National Planning Framework 4 : Engagement response from Scottish Health and Inequalities Impact Assessment Network

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the fourth National Planning Framework. I am writing on behalf of the Scottish Health and Inequalities Impact Assessment Network (SHIIAN). The network aims to promote a Health in All Policies approach in Scotland, to increase the use and quality of Health Impact Assessments and improve consideration of health issues in other assessments, in order to contribute to improvements in policies and plans that will enhance population health and reduce health inequalities (1).

The National Planning Framework will have a significant impact on health in Scotland. The planning policies and decisions that we make today will determine the physical, social and economic environments which people will experience long into the future. There is strong evidence of the broad range of ways that these environments can influence health and health inequalities. Our network has developed guides that summarise evidence of links between several policy areas and health. These identify health impacts arising from: Greenspace, Housing, Transport, Community Facilities, Rural Development, and Unconventional Oil and Gas (2). Planning policy and planning decisions, at both national and local levels, impact on all of these, and on other important determinants of health. It is important to take a holistic approach to understand the full range of these impacts for proposed policies and plans, in order to achieve the best overall impact.

The Scottish Government have identified six national Public Health Priorities, the first of which is 'A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities'. Clearly NPF4 will be central to delivering this priority, and spatial planning also impacts on each of the other five priorities (3).

We are very pleased that the high level outcomes for NPF4 include 'Improving the health and well-being of people living in Scotland'. Given the importance of planning policy for health, we hope that Health and Wellbeing will be adopted as a priority objective in NPF4 and also in future Local Development Plans.

SHIIAN is involved in a collaboration of public health professionals, planners and other stakeholders developing Place Principles for Scotland. The agreed set of Place Principles should provide a useful framework to understand the range of health impacts that planning policy can affect. Our aspiration is for these Principles to be incorporated into NPF4.

Our network is working to increase capacity for a Health in All Policies approach to policy making in all sectors and at all levels in Scotland. The use of specific tools and approaches like Health Impact Assessment and the Place Standard (4) can help to achieve this. We were pleased to see the introduction of a requirement in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 for assessment of health effects of national and major developments. Our aspiration is that the development of NPF4 will adopt a Health in All Policies approach with explicit consideration of its likely effects on health. We would also hope to see encouragement for Local Development Plans to use a similar approach. Our network would be very happy to support this if appropriate.

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Notes and links to further information

1. Further information about SHIIAN is available on our website https://www.scotphn.net/networks/scottish-health-and-inequalities-impact-assessment-network-shiian/introduction/

2. All SHIIAN evidence guides and guidance on HIA and HiAP are available from: https://www.scotphn.net/networks/scottish-health-and-inequalities-impact-assessment-network-shiian/shiian-resources-information/reports/

3. The six Public Health Priorities are:

    1: A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities

    2: A Scotland where we flourish in our early years

    3: A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing

    4: A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

    5: A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all

    6: A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

    Scottish Government and CoSLA (2018) Public Health Priorities for Scotland. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2018/06/scotlands-public-health-priorities/documents/00536757-pdf/00536757-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00536757.pdf

4. Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland. Place Standard: How good is our place? https://www.placestandard.scot/