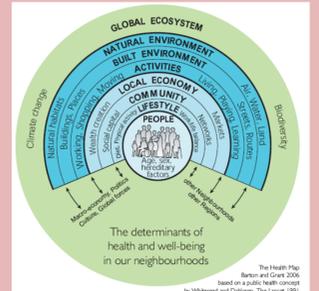


## Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)– Public Health Wales – Strengthening the positive impact of all policies, systems and services on health and wellbeing

The role of WHIASU is to support the development and effective use of HIA in Wales. HIA is a well established, systematic and practical way of assessing the potential positive and negative impacts of a policy or plan on health and wellbeing. To be effective and further the understanding and application of HIA the Unit has to build partnerships and collaborate with key public, voluntary, community and private organisations.

HIA is a key public health tool which supports both the implementation of WG policies and the wider decision making process, it:

- increases understanding across all policy areas of their contribution to maximise positive health outcomes and reduce inequalities
- is a 'tool' to raise awareness of and implement Health in all Policies (HiAP)
- facilitates links between public health/health professionals and other sectors
- strengthens partnership working and co-production
- uses the Wider Determinants as the framework for the assessment
- Can be used as a participatory engagement tool



**Principles underpinning the work of WHIASU and the practice of HIA have synergy with the sustainable development principle open, transparent, ethical, democratic, equitable, sustainable, participatory, robust**

### Why HIA? ...

There has been a commitment to developing the use of HIA in WG policy and legislation. The **Public Health (Wales) Bill (2016)** and the **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG)** both share an ambition that HIA and a HiAP approach are implemented more widely.

**The WBFG act focuses on 7 well-being goals which will be achieved through applying the sustainable development principle**



“Wales faces a number of challenges now and in the future, such as climate change, poverty, health inequalities and jobs and growth. To tackle these we need to work together. To give current and future generations a good quality of life **we need to think about the long term impact of the decisions we make**”.

(The WBFG Essentials, 2015)

**Nationally HIA** is already a requirement within key WG policy areas including :

- MTAN 2 – Coal Open cast Mining (2009)
- WelTAG (2008) – Transport
- NHS Wales Infrastructure Investment Guidance (2015)

**Locally** there is recognition that HIA can inform the decision making process and has been applied across a range of settings including; housing, health, social care, environment & economic regeneration, local development plans and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector.

### Benefits of HIA..

HIA contributes and adds value to public health priorities:

- Adopting and implementing a multi agency systems approach
- Working across sectors to improve the future health and wellbeing of individuals & communities
- Supporting the NHS to improve outcomes
- Protection of the public through the continuous improvement, quality, safety and effectiveness of services
- Influencing policy to protect and improve health and reduce inequalities

### Building Capacity

WHIASU offers a range of learning opportunities, including:

- Formal training sessions/packages
- Mentoring –‘learning by doing’ and guidance
- The first ever UK accredited competency courses – rapid and comprehensive HIA via the CIEH.
- Quality Assuring HIA
- Introductory HIA - web-based E-learning – <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/new.s.cfm?orgid=522&contentid=43319>
- Guidance, resources, case studies, evidence briefings and more via the website: [www.whiasu.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.whiasu.wales.nhs.uk)



One of **WHIASU's** key partners is the **Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Cymru-Wales (CIEH)**.

Over 70 practitioners across a range of environmental health disciplines have been trained in HIA in the last 2 years

### What they say....

‘Carrying out a HIA helped break down barriers between communities and statutory services’ (N. MC. 2017)

- ‘Use of the Rapid HIA toolkit gives an early indication of impacts’
- ‘Comprehensive HIA allows a more in-depth review of impacts and has the ability to add to the evidence base to support funding bids for future projects’ (TE, 2017)

‘Conclusion from undertaking the HIA:

- Helped inform the design of the scheme
- Supported the ambitions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Made connections between policy, scheme delivery and affected population’ (N, Mc. 2017)

‘undertaking a comprehensive HIA provided a valued opportunity for residents to meet professionals involved in the proposal and encouraged cross-organisational discussions which helped shape the recommendations for the scheme’ (N. Mc., 2017)

### HIA adds value not burden:

Following completion of HIA training EHO’s have become advocates for HIA. They influence their organisation and partners and through application demonstrate the added value HIA can contribute to their work, processes and positive public health outcomes.

“Once I realised the versatility of HIA and that it’s not complicated, it became an additional tool which I could use in my day-to-day work. I’ve assessed the merits of various planning applications as well as the effects of the authority’s public toilet closures. I find it highlights issues which you may otherwise have overlooked”. An EHO 2017

I’ve already been talking to ..... about other projects/bids that we intend submitting for funding.... we should undertake HIA’s and offered to facilitate. So hopefully, this will become common practice within our area of work at least. (T.E. 2017)

‘Assumptions had been made on the amount of public consultation which had occurred previously. HIA helped engagement and demonstrated the value of keeping communities involved’ (N Mc.2017)