



# HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT





# Welcome

**H**ealth Impact Assessment (HIA) provides a systematic yet flexible and practical framework that can be used to consider the wider effects of local and national policies or initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health. HIA works best when it involves people and organisations who can contribute different kinds of relevant knowledge and insight. The information is then used to build in measures to maximise opportunities for health and to minimise any risks. It also provides a way of addressing the inequalities in health that continue to persist in Wales ([WHIASU, 2024](#)).

This e-bulletin includes a range of projects and initiatives who have used, or are using HIA to improve the health and well-being of communities across Wales.

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*Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit*

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Policy

## Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit marks 20 years of ‘shaping a healthier Wales’

### Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit

The [Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit \(WHIASU\)](#) has marked 20 years of helping to “shape a healthier, more equitable Wales”.

The unit, which provides guidance, training, resources and information in relation to the practice of health impact assessment, celebrated the milestone anniversary on November 14 by hosting a [webinar](#) in partnership with Public Health Network Cymru.

During the session, which attracted participants from various sectors, attendees reflected on WHIASU’s development over the last 20 years, explored the practical application of health impact assessment, and discussed its future - especially with the upcoming introduction of health impact assessment regulations by the Welsh Government.

During the event, two new resources were introduced:

[‘Putting the Spotlight on Health, Well-being and Equity Using Health Impact Assessment: Case Studies from Public Bodies in Wales’](#) features multiple examples of HIAs conducted in Wales across diverse sectors and levels of depth, The [WHIASU@20 infographic](#) highlights the unit’s accomplishments as it celebrates its 20th anniversary.

The panel also considered where health impact assessment might be in another 20 years, given the significant changes the field has undergone over the past two decades.

Liz Green, Programme Director for WHIASU, said:

“Twenty years in, WHIASU stands as a testament to the power of Health Impact Assessments to shape a healthier, more equitable Wales.

“As we look to the future, our commitment to evidence-driven change remains strong—building on past lessons and advancing practices that put health, well-being and equity at the heart of public policy, especially with the introduction of the Health Impact Assessment regulations by Welsh Government in 2025.”

Visit the [WHIASU team page for more information.](#)

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Effaith ar Iechyd Cymru



**WHIASU**  
Wales Health Impact  
Assessment Support Unit

Policy

## Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)

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Principal Health Impact Assessment Development Officer; Wales Health Impact Support Unit, Public Health Wales

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**Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** is a process designed to evaluate the potential effects of policies, projects, or proposals on the health and well-being of a population, particularly in sectors beyond traditional healthcare. The purpose of an HIA is to ensure that health and well-being are considered in decision-making, aligning with the **Health in All Policies (HiAP)** approach. Established in 2004, the **Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)** works to promote and support the use of HIA throughout Wales. Operating within the **Policy**

**and International Health Directorate at Public Health Wales (PHW)**, WHIASU collaborates with both national and international organisations to incorporate health and well-being into decision-making processes, with a focus on improving health equity. Recently, WHIASU has supported various teams within PHW in conducting HIAs. Notable examples include work with the **Infant Feeding Team** under the **Health Improvement Team**, and the **Inclusion Health Team** within **Health Protection**. Additionally,

WHIASU is contributing to the HIA for the **Targeted Lung Screening Programme**, which is being developed for implementation across Wales. Building on two decades of work, WHIASU remains dedicated to advancing HIA and the HiAP approach, with the goal of fully integrating HIA practices across Wales. Under the upcoming HIA regulations, as outlined in the **Public Health (Wales) Act 2017**, WHIASU will collaborate closely with Welsh public bodies to assist them in embedding HIA within their decision-making frameworks. These regulations will require

all public bodies in Wales to conduct an HIA when making strategic decisions. WHIASU has already submitted a consultation response on behalf of PHW regarding the draft regulations and has also supported the Welsh Government in organising two workshops with public body representatives to review the findings of the consultation. WHIASU's goals include: Providing guidance, training, and support for conducting HIAs, with a training program to be relaunched in early 2025. Encouraging the use of HIA

as a tool in public policy and decision-making. Promoting awareness of how policies, projects, and proposals impact the health and well-being of communities and different population groups. For more information and resources, visit the WHIASU website: <https://phwwhocc.co.uk/whiasu/>  
**Contact:** [WHIASU.  
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## Practice

# Understanding the health impacts of a national lung cancer screening programme: a participatory health impact assessment (HIA) workshop summary

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**Jennifer Sharp,**

Screening Engagement Specialist, Screening Engagement



Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Wales, accounting for more deaths than breast and colorectal cancer combined<sup>1</sup>. Evidence from randomised controlled trials shows that targeted screening of high-risk individuals with low-dose CT can improve outcomes.

The [National Lung Screening Trial](#) and [NELSON](#) are two large randomised controlled trials demonstrating a 20% or greater relative reduction in lung cancer mortality with low-dose CT screening in high-risk individuals.

In September 2022, the reformed UK National Screening Committee (NSC) made a positive [recommendation](#) for targeted lung cancer screening, recommending that the UK nations move towards implementation of targeted lung cancer screening with integrated smoking cessation service provision. Following this recommendation, Welsh Government has asked Public Health Wales to make recommendations on how a national lung cancer screening programme could be delivered, and since April 2024 a project team has been working to

develop these.

The Head of Screening Engagement requested support from Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) to support undertaking a participatory HIA workshop to better understand the health impacts of a national lung cancer screening programme in Wales.

While some impacts on health determinants may be direct, obvious, and/or intentional, others may be indirect, difficult to identify, and unintentional.



A participatory HIA in this instance can identify health inequalities in not only the general population but in vulnerable groups as well<sup>2</sup>. The main output of any HIA is an evidence-based set of recommendations that should lead to the minimization of risks or unintended consequences and maximization of potential benefits. It can provide opportunities for health improvement and to fill in any identified 'gaps' in service provision or delivery.

During the workshop which took place in October 2024, the stakeholder group identified the main population groups who may be affected by the proposed screening programme using the [WHIASU Population Groups Checklist](#).

Undertaking a participatory HIA workshop in this way strengthened the evidence relating to the populations groups and determinants which could be affected by the national implementation of the lung cancer screening programme in Wales. The stakeholder discussion during the workshop identified a number of key themes that will be shared in the final report due early 2025.

The HIA workshop followed a systematic process, provoked a lively and thought-provoking

discussion, and highlighted a wide range of issues for consideration. Overall, there was a general consensus that a national lung cancer screening programme has the potential to be highly beneficial to the population of Wales, by identifying lung cancers early and through the integrated promotion of smoking cessation services.

However, it also highlighted the range, and importance, of work necessary to ensure an accessible and equitable screening programme is delivered. This has reinforced other research work carried out by the Screening Engagement Team, as well as raising questions not previously considered. It will provide a basis and focus for the next stages of the engagement work within the lung cancer screening project.

More information on the lung cancer screening programme can be found [here](#). Resources relating to all aspects of HIA are available on the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit's [website](#).

<sup>1</sup> NHS Wales Executive. <https://executive.nhs.wales/functions/networks-and-planning/cancer/workstreams/lung-health-check/>

<sup>2</sup> Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (2012). 'Health Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide'.

Policy | Research

# Self-administered sexual health testing in an open prison setting: a pilot health impact assessment and social return on investment analysis

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The sexual health of the male prison population is often among the poorest in a country. This paper aims to identify the wider health impacts and social value of a sexual health self-sampling programme offered to male prisoners in an open prison setting in Wales.

This study applied a unique pilot approach of using Health Impact Assessment and Social Return on Investment Frameworks in tandem. Key stakeholder groups affected by the intervention were identified, and engaged with through workshops, interviews and questionnaires to identify and quantify the health impacts and wider outcomes.

Outcomes were then valued using proxy financial values to present the overall estimated social value of the self-sampling service.

Based on a small sample, results indicate that for every £1 spent on the self-sampling service in the prison, a potential value of £4.14 was created. This resulted in a ratio of £4.14:£1. Approximately one-third of the value created (£1,517.95) was categorised as monetarily returnable, whereas the remaining value (£3,260.40) was purely illustrative social value, for example improved mental well-being.

This unique pilot study demonstrates the health impacts and wider social value of providing a self-sampling sexual health service to prisoners within an open prison setting. By innovatively testing the feasibility of using a Health Impact Assessment process alongside Social Return on Investment analyses, this paper has outlined how the frameworks can be used in synergy to illustrate not just direct return on investment but also the social value of providing such a service.

The full article can be accessed [HERE](#).

**Policy | Research**

# Analysing the value, benefits and barriers to stakeholder and community participation in health impact assessments (HIAs) in Wales from 2005 to 2020

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Health Impact Assessments (HIA) are undertaken to inform decision-making processes by assessing the potential health and health equity impacts of a programme, policy, or project and developing appropriate responses to mitigate harms and maximize benefits. Stakeholder and community participation is central to the impact assessment process. This research explores the experiences of stakeholders and community members who participated in HIA workshops in Wales between 2005 and 2020. Data were gathered through a questionnaire at the end of each HIA workshop

session with stakeholder and community participants from diverse backgrounds reporting on the experience of their participation. The analysis reveals a range of perceived benefits of participation in the HIA process. The identified benefits included the opportunity to be heard, networking, and a view of participation as a community service. These findings reinforce the importance of stakeholder and community participation in HIA, through the perspective of participants themselves. This study contributes to the understanding of community and stakeholder

participation in impact assessment processes and offers recommendations for improving the practice and impact of HIA in policy development. These findings have the potential to be transferable to other types of impact assessments, and other forms of community and stakeholder participation.

The full article can be found [HERE](#).

# Grapevine





## Autism Early Years Group

**Jayne Messer,**

Specialist Health Visitor

The Autism Early Years Group is offered to all parent and carers in Swansea Bay University Health Board who have had a child that is diagnosed with autism. We believe this is the only one of its kind in South Wales which is provided by Health, and is truly multidisciplinary, open to all families who have received a diagnosis through the Early Years Autism Service.

Seeking, waiting and receiving an autism diagnosis can be an emotional rollercoaster, it can be hugely stressful, frustrating yet also reassuring and validating. However, even when people expect the assessment to result in a

diagnosis of autism it can still be a shock. Caring for a child with autism can be extremely stressful and isolating. This service is therefore vital in helping parent and carers understand, process and support their autistic children to reach their full potential whilst also connecting with other parents and carers who may be experiencing many similar issues.

The group runs for six weeks and is currently a collaboration with Health, Education and the Third sector. Each week covers a particular topic. The first week explores 'what is autism' and we introduce the importance of self-care. The second week is ran by

the Occupational Therapists and focuses on sensory needs. The third is about communication delivered by Speech and Language Therapists. The third focuses on understanding behaviour and is provided by the Clinical Psychologist. The fifth week covers information about diet and eating shared by the dieticians and this session also covers issues around education provided by the Educational Psychologist. The final week involves inviting as many third sector organisations that provide support for children and young people with autism to come and meet with the parents and carers.

A key aspect is that these

groups are held in person to also help parent and carers connect with others, to help tackle the isolation that can often be felt when caring for a child with autism.

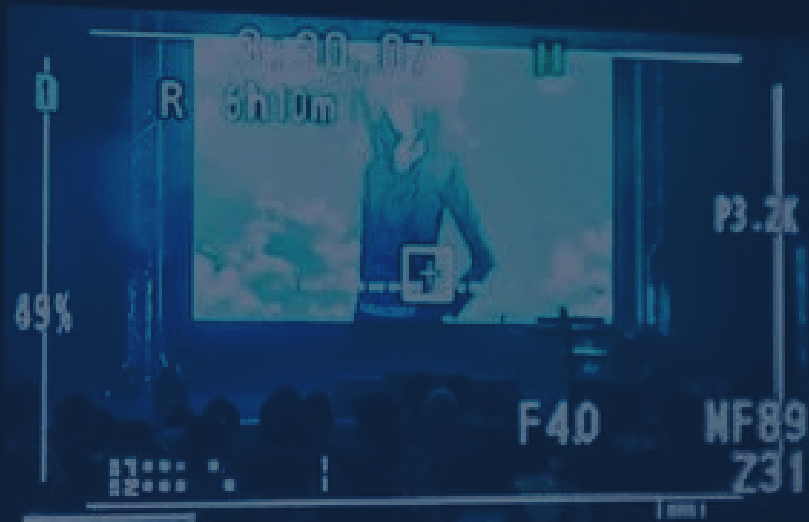
Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each group. As one parent wrote “the sessions covered a number of challenges we face as a family, gave us fresh strategies to think about and connected us to other parents reassuring us that we are not alone”. In relation to their children’s behaviours one parent said after the group said “now I understand and know how to deal with my son’s meltdowns”. In terms of accessing support another said “I know about how to access services now and learnt about new services I had never heard about”. Overall people felt the group provided a “good variety of subjects and materials”.

The plan is to continue to offer these groups throughout the year within the community to help accessibly and also online for those who struggle to travel.

For further Information please contact: [jayne.messer@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:jayne.messer@wales.nhs.uk)



# Videos



BARS

EVF DTL ZEBRA

LCD WFM

COUNTER-RESET/TC SE

FUNCTION SHTR/F





## Supporting postnatal weight management

We explore the need to develop the evidence base, discuss a behavioural science perspective and consider next steps for developing policy and practice to support postnatal health and wellbeing.

[Watch](#)



## Public Health Wales' International Public Health Forum

The International Health Forum promoted the experiences of colleagues across Public Health Wales, shared their learnings from engaging in international health activities and research and provided time to discuss opportunities for the future to engage in international partnerships working and networks.

[Watch](#)



## WHIASU@20

The landscape of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has changed massively over the last 20 years, and the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) have been right at the heart of it since its founding in 2004.

[Watch](#)

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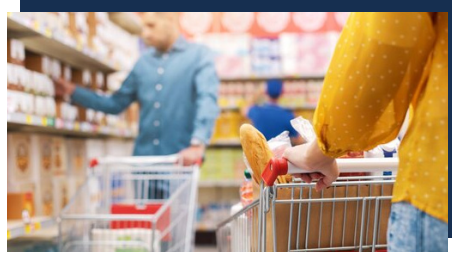
# News & Resources





[People in Wales need more opportunities to protect their mental wellbeing](#)

26-11-2024



[Food environment rather than lack of knowledge biggest barrier to action on weight](#)

26-11-2024



[Priority areas for early years action identified to help support young families in Wales](#)

26-11-2024

All News

## [Health-enhancing physical activity in the European Union, 2024](#)

World Health Organization

## [Waiting for change: Reducing suicide and improving poor mental health on the parenthood journey in Wales](#)

Samaritans Cymru

All Resources

**Next Issue**  
**A LOOK BACK AT 2024**

