



WHIASU



DEVELOPING A QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR HIA

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WELSH CONTEXT

- HIA focus - broad consideration of health and wellbeing and inequalities
- HIA as a lever for Health in All Policies (HiAP)
- Dedicated specialist team for HIA - Wales HIA Support Unit
- Public Health(Wales) Act 2017 - HIA to be statutory in specific circumstances for public bodies
- Need for quality assurance and ensure that HIAs carried out are of sufficient standard



DEFINITIONS

- Quality - ‘the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something’ and ‘general excellence and standard level’
- Quality assurance - ‘the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product, especially by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery or production’



ISSUES

- Limited review tools developed to date
- It is what's contained in the report but also
What's not in it! Inequalities not often referenced; or methodology/process.
- Who has commissioned the HIA and why? Important in the context of bias.
- Consultation versus involvement, who are the stakeholders?
- Jargon



DEVELOPMENT OF QA FRAMEWORK

- Based on knowledge and practice of specialist HIA/P team
- Use of only other dedicated tool and checklist - BC and LG
- Draft evolved over 18 months
- Stakeholder workshops to discuss the draft and test the QA review tool



WHO IS IT FOR?

- Decision makers i.e. planning officers/policy makers - need to be confident in the findings to inform their recommendations.
- Commissioners of a HIA needing to verify that the HIA has met practise criteria
- HIA practitioners seeking a peer review of a HIA
- Community members seeking an independent assessment of findings and methods of a HIA
- Educators requiring criteria on which to base conclusions about HIA assessments
- Research community to support appraisal



WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR QA TOOLS?

Need to understand

- The HIA's aims and objectives
- Why it has been commissioned
- What type of decision it is designed to inform or influence
- The context and constraints (scope) in which the HIA is being undertaken
- The evidence gathered is sufficiently robust and inclusive to justify the impacts identified and recommendations made
- The HIA is planned and carried out in a manner that met the needs of the decision making or project management process and is likely to make a difference



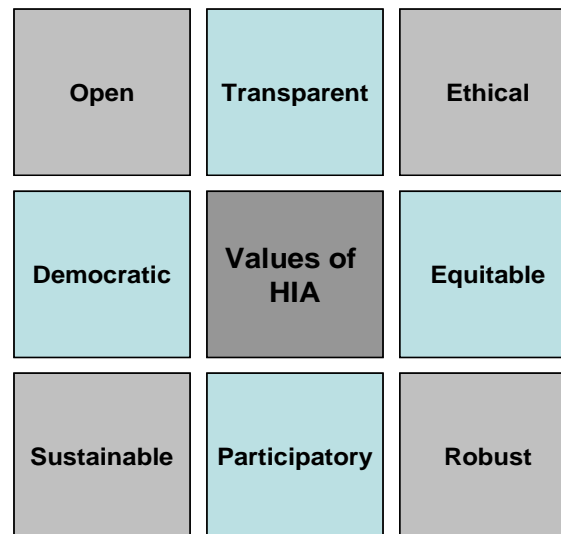
NEED TO UNDERSTAND

- that all stakeholders have had opportunities to participate and provide insight
- that health, wellbeing and inequalities have all been considered in a holistic, systematic and robust manner
- Both the **quality** of the **HIA** and the **process** the report describes



IMPORTANTLY...

- That the HIA been carried out in a way that follows recognised guidance and is underpinned and informed by the values of HIA practice?



QA EXPLANATORY NOTES

Quality Assurance Review Framework for Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

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Appendix One – Review Matrix

	Criteria	Grading: Good(G) Requires Strengthening (S) Inadequate (I)	Comments • What’s missing? • Are there any weaknesses? • What’s helpful? • What’s completed well?
1	Section 1: Information about the project, policy, plan or proposal		
1.1	<p>There is a clear description of the project or plan being assessed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Organisational relationships (e.g. who “owns” the project? are there any key partnerships?) • Where is the funding coming from for the project and the HIA • The context in which the project or plan ‘sits’ (e.g. geographic, population, the physical location) • Timeframes (see Explanatory Note) • Links or distance to other neighbouring projects if relevant (as there may be cumulative impacts) (see Explanatory Note) • The national and/or local policy context 		



Appendix Two – Explanatory Notes

	<p>Explanatory notes for selected criterion only.</p> <p>Further guidance on HIA methodology can be obtained from: Health Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide, Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit, 2012</p>
1	Section1: Information about the project, policy, plan or proposal
1.1	<p>Timeframes: it should be clear at what stage the proposal/project is at (e.g. planning/delivery/evaluation/mid-point review). It should be clear if there are a range of phases of implementation which may have different health impacts e.g. construction and operational phases. The following should be clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the duration of any plan and implementation• key project decision points and deadlines <p>Links or distance to other neighbouring projects if relevant (as there may be cumulative impacts):</p> <p>This may include other development/construction projects that are in close geographical proximity to the project under assessment. It could also include other programmes that are linked because of policy changes, policy implementation or service redesign that may create cumulative impacts on the same population groups.</p>



QA CONTENT - SCORING

- G = Good
- S - requires strengthening:
 1. Clarifications
 2. Minor
 3. Major
- I - inadequate

Comments are made against the criterion in the template and a reason/justification is given for the grading. These are then used to provide the summary feedback



USAGE - KEY STAGES

It is most valuable at the:

- **Scoping Report**
- **Assessment Report**
- **Decision making stage**

Should be carried out by at least 2 people-
individual appraisal then discuss/agree final
assessment and summary



TRAINING

- Overview of HIA and roles in HIA
- Overview of why quality is important
- Interactive and practical sessions
- Use document to QA a HIA
- Discussions
- Assignment and submission
- Certificate of competency in QA of HIAs (CIEH and WHIASU)



CHALLENGES TO BE AWARE OF...

- Lack of standardised approach in HIA practice
- Diversity of the settings in which decisions are made
- Diversity of practitioners experience/perspectives
- Lack of technical expertise - value of partners
- HIA is systematic process but it is also flexible and scalable leading to differences in size and complexity
- Time, capacity, resources
- Political pressure - contentious developments



OVERALL

- Provides confidence in knowledge and process of HIA
- Reviewers are independent of authors
- Be aware of conflict of interest
- Confidentiality
- Honest and fair assessment of the strengths and weaknesses
- Comment on omissions and include suggestions for improvement
- Use evidence to substantiate statements and challenges in feedback summary





- WHIASU checklist for ‘Assessing the Quality of HIA Reports’. (WHIASU, 2012)
- ‘Quality Assurance Review Framework for Health Impact Assessment (HIA) (WHIASU, 2017)

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