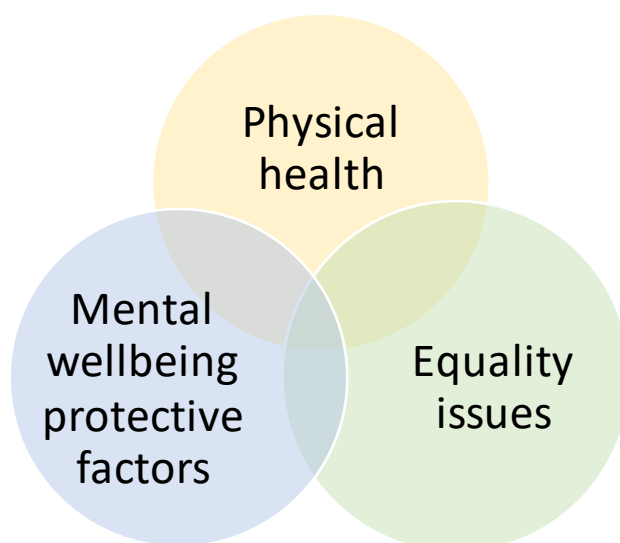


Appendix 6

Report on Integrated Health Impact Assessment (iHIA) and Green Infrastructure Prioritisation

What is an Integrated Health Impact Assessment (iHIA)?

The concept of an Integrated Health Impact Assessment (iHIA) has gained prominence in recent years as a comprehensive approach to evaluating the potential health impacts of policies, programmes, and projects. It's a way at looking at all projects, in their planning phase, to make sure that our Green Infrastructure (GI) projects and work have the greatest benefit/impact on the health and mental wellbeing of the residents of Monmouthshire and includes action for the nature and climate emergencies our communities are facing.



It provides a systematic process that combines various methodologies to assess the potential health effects of a proposed policy, programme, or project on a population. The assessment involves the collection and analysis of data, stakeholder engagement, and the consideration of health equity to ensure that the impacts on different population groups are thoroughly examined. IHIA places a strong emphasis on health equity, ensuring that the impacts on vulnerable and marginalised populations are considered. This helps to address disparities and promote fairness in health outcomes. When planning a GI project we need to consider how it will:

Consider Health Inequalities: 'The "hardest to reach" are often the ones we need to reach most.' Those groups of people experiencing the greatest health inequalities are the ones most likely to benefit from access to the natural environment. Therefore, increasing access for all, but with a focus on how to increase engagement for at risk groups, is an important consideration. These include children and young people, Socio-economic status (SES), older people, BAME communities, people with physical and mental health long-term health conditions, people with disabilities.

Increase access to green space and the natural environment: Access to green space and nature has been strongly linked good physical and mental health. Therefore, increasing opportunities

for people to engage with nature and the natural environment is an important health consideration.

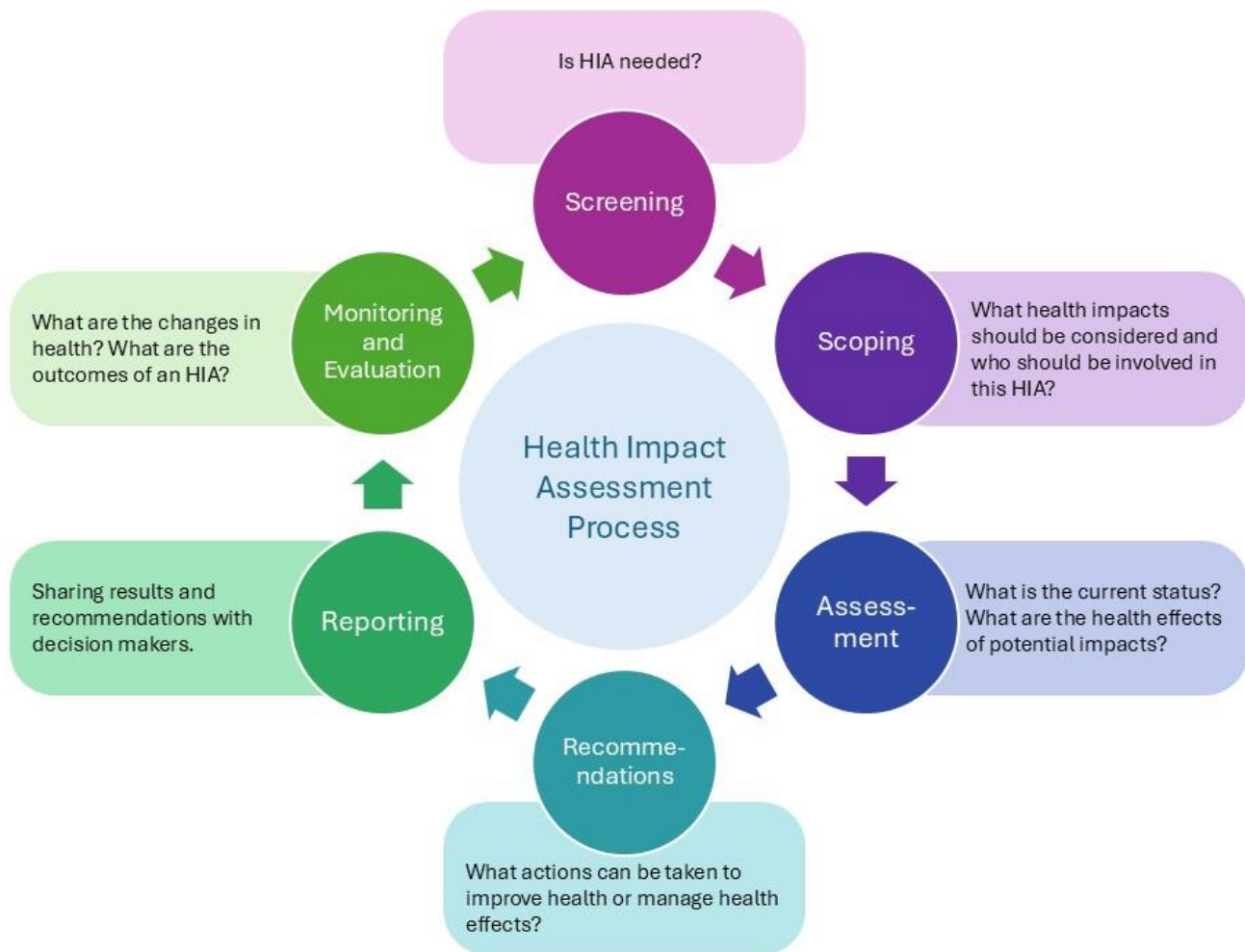
Increase social connection: Green space can support positive health and wellbeing outcomes through facilitating social interactions which promote social cohesion. The ability of our GI projects to enable people to come together in nature is likely to have a positive impact on social connections. **Support Volunteering:** Volunteering is an important element in sustaining the projects and green space improvements. It is associated with a sense of achievement, social connectedness and improved eudemonic wellbeing and therefore likely to be an important contributor the wellbeing of the volunteer themselves.

Facilitate healthy lifestyles through behaviour change: The pandemic lockdowns increased awareness about access to green spaces. However, since then the usage has almost dropped back to pre-pandemic levels. Hence, there's a need to understand sustainable behaviour change and appropriate promotion to encourage continued access and use of green spaces.

Using iHIA to Prioritise Green Infrastructure Delivery

We want to make sure that our GI work achieves the most benefit for our communities' health and mental wellbeing and to address nature and climate emergencies. So, we need to make sure our work is targeted, and its impacts are measured. Particular population characteristics can make people more vulnerable to lower levels of wellbeing. Consideration of these groups will help address health inequalities.

A tool for assessing and measuring the impact of GI projects on populations groups has been developed. A toolkit / checklist is used in the planning stage of a project to assess the impact - both positive and negative- of the activity on populations groups. The checklist process takes 15-30 minutes and is best undertaken with colleagues to generate discussion and consideration of the potential impacts of the proposed project.



For more information about the iHIA and the use of the toolkit, please contact Helenfairbank@monmouthshire.gov.uk