

Reducing Health Inequality

A consultation on the draft Health Impact Assessment (Wales) Regulations



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Health inequalities are unfair differences in health between people that could be avoided.



Health inequalities can happen because of:



Poverty — living on a low income or in poverty can make it harder to have your basic needs met and make healthy choices.



The environment you live in — where you live makes a big difference:

- poor housing can have damp, or other issues
- rural areas have less transport, services and support
- built-up areas can have pollution and lack of open spaces.



Lifestyle choices — poor diet, smoking or drinking too much alcohol.



Discrimination — some people are treated unfairly because of who they are. This can make it harder to get good quality care from the services when they need it.

It can mean some people:



- don't live as long as they should
- have more physical health problems and illnesses than they should
- have more mental health issues than they should
- find it more difficult to connect to services and don't get the support they need as quickly as they should.

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017

This law aims to improve the health of people across Wales and reduce health inequalities. It helps everyone work together for a healthier society.

Public bodies play a big part in this. They are funded by the government and provide services, for example the National Health Service of Wales (NHS) and local councils are public bodies.

As part of this law, we want to make new Regulations (rules) so public bodies have to carry out Health Impact Assessments (HIAs).



A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a way to make sure no group of people is unfairly affected by big actions or decisions being made by public bodies.



This tells you more about our new Health impact assessments Regulations. We want to know what you think of them so we don't leave anything important out.





Making things fairer

Equality is about everyone:

- having equal opportunities
- getting the support they need
- being treated fairly.

Equity is about understanding we don't all start from the same place. It's about understanding that some people need more support than others to reach the same outcome and have equality like:

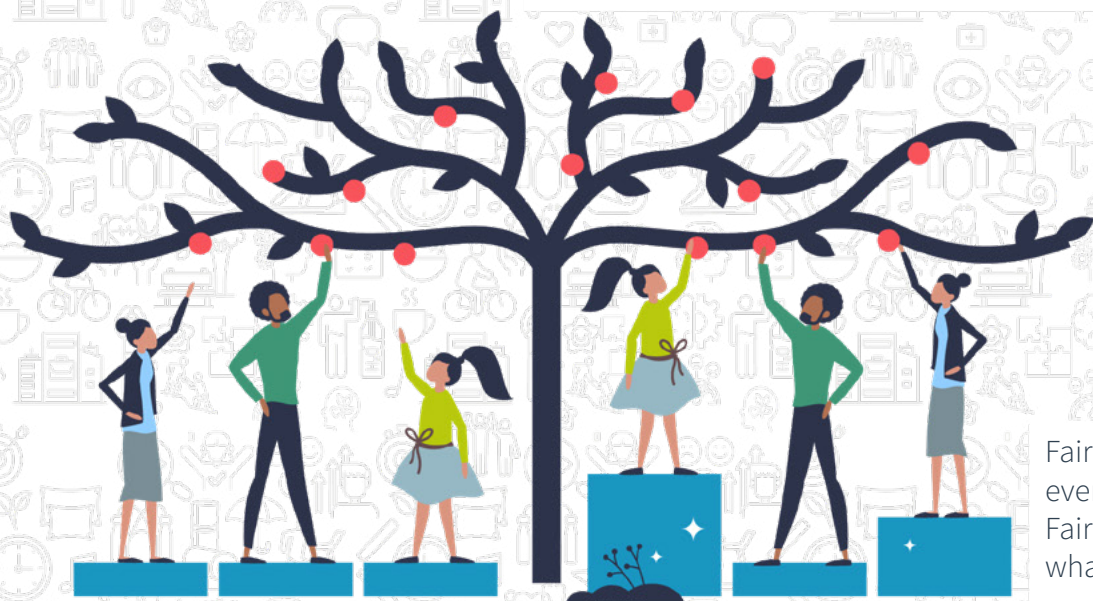
- older people
- children and young people
- women and girls
- people with disabilities
- people who are pregnant or on maternity leave
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people
- refugees and asylum seekers
- LGBTQ+
- people living in poverty.



The Well-being of Future Generations Act

This law means we have to think about how the decisions we make will affect people now and in the future. Public bodies have to do this too.

HIAs can help us to make decisions which make life fairer for more people, help improve equity and reduce health inequalities across Wales.



Equality

does not equal

Equity

Fairness does not mean everyone gets the same. Fairness means everyone gets what they need.”

(Rick Riordan, 2010).

Talking about: the new Regulations

This is what we're planning to put in the new Regulations.

When to carry out a HIA

Public bodies **will** have to do a HIA when it's planning to make a big decision or action that changes how it works or how it functions — these are called **strategic changes**.

Public bodies **won't** have to do one for changes to its day-to-day working or routine operating.

Before doing a HIA

Before doing a HIA a public body must tell people what they want to do and why. They must consult with:

- their partners
- people who use their service.

What to put in

Public bodies must make sure the HIA includes:

- information about what they want to do and why
- which partners and people they are consulting
- who this might affect
- any positive and negative impacts on physical and mental health
- how big or small these impacts might be
- how they will deal with the negative impacts
- how they plan to increase positive impacts
- anything else they think is important.

What to consider

When doing a HIA, public bodies must think about how their action or decisions could lead to health inequalities. They should consider:

- everything that affects people's health and well-being — like poverty, where they live and lifestyle choices
- if the action or decision will promote health opportunities to improve health, and well-being.

Publishing it

After they complete the HIA public bodies must publish it on their website. If they don't have a website they must publish it in whatever way they think best.

Support for public bodies

Public Health Wales National Health Service Trust will publish guidance for public bodies that helps them follow the Regulations. They will also help public bodies when doing their HIAs.



Question:

Do you think these Regulations will help public bodies do HIAs?

Yes

No

Don't know



which public bodies should do HIAs

There are **48** public bodies that all have to follow the Regulations and do HIAs. This list includes:



- Welsh Ministers
- Local authorities
- Local Health Boards
- National Health Service Trusts like Public Health Wales
- National Park authorities that run National Parks in Wales
- Welsh fire and rescue authorities
- the Natural Resources Body for Wales
- the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- the Arts Council of Wales
- the Sports Council for Wales
- the National Library of Wales
- the National Museum of Wales.

But there are some public bodies that aren't included in the list:

- **Qualifications Wales**
- **Social Care Wales**
- **Health Education and Improvement Wales**
- **Welsh Revenue Authority**
- **Transport for Wales**
- **Centre for Digital Public Services**
- **Digital Health and Care Wales**
- **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.**

Last year, we asked people across Wales if they thought these other public bodies should have to think about the health and well-being of future generations when they make decisions.

Most people think they should so, we're thinking of adding them to the list.



Question:

Do you think these other public bodies should also have to do HIAs?

Yes No Don't know



Talking about: when to do a HIA

The Regulations will say public bodies must do a HIA when they want to take an action or make a decision that is strategic.

A strategic action or decision includes anything:

- that changes how it functions
- that changes its legal actions or responsibilities
- that set new goals or objectives that change direction
- that affect their finances or financial planning
- that changes short-term plans to long term plans
- that makes changes to public services
- that changes how it delivers or buys services
- that changes a law or makes a new law.

A public body won't have to do a HIA for actions or decisions that:

- are part of its day-to-day working
- administration matters
- routine operating
- short-term plans.



Question:

Do you agree that public bodies should have to do a HIA for strategic actions or decisions?

Yes No Don't know

Question:

Are there other times they should have to do HIAs?

Yes No Don't know

When?

Question:

Are there times they shouldn't have to do HIAs?

Yes No Don't know

When?

We want HIAs to all be done to the same high quality across Wales. Public bodies will have flexibility, but they will have to follow the Regulations.

Involving people

Before doing a HIA a public body must tell people what they are thinking of doing and why. They must consult with their partners and the people who use their service.

Involving people helps them spot any impacts the action or decision could have on people's physical and mental health.

Thinking about the outcomes

Public bodies have to consider the possible outcomes this will have on people's lives and what they want to achieve. They must think about:

- everything that affects people's health and well-being — like poverty, where they live and their lifestyle choices
- if the action or decision will promote health opportunities to improve health, and well-being
- how this will affect future generations — this is part of their sustainability duty
- anything else that could cause health inequalities or impact people's health outcomes.



Question:
Do you think public bodies should have to consider these outcomes as part of HIAs?

Yes No Don't know

Question:
Do you think they should have to consider everything that causes health inequalities?

Yes No Don't know

Question:
What else should they have to consider as part of the HIA?



Talking about: the role of Public Health Wales

Public Health Wales already support public bodies. They have lots of resources available on their website and guidance for public bodies.

We want them to develop new guidance that helps public bodies to understand when they must carry out a HIA and how to do it.



Question:

Do you think developing guidance is the best way to support public bodies?

Yes No Don't know

Question:

What information would help public bodies the most?



Talking about: publishing a HIA

The Regulations say that public bodies must publish HIAs. Public bodies can decide to publish the HIA in whichever way they think is best, but it should be easy to find and easy to understand. This helps people know what's happening and why.

Public bodies should publish it on their website if they have one.



Question:

Do you think public bodies should publish their HIAs in whatever way they think best?

Yes No Don't know

How do you think HIAs should be published?

HIA's are a big step towards reducing health inequalities.

There will be guidance, but we want to make sure that public bodies have all the support they need to follow the Regulations and carry out HIAs.

Question:
As well as the guidance, what else could we do to support public bodies?



We want to make sure this is fair for everyone.


Question:
Do you think these Regulations will have any impact (positive or negative) on the Welsh language?

Yes No Don't know
How?

Is there anything else we need to think about?

Thanks for taking part

Please send your answers to:

 healthimpactassessment@gov.wales

 By: 29th March 2024