

CONCEPT  
EXPLAINER

WHAT IS

# Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

swipe



# HIA is defined

by Public Health Scotland as a process which systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a project, program, plan, policy, or strategy on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA identifies appropriate actions to avoid or mitigate health risks and promote health opportunities.



# HIA helps decision-

makers think about health, wellbeing, and equality right from the start across areas like housing, transport, planning, and economic development. It can flag up unintended consequences before decisions are made, show how different groups might be affected, and enable community and stakeholder feedback. Because it's flexible, it can also be used alongside other impact assessments, like Equality Impact Assessments.



# Although not a

statutory requirement in Scotland, HIA is recognised as a practical and collaborative tool for embedding health and wellbeing within policy and planning processes, supporting the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing health inequalities and advancing the principles of prevention and collaboration across sectors.



# Most HIAs follow

a broadly similar structure which includes six stages:

- 1.** Screening – is it required?
- 2.** Scoping – how will it be delivered?
- 3.** Identification of impacts – how the policy could shape health and equity
- 4.** Appraisal – evidence gathering based on identified impacts
- 5.** Recommendations – actions to enhance or mitigate health impacts
- 6.** Monitoring – implementation of actions



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# Thanks for reading

react and share

