Health Impact Assessment Screening Guidance

This document provides guidance on how to undertake an effective Health Impact Assessment Screening.

Question 1: Housing quality, design and affordability

Access to decent and adequate housing is critically important for health and wellbeing, especially for the very young and very old. Environmental factors, overcrowding and sanitation in buildings as well as unhealthy urban spaces have been widely recognised as causing illness. Inadequately insulated, ventilated and energy inefficient homes increase the risk of cold homes, fuel poverty and overheating which increase the risk of death and cardiovascular, respiratory and musculoskeletal conditions, particularly in the very young and very old. Homes which are not designed to reduce the risk of mould can increase the risk of mould-related allergy and respiratory disease and death, post-construction management also has an impact on community welfare, cohesion and mental wellbeing.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Accessible and adaptable dwellings • Internal space standards, orientation and layout • Affordable housing and dwelling mix • Energy efficiency • High Quality Design	Inadequately insulated, ventilated and energy inefficient homes increase the risk of cold homes, fuel poverty as well as overheating and increased indoor air pollution. These factors increase the risk of death and cardiovascular, respiratory, metabolic, psychiatric and musculoskeletal conditions, particularly in the very young and very old. Homes which are not designed to reduce mould can increase the risk of mould-related allergy and respiratory disease and death.	Energy efficient homes can reduce the cost of energy bills for residents which can reduce stress and mental health problems as well as reduce poverty and financial precarity. Energy efficient homes reduce the impact of domestic energy use on climate change.	SP4. Sustainable Development SP5. High Quality Design
	A lack of affordable housing within communities may compromise the health of low-income residents as they are likely to spend more on housing costs and less on other daily living needs.	Making provision for affordable housing has the potential to improve wellbeing, while housing quality can be improved by use of appropriate construction methods. This includes use of good materials for noise insulation and energy-efficiency, and detailed design considerations to make sure that homes are accessible, adaptable and well oriented.	
	Poor choice of location, design and orientation of housing developments can be detrimental to physical and mental health.	Providing a sufficient range of housing tenures with good basic services is also essential. Adaptable buildings for community uses such as health, education and leisure can contribute towards a sustainable community.	
	The quality of design, including internal sound insulation, daylighting and provision of private space can influence the health and wellbeing of occupiers.	Providing adaptable homes allows residents to remain in their home despite changing accommodation requirements. In this context, adaptable housing allows care to be provided in the community more easily.	

Category 2: Access to healthcare services and other social infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes education (primary, secondary, higher and special needs); health facilities (hospitals and primary care providers); social services; emergency services (police, fire and ambulance); and other community facilities, such as cultural facilities, libraries, cemeteries and community halls.

Strong, vibrant, sustainable and cohesive communities require good quality, accessible public services and infrastructure. Access to social infrastructure and other services is a key component of Lifetime Neighbourhoods. Social isolation is associated with poor physical and mental health, particularly in the elderly as well as other vulnerable groups.

Encouraging the use of local services is influenced by accessibility, in terms of transport and access to and into a building, and the range and quality of services offered. Access to good quality health and social care, education (primary, secondary and post-19) and community facilities has a direct positive effect on human health. Opportunities for the community to participate in the planning of these services has the potential to impact positively on mental health and wellbeing and can lead to greater community cohesion.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Needs and demand for • services • Capacity of existing healthcare services, education services and • social infrastructure • Timing, location and accessibility and developer contributions • Reconfiguring health and social care services • Access and use of buildings by disabled and older people • Public Access • Automated external defibrillators	Failing to plan for the social infrastructure needs in an area can exacerbate pressure of existing services and worsen health outcomes and inequalities	The provision of accessible healthcare services and other social infrastructure to support population growth and change is an essential component of creating sustainable, healthy communities	SP6 Health and Wellbeing SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy
	The under-provision of key services can contribute towards unnecessary extra travel, which can damage the environment and social cohesion	The planning system can help modernise facilities and improve the quality of services. Developer contributions can help provide and fund new facilities.	
	For those with mobility problems, including older people, poor access to local services could limit opportunities for social interaction and lead to isolation and depression.	Co-locating some services can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, for example, primary health and social care, dentistry and pharmacies Access to a range of education, primary, secondary and post-19 improves self-esteem, job opportunities, support to residents in applying for jobs and earning capability. Rapid access to CPR and defibrillation can save lives.	

Category 3: Access to open space and nature

Providing secure, convenient and attractive open/green space can lead to more physical activity and reduce levels of heart disease, strokes and other ill-health problems that are associated with both sedentary occupations and stressful lifestyles. There is growing evidence that access to parks and open spaces and nature can help to maintain or improve mental health.

The patterns of physical activity established in childhood are perceived to be a key determinant of adult behaviour; a growing number of children are missing out on regular exercise, and an increasing number of children are being diagnosed as overweight and obese. Access to play spaces, community or sport facilities such as sport pitches can encourage physical activity. There is a strong correlation between the quality of open space and the frequency of use for physical activity, social interaction or relaxation.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Opportunities for physical • activity • Access to open and natural space, including water fronts • Formal and informal outdoor play spaces • Maintenance of open space and sports facilities • Integration with other outdoor uses such as growing food	Failing to protect local green spaces and playing fields near to communities can limit opportunities for physical activity.	The provision of publicly accessible blue space, green spaces and play spaces can encourage physical activity and maintain or improve mental health	SP11. Green Belt and Safeguarded Land DP12. The Natural Environment DP14. Green Infrastructure DP15. Open Space and Recreation
	Green spaces that are of poor quality, feel unsafe, or are inaccessible will discourage physical activity and social interaction	A growing population, particularly an increase in children will require a range of formal and informal play spaces and equipment	
	Failing to provide a range of different types of open and play spaces may place pressure on existing spaces where formal and informal activities may conflict with each other	Natural spaces and tree cover provide areas of shade and can improve air quality in urban areas	
• Maximising green infrastructure in urban environments (including green roof systems and gardens and green walls)		There may be opportunities to integrate play spaces with other related health and environmental programmes such as food growing and increasing biodiversity. Green walls can also provide insulation or shading and cooling. Green infrastructure can reduce flood risk	

Category 4: Air quality, noise and neighbourhood amenity

The quality of the local environment can have a significant impact on physical and mental health. Pollution caused by construction, traffic and commercial activity can result in poor air quality, noise nuisance and vibration. Poor air quality is linked to incidence of chronic lung disease (chronic bronchitis or emphysema) and heart conditions and asthma levels among children. Noise pollution can have a detrimental impact on health resulting in sleep disturbance, cardiovascular and psycho-physiological effects. Good design and planning, and the separation of land uses can lessen noise impacts.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Construction impacts • Air quality • Land contamination • Noise, vibration and odour • Quality of local environment • Provision of green space and trees	The construction process can result in exposure to land contamination, deterioration in air quality and nuisance from noise, dust, vibration and odours.	The use of construction management plans can lessen construction impacts, particularly hours of working and construction traffic movements	SP6. Health and Wellbeing DP3. Affordable Housing Provision DP7. Cross Subsidy Exception Schemes DP18. Pollution and Public Amenity DP26. Strategic, Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure
	High level of road traffic and congestion generated by new developments can result in higher levels of air pollution and noise	Travel plans for construction and the future community and reduced levels of car parking which encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking will result in better local environmental conditions	
	The close proximity of residential units to industrial uses or uses generating late night noise can cause nuisance	Good design and the sensitive location and orientation of residential units can lessen noise impacts. Natural spaces and trees can improve the air quality in urban areas	

Category 5: Accessibility and active travel

Convenient access to a range of services and facilities minimises the need to travel and provides greater opportunities for social interaction. Buildings and spaces that are easily accessible and safe can also encourage all groups, including older people and people with a disability, to use them. Discouraging car use and providing opportunities for walking and cycling can increase physical activity and help prevent chronic diseases, reduce risk of premature death and improve mental health.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Streetscape (visual element of the street) • Opportunities for walking and cycling • Access to public transport • Minimising the need to • travel • Discouraging car use • Road Traffic Injuries	Greater traffic volumes and speeds have increased the risk of road traffic injuries, with pedestrians and cyclists being particularly vulnerable.	Combining active travel and public transport options can help people achieve recommended daily physical activity levels.	SP3 Climate Change SP6 Health and Wellbeing DP15. Open Space and Recreation DP18. Pollution and Public Amenity DP28. Communications and Transport
	Poor urban planning can prioritise the car over pedestrians and cyclists and increase community severance.	Consideration inclusive design, access, orientation and streetscape during the design process can make it easier for people to access facilities using public transport, walking or cycling.	
	Over provision of car parking in a development can undermine other travel modes such as public transport and cycling.	Reduced levels of car parking and travel plans which encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking will result in increased opportunities for active travel. Cycling and walking can be promoted by connecting routes and public to wider networks, providing safe junctions, 20mph speed limits in new residential developments and calming traffic and providing secure cycle parking spaces. Provision of secure cycle parking, showers and cycle lanes and suitable routes can also promote walking and cycling, as can provision of routes and spaces that are green	

Category 6: Crime reduction and community safety

Thoughtful planning and urban design that promotes natural surveillance and social interaction can help to reduce crime and the perception and 'fear' of crime, all of which impact on the mental wellbeing of residents. As well as the immediate physical and psychological impact of being a victim of crime, people can also suffer indirect long-term health consequences, including disability, victimisation and isolation because of fear. Community engagement in development proposals can lessen fears and concerns.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Designing out crime • Security and street surveillance • Mix of uses • Community engagements • Major accidents/disasters	Poor urban design can exacerbate crime and community safety by creating under-used, isolated spaces without natural surveillance and segregate places by creating barriers such as roads.	The detailed design and layout of residential and commercial areas can ensure natural surveillance over public space. This can be assisted by creating places which enable possibilities for community interaction and avoiding social exclusion.	SP 6. Health and Wellbeing
	Where the local pedestrian environment is intimidating, and inconvenient people are more likely to use cars more or go out less. This can reduce social interaction and reduce physical activity.	Active use of street and public spaces, combined with effective lighting, is likely to decrease opportunities for ant-social behaviour or criminal activity	
	The introduction of new or more intensive uses, particularly in locations where large numbers of people congregate or where additional housing is proposed, can place pressure on existing police infrastructure which can exacerbate crime, anti-social behaviour, reduce security and increase the fear of crime.	Developers can work with the police to get their advice on making development proposals 'secure by design'. They can also involve communities to foster a sense of ownership and empowerment, which can also help to enhance community safety.	

Category 7: Access to healthy food

Access to healthy and nutritious food can improve diet and prevent chronic diseases related to obesity, People on low incomes, including young families and older people, are the least able to eat well because of a lack of access to nutritious food. They are more likely to have access to food that is high in salt, oil, energy-dense fat and sugar.

Opportunities to purchase and grow local healthy food and limiting concentrations of hot food takeaways can change eating behaviour and improve physical and mental health.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Healthy, localised food supply • Hot Food Takeaways • Social enterprises • Allotments and community food growing spaces	The centralisation of shopping facilities and growth of large supermarkets can reduce the variety of foods available locally and disadvantage those on limited income to afford a healthy diet	By considering food access, location and how to facilitate social enterprises, planners can help to create the conditions that enable low-income people to have better and affordable access to nutritious food.	SP3 Climate Change SP6 Health and Wellbeing DP15. Open Space and Recreation DP18. Pollution and Public Amenity DP28. Communications and Transport
	Redevelopment of local allotments, gardens or agricultural land can also reduce the potential for locally grown food	Urban planning can preserve and protect areas for small-scale community projects and local food production, including allotments	
	An overconcentration of hot food takeaways can restrict healthy eating choices	Urban planning can promote and increase the diversity of shopping facilities in local centres, and limit concentrations of hot food takeaways.	

Category 8: Access to work and training

Employment and income are a key determinant of health and wellbeing. Unemployment generally leads to poverty, illness and a reduction in personal and social esteem. Work can aid recovery from physical and mental illnesses.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Access to employment and training • Job diversity • Business support • Social Value	Locating employment in inaccessible locations or failing to provide diversity of local jobs or training opportunities can negatively affect health, including mental wellbeing, both directly and indirectly.	Urban planning linked to clear strategies for economic regeneration, allocation of appropriate sites and coordination of infrastructure provision can help to facilitate attractive opportunities for business, encourage diversity in employment and ensure that local jobs are retained.	SP12 Shropshire Economic Plan SP13. Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth and Enterprise
	A poor-quality environment and lack of infrastructure can make places less competitive or attractive to business investment.	Equitable transport strategies can play an important role in providing access to job opportunities. The provision of local work can encourage shorter trip lengths, reduce emissions from transport and enable people to walk or cycle.	
	A lack of business and employee support through affordable business space and childcare provision can hinder economic and growth and employment opportunities.	Access to other support services, notably childcare, can make employment opportunities easier to access	

Category 9: Social cohesion and lifetime neighbourhoods

Friendship and supportive networks in a community can help to reduce depression and levels of chronic illness as well as speed recovery after illness and improve wellbeing. Fragmentation of social structures can lead to communities demarcated by socioeconomic status, age and/or ethnicity, which can lead to isolation, insecurity and a lack of cohesion.

Voluntary and community groups, properly supported, can help to build up networks for people who are isolated and disconnected, and to provide meaningful interaction to improve mental wellbeing.

Lifetime Neighbourhoods places the design criteria of Lifetime Homes into a wider context. It encourages planners to help create environments that people of all ages and abilities can access and enjoy.

Considerations	Negative effects	Positive Effects	Relevant Local Plan Policies / Other Relevant Documents
• Social interaction • Mixed Communities • Access to community • facilities • Voluntary sector involvement • Community Severance • Lifetime neighbourhoods • Social Value	Social cohesion can be undermined by intensive housing redevelopment and dispersal of resident communities	Urban planning can help to facilitate social cohesion by creating safe and permeable environments with places where people can meet informally	SP4. Sustainable Development SP6. Health and Wellbeing SP8. Managing Development in Community Hubs SP9. Managing Development in Community Clusters
	Community cohesion can also be affected by infrastructure such as roads or other development that severs community links. Large schemes may disrupt familiar walking routes, or create a barrier to movement	Mixed-use developments in town centres and residential neighbourhoods can help to widen social options for people.	
	Poor planning may also result in the loss of community facilities	The provision of a range of diverse local employment opportunities (paid and unpaid) can also improve both social cohesion and mental wellbeing. The planning system can be used to help the process of providing a range of facilities and providing opportunities for improving levels of equity.	