the work plan for the HIA and the methodology section of the final report. It also contributes to fulfilling key values and principles that underpin the implementation of HIA including transparency, participation and robustness.

HIA is not a linear process and you may find at the initial stages of the HIA that the screening and scoping phases are interchangeable and that both can inform and support the other. It is not necessary for a screening tool or session to have been completed previously. However, a screening tool is useful and beneficial for helping to determine the focus of the HIA and the current position in terms of evidence of impacts. Ideally, the scoping should not be completed in isolation.

When completing the scoping refer to the guidance notes at the end of this scoping checklist template.

Title and Overview

Title of the policy, programme, project to be appraised:

Background or overview of the policy, programme, project (cross reference this with any previous documents associated with the HIA that it may have appeared in i.e. screening)

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NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Project Management and Governance

The questions below will inform some of the other scoping considerations. However, your initial conclusions may require refining once other sections on this template have been considered and completed.

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

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

3. Should the assessment be an in-house exercise or should someone be commissioned to do the appraisal?

4. What financial and human resources are required/available?

5. Roles and responsibilities of those involved?

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Process

All elements of the HIA process need to be considered/planned (screening, assessment, reporting, quality assuring, monitoring, reflection including any evaluation). This section can also provide insight into the justification for why certain things have or have not been carried out. This is important when reporting on the HIA.

1. Which elements of the HIA process are being considered (this can help to determine the detail in some of the key scoping questions)

2. What kind of assessment is necessary and/or possible in the time available – desktop, rapid participatory or in-depth?

3. What HIA tools / assessment frameworks will be used?

4. 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?

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5. Who are the stakeholders and what methods will be used to gather their knowledge, insight and experience (undertaking a stakeholder analysis is helpful to ensure all relevant stakeholders are included and invited to contribute their insight)?

6. Reporting - are there arrangements for quality assurance (QA) in place? Who is most appropriate for the QA (internal or external)?

7. Are arrangements in place for reviewing the HIA process, reflecting on it and monitoring its influence and outcomes? (If yes requires outline plan)

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Objectives and Focus

This is an important element of the scoping. Consider, what is the question that needs to be answered by the assessment. The focus and objectives determine and inform many aspects of the HIA. Note however, it may not be possible to answer this fully in the first instance. It may require further discussion with the Steering Group or information provided by screening and/or other elements of the scoping checklist / process.

1. What are the objectives and the rational for conducting a HIA? (for example; to understand or evidence health impacts; inform or influence a decision; improve the impact on health and well-being, to develop an evaluation and monitoring plan, or all of the above / other?).

2. What elements of the policy/project/plan should the appraisal focus on? (The screening tool should determine this – perhaps make some preliminary remarks.)

3. Geographical boundaries of the project? (Do you need to consider the impact on people in other areas or communities/additional developments/projects that may impact on the one under consideration here/cumulative impact?)

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Guidance Notes

Project Management and Governance

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 (see below). 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 process. This means that you will have a broad group of people to participate in the scoping process. One of the first tasks of the steering group is to agree how often the group should meet and to agree dates.

Internal/commissioned/additional support - If HIA is to develop as a routine aspect of decision-making then it 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.

You should also consider alternative options such as secondments, where someone within the organisation has the opportunity to acquire skills that are both valuable to the organisation and their personal career development. In addition, you may have people who have skills in facilitating HIA events and you should make use of them whenever possible. What time you have will shape the decisions you make about the kind of HIA you are able to undertake?

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. Remember HIA is a flexible and proportionate tool.

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 interpretation
- 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.

Process

It is important to indicate if the **scoping** is determining the direction of the whole HIA or elements of the process. It is important to be open and transparent and demonstrate fully what was planned/undertaken/considered, what was not and why. HIA has five phases:

- Screening
- Scoping
- Assessment
- Report including Quality Assurance
- Review and Reflection including any Monitoring and Evaluation

HIA is not a linear but iterative process i.e. if scoping was undertaken prior to screening you may wish to update the scoping following any findings from a screening and vice versa. Provide clarity and update if required.

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.

If HIAs are to become part of on-going decision-making processes then it is likely that more rapid assessments will be favoured. In Wales, a three meeting approach is reported by some as being the one that most organisations have the capacity to accommodate.

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 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:
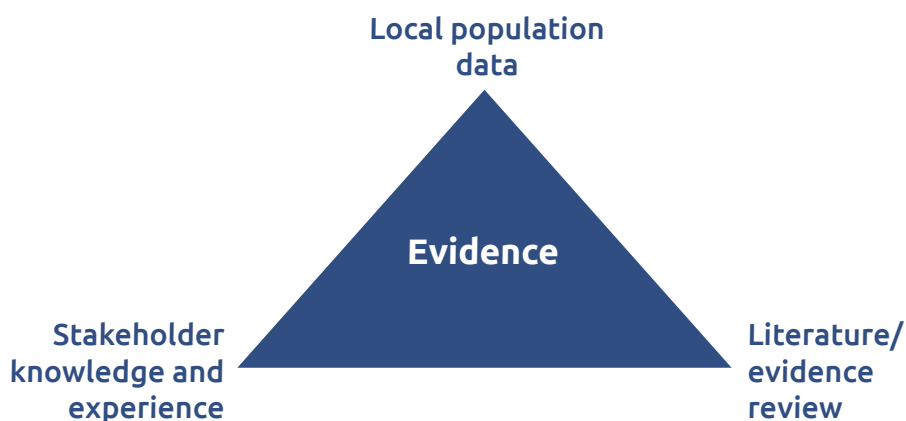
Depending on the nature of the proposal, the resources and time available you should have a basic understanding of the methods you wish to use to assess the potential impacts. The assessment will be informed by local population data and a literature/evidence review (local, national and international 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://whiasu.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/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 effect (if any) on health and wellbeing outcomes as predicted in respect to the determinants or populations identified within the HIA as those being particularly affected (outcome evaluation).

Focus

Focus of appraisal - To ensure the best use of any resources you need to focus on those impacts that are most likely to occur and have the greatest potential impact on health and inequalities. Using the screening matrix and reporting sheet you can identify which areas of impact the appraisal should focus on. Should certain determinants be prioritised, should others be scoped out? Or is a broad lens needed?

As the appraisal stage progresses it is useful to reflect on the scoping to ensure the focus has been maintained or in response to findings within the appraisal does the focus require amending? It is acceptable to make changes but these need to be recorded and justified within the report.

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.

WHIASU
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