

The Route to Health Improvement

Notable Practice Case Study

This practice relates to one (or more) of the below key features :				
Corporate Culture	Policy Development X	Collaboration	Capacity Building	Governance

Background & Context:

The HSCWB Strategy, in addition to Health Challenge Anglesey, adopted the World Health Organisation definition for health; that it should be considered in its widest sense and that the wider determinants of health have a huge influence on health and well-being. In this context, the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Methodology was identified as a potentially very useful tool in promoting this vision for health, whilst ensuring that projects / plans / strategies considered their potential effect on health and wellbeing either prospectively, concurrently or retrospectively. Nationally, HIA was receiving more attention and we felt that locally, we should endeavour to develop a better understanding of its use. To this end, the HSCWB Strategy made reference to its use as an example of best practise.

Description & Characteristics:

Work had begun locally within the Community Partnership to develop an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Tool and methodology. Using this framework in addition to adapting the Assembly's 'A Practical Guide to Health Impact Assessment' document, we developed our own HIA Tool with associated guidance. A core group was formed comprising of members from the LA, LHB and NPHS. The group worked closely with the Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit who provided invaluable support; training and awareness raising sessions were then held with various groups. It was felt that the best way to learn more about HIA was to 'give it a try', so the tool was applied to a prospective planning proposal which resulted in a successful first screening session with several recommendations. The Group also felt that there was more value in doing only the scoping and screening sessions (taking up to two 2 hour sessions), rather than any in-depth work (which could take up to several weeks). It has been estimated that a screening session will provide approximately 90% of the output of a more in-depth assessment. Over the last 18 months the tool has been used for projects varying from the development of a 'Stroke Action Plan' an appraisal of the options under consideration as part of the community hospitals review, right through to being used as a consultation tool with young women in the community as part of the 'Mentro Allan' project. The tool is therefore very flexible, and the methodology can be adapted depending on who is involved. The process is also very valuable in that it gets people who may not usually sit around a table together (from different agencies or departments in the Council) to discuss the same issue, promoting ownership of a project / proposal and ensuring everyone can voice

their opinion. A comment by a colleague who sat through their first HIA captures the nature of the process: "I never thought my work or this project would have anything to do with health and well-being.....".

Why was/is this initiative/approach successful?

It was essential to do some 'homework' at the early stages to ensure the process of developing HIA was correct, such as identify existing work (the Assembly document) and starting a core group which represented a partnership approach. The fact that the IIA had been developed was a great help as we had an existing framework within to develop the HIA; this existing knowledge of Impact Assessment also assisted the HIA core group to develop more quickly. In the future the group hope to identify other opportunities for applying HIA and continue to provide training for key officers so that they become experienced with, and see the value of using the tool. Finally, the HIA agenda requires champions from different agencies and departments to continually drive and promote the work and increase capacity to deliver – this is vital as, although an obvious point, the HIA needs to be used to be effective.

Measures of Success:

The HIA tool and methodology has assisted key officers to promote the understanding, within the Local Authority especially, that health is everyone's business, and that almost all projects / proposals / developments have an effect on health and wellbeing. It has proved a very useful practical method to emphasise this point, as contributors can directly see the link between their work and the health improvement agenda. It has also provided valuable output when used as a tool within the community. A future measure of success will be the extent to which the use of HIA output influences policy outside of the traditional HSCWB agenda.

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