**Integrating Assessments: Health Inequalities Impact Assessment**

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In 2010, Scottish Government policy makers were required to complete multiple impact assessments of proposed policies, assessing impacts on equality groups, business and regulation, carbon and others. These reflected different values and used different processes. Most were desktop assessments, often completed by a single person. Not surprisingly, there was little appetite to add HIA to this list. In 2008, [Equally Well](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2008/06/equally-well-report-ministerial-task-force-health-inequalities/documents/0062206-pdf/0062206-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0062206.pdf) recognised this and recommended developing integrated impact assessment with health inequalities a ‘clear component’. We were seconded to Scottish Government during 2009 and 2010 to help implement this.

We developed and piloted an approach called Health Inequalities Impact Assessment (HIIA). This includes a scoping workshop in which a group stakeholders use a checklist to identify and discuss impacts on equality groups, other populations, health determinants and human rights. There are synergies between these as they are all impacts on people and underpinned by similar values. The workshop identifies key areas of impact, research questions and relevant evidence sources. Following the workshop, the appraisal involves gathering evidence on the impacts identified during scoping, preparing an impact matrix, making recommendations and drafting the final HIIA report.

We produced detailed guidance and templates for HIIA. We recognised that a major limitation of impact assessments can be the range of experience and knowledge of the individuals undertaking the assessment, which could negatively impact on the validity, and therefore the impact, of the recommendations made. As such, as well as involving multiple stakeholders in the workshops, we published an “[Issues to Consider](http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1138/hiia-key-issues-to-consider.pdf)” document – an evidence-based guide on the ways policies can impact differently on various groups of people. This guide assisted and upskilled participants well ahead of, and during, the assessment process enabling better informed discussions and decision-making.

Does HIIA differ from HIA? HIIA is a form of HIA. HIA is a flexible approach that can use different tools, methods and report formats. SHIIAN recommends use of scoping workshops in HIA, as used in HIIA, but also advocates adapting [HIA guidance](https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Health-Impact-Assessment-Guidance-for-Practitioners-SHIIAN-updated-2019.pdf) to the circumstances. HIIA is more prescriptive as it defines the process, scoping checklist and report templates. This enables organisations to ensure they meet legal requirements for Equality and Fairer Scotland Assessments, and reduces the training needed to plan and conduct the assessments.

We piloted HIIA on 7 Scottish Government health policies and 3 NHS Board polices with very positive feedback. All participants reported that the HIIA had added value and 80% said they had identified new issues, even though some policies were at a late stage of development. Participants particularly welcomed the creative scoping workshops involving stakeholders in a structured discussion that brought different perspectives together, and the purposive way evidence was used.

Following the pilots, the Health Scotland Equalities Team became responsible for support and further development of HIIA. For several years, the team supported colleagues in NHS Boards and SG Health Directorates to use HIIA (some case studies are [here](http://www.healthscotland.scot/tools-and-resources/health-inequalities-impact-assessment-hiia/hiia-case-studies) and [here](http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1117/health-inequalities-impact-assessment-answers-to-frequently-asked-questions-nov14.pdf)). They also reviewed human rights impact assessment and revised some HIIA resources to align with the 2012 Health Scotland Health Inequalities Framework. Although organisational changes mean HIIA is not currently directly supported in Public Health Scotland, the [resources](http://www.healthscotland.scot/tools-and-resources/health-inequalities-impact-assessment-hiia/how-to-have-an-hiia-workshop) are still available and there is discussion about updating them.

In Scottish Government, HIIA was used in an EU Joint Action project to assess the impacts of Welfare Reform in 2012. However, despite the positive evaluation, there was no agreement to use HIIA more routinely beyond health directorates. Recent legislation has added new impact assessment requirements. Today Scottish Government policies are subject to seven different kinds of impact assessment. These do not include health but HIIA could meet several of the requirements. This year, Scottish Government published a [review of impact assessment in governments](https://www.gov.scot/publications/literature-review-impact-assessment-governments/pages/1/) that considers the potential for integration. Will the Scottish Government now take the opportunity to include health determinants within an integrated impact assessment approach?