

Health Equity and Inequalities Assessments

1. [Health Equity Audits](#) are applied retrospectively and can help to identify whether some groups are under or over-represented in disease groups or service activity.
2. The [Health Equity Assessment Tool](#) (HEAT) systematically assesses inequality in relation to a programme of work and identifies action needed to rectify inequality.
3. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has a narrower focus and is restricted to the legal duties to prevent discrimination against people with protected characteristics as defined in the [2010 Equalities Act](#). It does not usually take account of socioeconomic, inclusion health, or geographical drivers of inequity.
4. The [Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment](#) (EHIA) tool was developed for NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) staff and is an extended version of the EqIA tool with additional elements to cover health inequalities domains such as people who are homeless or living on low income. It also strengthens governance arrangements
5. Health Impact Assessments (HIA) are used to evaluate health impacts of policies, services and projects, including indirect impacts on health. Example frameworks have been published by the [World Health Organisation](#) and there is a [collation of examples from the UK](#) . A [Spatial Planning Template](#) for use by local authorities is available.

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Tool	Purpose	Intended use	Equality or equity dimension?	Format	Length/ease of use
Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT)	A tool to help you systematically assess health inequalities related to a programme of work and identify what action can be taken to help reduce health inequalities and promote equality and inclusion.	Designed to be used at the start of a work plan but can be used flexibly, including retrospectively.	Invites user to consider health inequalities and wider determinants of health, as well as protected characteristics.	A series of questions in 4 stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare • Assess • Refine and apply • Review 	Tool is 5 pages and 4 stages.
Health Equity Audit (HEA)	<p>A review procedure which allows you to assess pathways that foster inequalities at various levels (e.g. social, environmental or lifestyle) and examine how health determinants and access to services are distributed across the population.</p> <p>Identifies how fairly services or other resources are distributed in relation to the health needs of different groups and areas and the priority action to provide services relative to need.</p>	For retrospective /ongoing use. Can be applied to entire populations or be restricted to a specific geographical area or health service.	Asks about health inequalities generally.	6 stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree partners and issues (choose highest impact issues e.g. cancer, primary care) • Compare service provision with need • Agree high-impact action to narrow the gap • Agree priorities for action • Secure changes in investment and service delivery • Review progress and assess impact 	<p>User can be guided by a Health Equity Audit Cycle diagram but there is no consistent template in which to input answers.</p> <p>A resource-intensive exercise that applies more broadly than HEAT.</p>

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<p>Health Impact Assessment (HIA)</p>	<p>A practical tool to evaluate the health impact of policies and strategies in sectors that indirectly affect health e.g. transportation, employment, environment.</p> <p>Focuses on health impacts generally - one question on health inequalities but this is not the focus.</p>	<p>Used prospectively to inform decision-makers of adverse health effects of proposed actions so they can adapt proposals prior to implementation.</p>	<p>One question that invites user to consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups will be particularly affected by proposal.</p>	<p>Several stages including scoping and assessment of proposals in order to create an overall impact analysis.</p>	<p>DHSC published a 'tools for recording results of HIA' 4 page document in 2010 - only for recording results so limited guidance.</p> <p>HIA can be completed without this template so outputs vary.</p>
<p>Equality Impact Assessment (HIA)</p>	<p>An analysis of a proposed organisational policy, or a change to an existing one, which assesses whether the policy has a disparate impact on persons with protected characteristics.</p>	<p>For prospective use. To allow you to consider the health inequalities impacts of a proposed decision.</p>	<p>Varies between areas.</p>	<p>Questions on the likely equality impact on different groups, both positive and adverse.</p>	<p>No standard template to use - approach appears to vary between local areas.</p>



Using national and local data to address health inequalities: Step by step guide



From: PHE. 2019 [A guide to using national and local data to address health inequalities](#)