



# Health Impact Assessment Guidance: Plain Language Summary

Standalone Health Impact Assessment  
and health in environmental assessment



MAKING LIFE BETTER



The Institute of Public Health (IPH) is an all-island organisation. The purpose of the Institute is to inform public policy to support healthier populations in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The Institute does this through research and evidence review; policy analysis and evaluation; partnership working; specialist training and public communications.

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## At a glance – the Guidance documents



This Guidance is presented in four formats. Each document is aimed at a different readership, and each has a different degree of complexity and technical detail.

This is the **Plain Language Summary**.

This summary is intended for the general public.

It provides answers to these questions:

- What is Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?
- Who is the HIA Guidance for?
- What does the HIA Guidance cover?

## 1. What is Health Impact Assessment?

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process to help understand how a proposal might affect the health of the community.

HIA can be used on proposals for new laws or policies. It can also be used to look at proposed changes to services and programmes. These changes might be occurring at national, regional or local level. The changes might be proposed by a health body like the Department of Health, Health Service Executive or Health and Social Care Trusts or they might be led by a non-health organisation like your local council, community group or a private developer.

When changes are made the health effects might be different for some groups of people. HIA can be used to consider this – for example, how people with less money, children, older people or people with a disability might be affected.

HIA assesses proposals while they are being planned rather than after the changes have happened. The HIA process helps to make suggestions early on to influence how a proposal could be adapted to protect and improve health.

Laws in Ireland and Northern Ireland do not require anyone to conduct a HIA. However, using HIA means that the health of communities can be better considered in decision-making.

## 2. Who is the HIA Guidance for?

This Guidance has been developed to support people working in lots of different roles, including people who are new to HIA and those who already have some experience.

It will support people working in the civil service, alongside those working in public health, the environment, and community development roles.

HIA is a process that can help people to work towards national goals to improve health in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

HIA can support people from different backgrounds to work together to ensure that decision-making for health is fairer and more inclusive.

### 3. What does the HIA Guidance cover?

The Guidance includes a Plain Language Summary, Executive Summary, Manual and Technical Guidance. This Plain Language Summary is the least detailed and the Technical Guidance is the most detailed.

The Guidance is for Ireland and Northern Ireland. It updates previous guidance from 2009.

The Guidance provides reliable and up to date knowledge on how to approach a HIA. It also provides practical tools and advice on engaging partners, resources and looking at data and information. Case studies are included to show what HIA looks like in practice.

The Guidance steers the user through all steps of HIA.

HIA can be done as a standalone assessment or alongside other impact assessments, including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Guidance provides information on HIA in both contexts.

This Plain Language Summary helps introduce the idea of HIA and the new Guidance. [Further detail is available in the \*Executive Summary, Manual, and Technical Guidance.\*](#)







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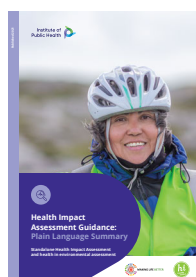
# Health Impact Assessment Guidance

Document access below



[A Manual](#)

[Technical  
Guidance](#)



[Plain Language  
Summary](#)



[The Case  
for HIA](#)



[Executive  
Summary](#)