

Synthesizing emerging evidence to promote and protect health and well-being in uncertain times: A Health Impact Assessment of Brexit in Wales

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Wales Centre for Public Policy, 24th May 2019



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Welcome to the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit

This site provides information on the Wales HIA Support Unit, health impact assessment (HIA) and the process as practiced in Wales, news and recent developments. It provides a resource to those currently practicing HIA and those who are new to it and looking for information and evidence. There are details of completed HIAs in Wales and other HIA activities from the Unit plus links to useful resources.

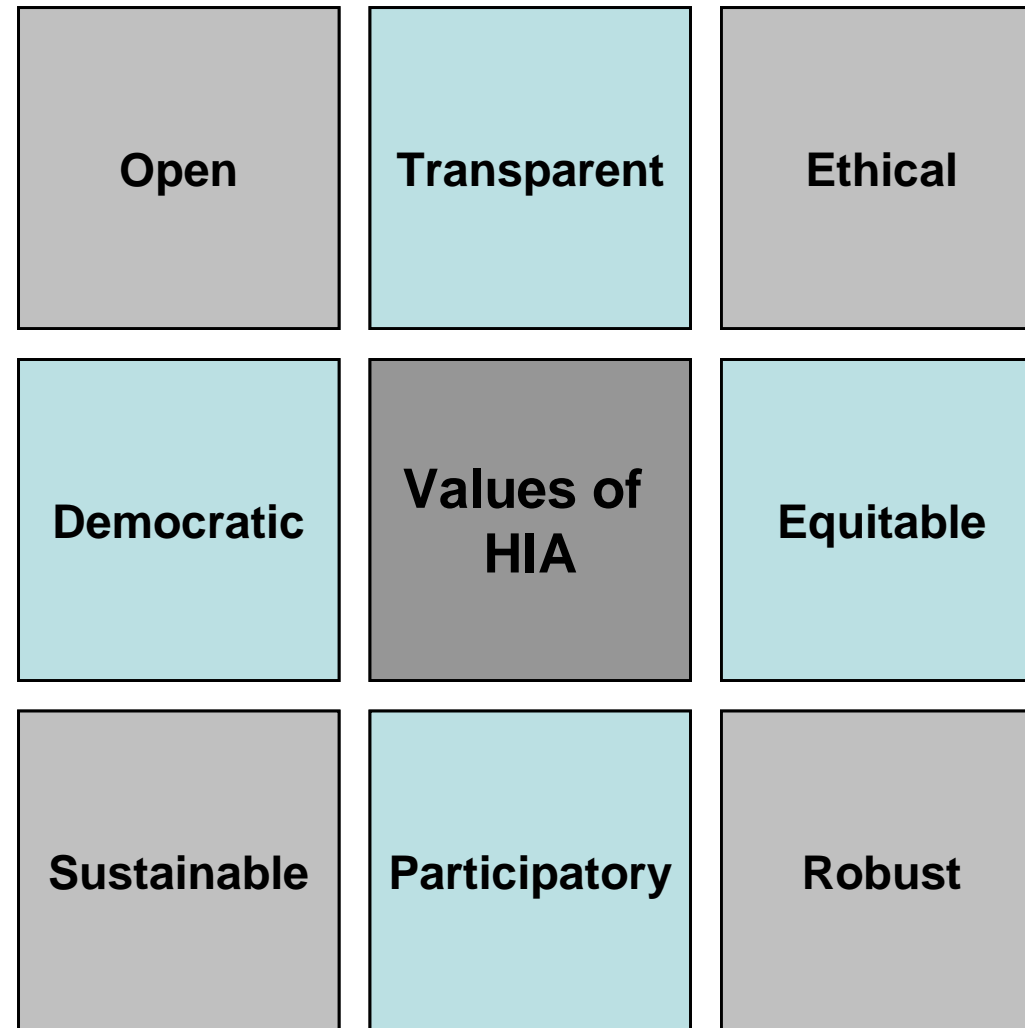
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Key features of Health Impact Assessment

- Framed around the **social determinants of health and well-being**
- The key purpose of HIA is to **reduce health inequalities and improve health and well-being** through influencing public policy across sectors: a “**Health in all Policies**” approach.
- Evaluates the likely impact of a policy or programme on health and well-being, and **key population groups**.
- Seeks to **influence decisions and policy making** in order to maximise benefits to health and well-being and reduce or prevent any unintended consequences or harms.
- **Mixed methods approach:** literature review; stakeholder views, qualitative perspectives and population health data.

The values base of HIA



Brexit HIA Overview

Aims:

- To identify the potential health and well-being impacts of Brexit in Wales - whether physical, mental or social
- To support organisations and policy makers in Wales
- To advocate for health and well-being in planning and policy development
- To inform Public Health Wales plans

Scope:

- Wales, cross sector focus.
- Specific Brexit scenarios not evaluated
- All impacts identified as potential
- Short, medium and long term impacts – looking beyond immediate contingency planning
- Participatory, complex, comprehensive HIA completed in July – Dec 2018

The HIA was produced in an ever changing and evolving environment leading up to an anticipated withdrawal agreement between the UK & the EU.



Departments

Worldwide

How government

Publications

Consultations

Statistics

New

[Home](#)

Collection

How to prepare if the UK leaves the EU with no deal

Guidance on how to prepare for Brexit if there's no deal.

PoliticsHome
ALL TODAY'S POLITICS IN ONE PLACE

HOME GREEN BOX CENTRAL LOBBY CALENDAR THE HOUSE

Brexit | Communities | Culture | Defence | Economy | Education | Energy | Environment | Foreign Affairs | Health

Government forced to publish Brexit impact assessment after Commons climbdown


Written by: Kevin Schofield Posted On: 20th November 2018

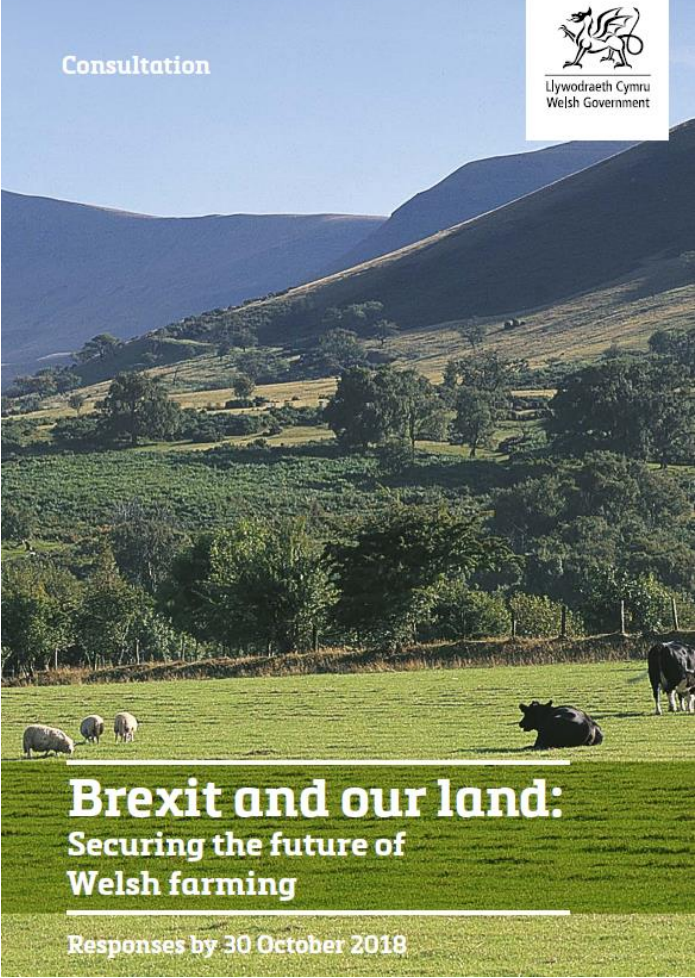
Ministers will be forced to publish a report on the impact of Theresa May's Brexit plan after a Tory rebellion forced a Commons climbdown.



It was a time of intense political activity with new evidence , stakeholder opinion reports, analysis, policies, and plans being published on an almost daily basis.

Consultation


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Brexit and our land:

Securing the future of Welsh farming

Responses by 30 October 2018

BREXIT AND THE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE IN THE UK

Prepared for the Cavendish Coalition for the project

“Incentivising the domestic workforce and securing clear, reasonable routes for immigration both during and after the UK’s exit from the EU”

Methods and frameworks

Research methods

- A literature review guided by a detailed protocol
- Stakeholder participatory workshop
- Interviews with policy leads and sectoral experts (n=25)
- A community health data profile of key relevant population groups in Wales
- Internal and external review

Frameworks used for analysis

- Social determinants of health
- Impact definition matrix
- Policy mechanisms
- Action categories

Direct impacts on the following social determinants of health

- Access to services: health and social care services; medicines; staffing; clinical trials
- Lifestyles: Food safety, standards, supply and cost
- Lifestyles: Alcohol and Tobacco
- Environmental regulations: air quality and bathing water
- Working conditions
- Employment and skills
- EU funding for community and economic investment, agriculture and research
- Human rights

Indirect impacts

- Mental well-being
- Family life
- Community resilience and cohesion

Potential impacts identified: population groups

- Whole population
- Those at potential risk of increased negative impact:
 - Families impacted by uncertain / new immigration regulations
 - Children and young people
 - EU citizens living in Wales
 - People who are living on low income
 - People who are unemployed / at risk of unemployment
 - People living in areas with poor economic and health indicators
 - People living in areas where large employers may move
 - Areas of Wales that have been significant beneficiaries of EU funding
 - People in need of health and social care services
 - Black and minority ethnic groups
 - Farmers / rural communities
 - Ports and Coastal areas

Type of impact

Positive / opportunity

Impacts that are considered to improve health status or provide an opportunity to do so

Negative

Impacts that are considered to diminish health status

Likelihood of impact

Confirmed

Strong direct evidence e.g. from a wide range of sources that an impact has already happened or will happen

Confirmed

Probable

More likely to happen than not. Direct evidence but from limited sources

Probable

Possible

May or may not happen. Plausible, but with limited evidence to support

Possible

Intensity / severity of impact

Major

Significant in intensity, quality or extent. Significant or important enough to be worthy of attention, noteworthy

Major

Moderate

Average in intensity, quality or degree

Moderate

Minimal

Of a minimum amount, quantity or degree, negligible

Minimal

Duration of impact

Short term (S)

Impact seen in 0 – 3 years

Short term (S)

Medium term (M)

Impact seen in 3 – 10 years

Medium term (M)

Long term (L)

Impact seen in >10 years

Long term (L)

Policy mechanisms through which Brexit directly impacts on the social determinants of health and well-being

- Changing regulatory standards and legal frameworks
- Terms of future trade policy and trade agreements
- End of freedom of movement, changes to immigration policies
- Rights of EU Nationals to live and work in the UK
- Regulatory divergence – customs and border impacts
- Loss of jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice and EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Reduced access to key coordinating public health systems
- Reduced access to data, intelligence and evidence sharing
- Reduced access to EU funding
- Leaving the single market and / or customs union

Mechanisms through which Brexit indirectly impacts on the social determinants of health and well-being

- Economic decline, inflation and linked reduction in funding for the public sector, infrastructure and key community assets
- Increased uncertainty over the future
- Increase in hate crime
- Increased political engagement and participation

Action Categories:

Action needed	Action is needed to prevent or mitigate potential negative impacts or maximise opportunities for health
Active engagement needed	Action is needed, for example to influence policy development within Wales, UK and Europe and future trade agreements
Research priority	Research is needed in the next 12-18 months to fill significant evidence gaps or reduce the uncertainty in the current level of understanding, in order to assess the need for additional action
Watching brief	The evidence in these areas should be kept under review, with long term monitoring and surveillance of impact levels and adaptation activity so that further action can be taken if necessary



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Key Findings – Overview

- A wide range of direct **potential** impacts across the *determinants of health* – many of which affect the whole population.
- A wide range of **potential** *population groups* affected
- Nearly all potential **positive impacts / opportunities** are classified as '**possible**', that is they may plausibly happen but there is limited evidence to support this.
- The majority of potential **positive** impacts/ opportunities are expected to have a **moderate** degree of impact over a **medium to long term** – all contingent on policy direction and/or investment
- The majority of potential **negative** impacts identified are classified as having either a **moderate or major** impact and over half are estimated to have either a **probable or confirmed** impact. Many in short/medium term



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- Indirect impact on *mental well-being possible* due to uncertainty, economic impacts, community and family relationships, potential loss of rights – need further evidence
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act) provides a *unique context* via which Wales could maximise any positive impact
- Opportunity cost on addressing other policy priorities
- *Trade and trade agreements* are a key determinant of health

Recommendations included:

- Policy makers and public services should consider the range of potential impacts of Brexit identified in this report and the areas for future action and ensure co-ordinated actions are in place to address each.
- Policies and actions should be prioritised in order to address the *impacts on vulnerable population groups*
- *Leadership* needs to continue across all Brexit issues in order to provide overall direction to Wales' response in the short to long term
- The public health system should consider how to build knowledge, skills and capacity to influence and contribute to *trade agreements*



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Responses

- 242: “It will provide **an invaluable reference and evidence base for service and community leaders as we move forward into even more uncertain times** and the possibility of new international relationships. This is the only health impact assessment of Brexit that's been published anywhere within the UK....”.

Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services, Senedd,
January 22nd 2019

Responses

- The findings of the report are informing organisational responses to Brexit in Wales.
- The HIA identified priority areas for further research that are informing and supporting research agendas in Wales in response to Brexit.

Limitations

- There may be other impacts that are, as yet, **unidentified**.
- There is **limited evidence on the precise impacts of any Brexit scenario**
- Majority of impacts identified are **potential** rather than actual
- Evidence of the impact of Brexit on a wide range of policy areas is either **unknown or highly contested and assumptions** have been made within the high-level evidence used within this report. These are highlighted in the report.
- Attribution in relation to health outcomes from a complex event like Brexit is very challenging.

Strengths of the analysis

- A holistic analysis of potential impacts on **health and well-being** with a focus on the social determinants of health and specific **population groups** – how will Brexit affect people's lives, well-being and livelihoods?
- An analysis that supports **longer term, integrated and preventative thinking** – going beyond business continuity and short term “no deal” planning.
- The frameworks for analysis used in the HIA are providing a useful structure through which to manage complexity, enabling prioritisation and planning, and increasing understanding of how impacts may occur.

Thank You

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