

This report is presented in two sections.

Section 1

Section one is a report on the results of the Health Impact Assessment of the proposal to introduce Charging for Water and Sewerage Services in Northern Ireland.

Section 2

Section two is the screening tool which was used in the Ards Peninsula Communities to select the water charging proposal.

Both parts have been written by Erica Ison, Specialist Practitioner in Health Impact Assessment and her permission has been given to reproduce these reports.

***Belfast Healthy Cities:
Community Health Impact Assessment Process***

**Health Impact Assessment of the Proposal
to Introduce Charging for Water and Sewerage Services
in Northern Ireland**

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For more information on CHIA or for a copy of the Ards Peninsula Community profile, contact Belfast Healthy Cities on (028) 9032 8811 or by e-mail at info@belfasthealthycities.com

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Part 1: Introduction

In Part 1, we outline what is involved in health impact assessment, and describe the potential for community-led health impact assessment. Finally, we give an introduction to the process of community health impact assessment as originated by Belfast Healthy Cities.

1.1 What is Health Impact Assessment or HIA?

Health impact assessment or HIA has been defined as:

“a combination of procedures or methods by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to the effects it may have on the health of a population”

WHO European Centre for Health Policy, 1999

The overall purpose of conducting an HIA is, having identified the impacts on health of a particular proposal, to find ways of changing it such that any negative impacts can be minimised or avoided and any positive impacts be maximised or enhanced. The desired outcome is to achieve health gain from both non-health and health-related proposals. However, this outcome cannot be realised unless decision-makers and policy-makers can be persuaded of the usefulness of this approach in general and of any specific recommendations or suggestions coming out of a particular HIA.

In essence, HIA is a tool that can be used to enable decision-makers take account of people's health and well-being during decision-taking. In this sense, HIA is not the answer, but it provides a systematic framework with which to explore all the relevant information, knowledge and experience relating to a proposal's potential effects on the health of a community or population and to take that into consideration together with other priorities during the design, development and/or implementation of any proposal.

1.2 What is Community-led Health Impact Assessment?

In general, in the UK, it tends to be public sector organisations, such as health or regional/local government, that initiate the HIA process. It is uncommon for voluntary sector organisations to initiate it, mainly due to the level of resources required to undertake it, and community-led health impact assessments are rare.

This situation reflects the evolution of the process of community health development (CHD) in the UK since the 1960s (Pulling and Ison, 1999). At first, CHD was a top-down process instigated by central Government. As time went on, local public sector organisations instigated the process but tried to work with the community. Ultimately, CHD became a bottom-up process with communities instigating and controlling projects and programmes that address their needs and developed their skills.

One of the exciting possibilities for the development of HIA as a methodology is that it will evolve in a similar manner to CHD, whereby communities are not simply consulted or asked to participate but are in control of the HIA process and are able to have direct influence with decision-makers. This overall vision lies at the heart of the work in

community health impact assessment undertaken by Belfast Healthy Cities over the last year (2003-2004).

1.3 Community Health Impact Assessment in the Belfast Area

The definition of Community Health Impact Assessment or CHIA originated by Belfast Healthy Cities is as follows:

An approach to health impact assessment, which is community-led and which is guided by the principles of community development

Since 2003, Belfast Healthy Cities has been developing a process for CHIA. Part of the preparation for the development of CHIA process was to select two communities willing to pilot it in relation to one of the proposals to be implemented in their area that would have implications for their health and well-being.

1.3.1 Community Health Impact Assessment Process on the Ards Peninsula

The community living in the Ards Peninsula was one of the communities selected to pilot the CHIA process being developed by Belfast Healthy Cities.

As part of the process, members of the community, together with representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors, were trained in health impact assessment, including some of the skills necessary to undertake it (e.g. facilitation). However, a “learning by doing” approach was taken to training, such that in addition to receiving information about HIA participants were involved in developing and then using a screening tool in order to select a proposal upon which they then undertook the appraisal.

In this report, we present the results thus far of undertaking a community-led health impact assessment on the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

Part 2: Parameters for the health impact assessment of the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

In Part 2, we outline the parameters for the HIA of the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, including the aims and objectives, the options for appraisal of health impacts, and the population affected, including vulnerable groups. We list the main stakeholders for the HIA, and the methods of consultation during appraisal are briefly described. Finally, the governance and accountability mechanisms for the HIA are defined.

2.1 Aims of the HIA

The Assessor (EI) set the aims of the HIA as follows:

- To identify the impacts on health and well-being of the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To identify appropriate interventions to address the impacts on health and well-being of the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To use the results of the HIA to influence decision-making about the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, and in particular the consideration of impacts on vulnerable groups

2.2 Objectives of the HIA

The Assessor (EI) set the objectives of the HIA as follows:

- To assess the impacts on health and well-being of four options for the method of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To identify appropriate interventions to address the impacts on health and well-being of the four options for the method of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To assess the impacts on health and well-being of three options for the mechanism of regulation of the introduction and management of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To identify appropriate interventions to address the impacts on health and well-being of the three options for the mechanism of regulation for the introduction and management of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To inform decision-makers responsible for the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland of the results of the appraisal
- To make suggestions to decision-makers about ways of minimising potential negative impacts and maximising positive impacts of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, particularly on vulnerable groups
- To make suggestions to decision-makers about the appropriate regulatory mechanism for the introduction and management of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland
- To involve the statutory, voluntary, and community sectors on the Ards Peninsula in the HIA

2.3 Values for the HIA

Values for the HIA were set by the Assessor (EI), as follows:

- Fairness
- Equity
- Accessibility

2.4 Elements of the proposal, and options for appraisal in the HIA

For the purposes of the HIA, the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage management services in Northern Ireland was seen to comprise two main elements for appraisal, as follows:

- ❖ the introduction of charges for water and sewerage services;
- ❖ the mechanism of regulation of charging for water and sewerage services.

Although for the first main element of the proposal, the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services, there were four main options for charging, it was considered important to assess the potential impacts of the introduction of charging *per se* in addition to the potential impacts of the four options for methods of charging.

The four options for the method of charging are:

- the use of metering as a basis for charging;
- the use of a fixed charge and metering as a basis of charging;
- the use of property value as a basis of charging;
- the use of a fixed charge and property value as a basis of charging.

For the second main element of the proposal, the mechanism of regulation for charging for water and sewage services, there were three options for appraisal:

- the use of the pre-existing Northern Ireland Regulator;
- the establishment of a new dedicated regulator;
- the use of the system of water regulation in Great Britain.

2.5 Population affected by the implementation of the proposal

The main population affected by the implementation of the proposal is the entire population of Northern Ireland, including the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

However, within that population, there are various communities or groups of people who may be affected differentially by the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services. The main groups or communities who are vulnerable, marginalized or disadvantaged and may be negatively affected by the implementation of the proposal are shown in Box 2.1.

Box 2.1: Groups or people in the population particularly vulnerable to the implementation of charging for water and sewerage services

- Older people, particularly those of pensionable age
- People who are unemployed, and their families
- People on a low income, and their families
- People dependent on means-tested benefits, and their families
- Lone parents and their families
- Large families
- Students
- People living in houses of multiple occupancy
- People who live alone
- People who already have a chronic illness
- People who have an acute illness
- People who have pre-existing mental health problems
- People who have problems with alcohol consumption
- People with poor health
- People who deal with stress through unhealthy behaviours (e.g. drinking, smoking, drugs)
- People who have a physical disability
- People who have a learning disability
- Carers
- The farming community
- Small and medium-sized businesses
- Voluntary sector agencies, particularly small local organisations

2.6 Stakeholders for the HIA

In HIA, a stakeholder is anyone who is involved in or affected by the proposal. As the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services affects everyone in Northern Ireland, everyone is a stakeholder. However, the main groups of stakeholders for the HIA include:

- the general public;
- public sector agencies, e.g. health and social services, and fire services;
- voluntary sector agencies;
- community sector organisations and representatives;
- elected representatives at all levels of government (European, national, regional and local);
- all Government departments;
- local government;
- the Environment Agency;
- the private sector and businesses.

2.7 Particular circumstances for consideration in the HIA

With respect to the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, there are two main inter-related factors that need to be taken into account:

- until the implementation of this proposal, people in Northern Ireland have not paid directly for water and sewerage services;
- for the general public, there is a great deal of concern about this proposal – people are anxious not only about the introduction of charging *per se*, but also about the method and rate of charging that will be adopted, and the way in which charging will be regulated.

In addition, the state of the economy in Great Britain, where charging for water and sewerage services already exists, is healthier than that in Northern Ireland. Thus, people in Northern Ireland are less likely to be able to bear the same rates or charges as levied in Great Britain. People are anxious that the system in Great Britain will be replicated in Northern Ireland without taking into account important differences between the two economies.

2.8 Health impacts of concern

During the screening step of the health impact assessment, the potential impacts that were of most concern to participants were:

- the reduction in disposable income for the entire population, and what effect that might have on the economy as a whole;
- the differential negative impacts on people living on a low income – for those considered most vulnerable see Box 2.1.

2.9 Methods of consultation during the appraisal step of the HIA

For this HIA, one consultation event was organised based on the use of rapid appraisal techniques. A participatory stakeholder workshop was held at The Narrows, Portaferry on the morning of 5 May 2004 to which members of the community, the statutory sector, the voluntary sector, and the private sector in the Ards Peninsula were invited.

The general structure and organisation of a participatory stakeholder workshop is described in Ison (2002).

At the participatory stakeholder workshop, a presentation about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services was given by Peter Barbour from the Department for Regional Development's Water Reform Unit.

The following questions were put to participants during the appraisal:

- ⇒ What are your concerns about the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland?
- ⇒ What are your positive expectations about the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland?
- ⇒ What are the barriers to, and conflicts around, the implementation of the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services to Northern Ireland?
- ⇒ What are the impacts on health and well-being (positive and negative) of each of the four options for the method of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland?
- ⇒ What interventions should be used to address the impacts on health and well-being of each of the four options for the method of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland?
- ⇒ What are the impacts on health and well-being (positive and negative) of each of the three options for the regulation of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland?
- ⇒ Which of the three options for the regulation of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland would be appropriate in terms of promoting health and well-being?

During the workshop, participants expressed their views as individuals on a Graffiti Wall (concerns and positive expectations), as a group during brainstorming (barriers and conflicts), and by working in small groups (impacts and interventions).

2.10 Governance and accountability for the HIA

The HIA was conducted under the guidance and direction of a Steering Group, the same Steering Group as that in overall charge of piloting the CHIA process, including overseeing the compilation of a community profile. Members of the Steering Group are shown on page 2 of this report.

Section 3: Results of the appraisal

In Part 3, we present the results of the appraisal, in terms of concerns and positive expectations about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services, the barriers to, and conflicts around proposal implementation, potential impacts on health and well-being of charging *per se* and each of the options for charging, and suggestions how to minimise any negative and maximise any positive impacts. We also present the potential impacts of the three different systems of regulation for charging for water and sewerage services, and suggestions about which is the most appropriate to promote health and well-being in Northern Ireland.

3.1 Concerns about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services

Concerns expressed about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland are shown in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1: Concerns about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

- Charging will be introduced in 2006, but when will the benefits of charging be apparent?
- Once charging has been introduced, there is the potential for costs to increase
- It is not in the interests of those who make a profit from selling water to emphasise economy in the use of water
- There may be a decline in water quality with an increase in profit
- Non-payment by users: how will this be managed (and payment recovered), and who will bear the costs of non-payment?
- Vulnerable groups in society, such as people on low incomes, unemployed people, older people of pensionable age, and lone parents, may not be able to afford the cost – it represents an additional item of expenditure to be found from their disposable income, which may deepen the poverty trap for some including an increase in their level of debt
- There will be a differential negative impact on the poorest people in society
- There may not be any benefits associated with the introduction of water charging
- Has the cost of improving the water and sewerage infrastructure been included in the £3 billion?

Systems of charging

- The system of charging needs to be applied on an equitable basis to take account of the difficulties for those on a low income
- There does not appear to be a choice about metering
- Metering is necessary as the only fair basis of charging
- Charging on the basis of house value may penalise some people on low incomes, e.g. pensioners, who have become asset-rich due to the performance of the housing market over a long period of time
- People who have wells or septic tanks need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the system of water charging
- The use of water by farmers also needs to be taken into consideration when deciding on the system of water charging, especially given the difficulties faced by the agricultural industry at the moment

3.2 Positive expectations about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services

Positive expectations about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland are shown in Box 3.2.

Box 3.2: Positive expectations about the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

- Updating/repair of the water and sewerage system
- Improvements in sewerage management
- Reduction in sewage discharged to beaches/cleaner beaches
- Compliance with EU Directives, and therefore avoidance of fines
- Economic use of water
- Improvements in water quality
- Improvements to health
- Value for money
- Fairness
- Consensus on appropriate and effective way forward for investment in the infrastructure of water and sewerage system in Northern Ireland, and charging for water

3.3 Barriers to, and conflicts around, the implementation of the proposal

The barriers to introducing charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland are shown in Box 3.3. The conflicts around the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services are shown in Box 3.4.

Box 3.3: Barriers to the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services

Issues over implementation

- Lack of awareness of water charge being introduced
- Lack of public confidence in capacity of charging/system to deliver an increase in standards of water and sewerage management

Issues over system of charging

- Need for charging system to be fair, and to be equitable
- Need for charging system to incorporate measures that take account of ability to pay, not just for people belonging to low-income or vulnerable groups but also for farmers

Issues over payment

- The need to determine an effective and appropriate mechanism to ensure payment of charges
- Implications of non-payment of charges – how will the shortfall in revenue be addressed? Will those who pay subsidise those who do not?
- The need to introduce a system of penalties for those who do not pay water charges

Issues over water usage

- Current and historical patterns of water usage in the absence of water charging

Box 3.4: Conflicts around the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services

Issues over level of investment and nature of investment

- The method of calculation for the investment required in the water and sewerage system/infrastructure
- The method of determining the nature of the investment to be made in the water and sewerage system/infrastructure
- Priority with respect to investment: will national needs be given precedence over local investment requirements/needs?

Issues over system of charging

- The method of property valuation, if this is to be used as a basis for water charging

Issues over payment

- Refusals to pay and defaults on payment of water charges

Issues over liability

- Responsibility for historical liability/liabilities
- The removal of Crown Immunity

Issues over accountability

- Accountability of governing body/mechanism(s) of governance

Issues over access to reservoirs

- Implications over access to, and potential to introduce charging for the use of, reservoirs as leisure facilities

Issues over sewerage management

- Regulation of standards of sewage management

Issues about public spending

- The apportionment of public money that is “saved” by the introduction of water charging – will people see the benefits of a re-apportionment of public monies that were previously spent on water and sewerage management?

3.3 Outcomes of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services, and their potential impacts on health and well-being

In this section, we outline the outcomes of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. There are three main outcomes of introducing such a charge:

- an increase in the investment in the infrastructure for water and sewerage services;
- a decrease in the amount of disposable income available to individuals and families
- an increase in the level of overheads for organisations in the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

Each of these main outcomes may have impacts on the health and well-being of the population, and in particular of vulnerable groups.

3.4.1 Potential impacts of introducing charging for water and sewerage services on the water and sewerage infrastructure

As outlined above, one of the main outcomes of introducing charging for water and sewerage services is an increase in investment in the infrastructure for water and sewerage services. The potential impacts of that outcome are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The potential impacts on the water and sewerage infrastructure of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services

<i>Outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services</i>	<i>Potential impacts on water and sewerage infrastructure</i>
An increase in investment in the infrastructure for water and sewerage services	<p>An increase in the construction of water and sewerage infrastructure, e.g. new sewage works, and pipelines, which will have an impact on the environment, particularly in rural and coastal areas – potentially negative in terms of the location of sewage works in areas/landscapes of natural beauty, and potentially positive in terms of the increase in the quality of protected waters (streams, rivers, and sea water)</p> <p>An increase in the maintenance of the existing water and sewerage system, resulting in a decrease in the amount of leakage throughout the water delivery system, thereby increasing efficiency and improving value for money</p> <p>Development of appropriate methods of water conservation and recycling</p> <p>An improvement in the quality of drinking water</p> <p>An increase in the quality of water in reservoirs</p> <p>An improvement in the quality of protected waters, i.e. rivers, canals, and sea water</p> <p>An improvement in the cleanliness of beaches</p>

3.4.1.1 Potential impacts on the public health

The potential impacts of investing in the infrastructure for water and sewerage services on the public health are shown in Table 3.2.

Investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure therefore could serve to decrease the demand on health services, for instance, by reducing the incidence of various water-borne diseases.

Table 3.2: The potential impacts of investing in the infrastructure for water and sewerage services on the public health

<i>Impacts of investing in water and sewerage infrastructure</i>	<i>Potential impacts on public health</i>
An improvement in the quality of drinking water	<p>A decrease in the level of harmful chemicals in drinking water, decreasing the risk of build-up of chemicals, e.g. pesticide residues, in the human body, thereby reducing potential damage to the nervous system</p> <p>A decrease in the incidence of water-borne infections</p>
An increase in the quality of water in reservoirs	A decrease in the incidence of water-borne infections, e.g. Cryptosporidium
An improvement in the quality of protected waters, i.e. rivers, canals, and sea water, through better sewage management	A decrease in the incidence of water-borne infections, e.g. E. coli, for those using protected waters for leisure or work purposes
An improvement in the cleanliness of beaches, through better sewage management	<p>An increase in people using the beaches for leisure and recreation, including tourists and holidaymakers, which will increase the level of physical activity/exercise leading to increases in cardiovascular and muscular fitness, a reduction in obesity, and a decrease in the level of stress</p> <p>An increase in the number of visitors, tourists and holidaymakers, leading to an increase in expenditure for the local economy in rural/coastal areas, which may increase the number of jobs locally and increase the amount of money then retained in the local economy</p>
A decrease in the risk of flooding	<p>A reduction in the potential for damage to homes and other properties, leading to a decrease in stress, anxiety, and the need to replace household and personal items, or goods and other necessities for the operation of businesses</p> <p>A decrease in the risk of water-borne diseases</p>
An increase in the water distribution network	An increase in public safety as a result of water being made accessible to fire services in locations where previously it was difficult or impossible to obtain

3.4.2 Potential impacts of introducing charging for water and sewerage services on the level of disposable income

The second main outcome of introducing water charges in Northern Ireland will be a reduction in the amount of disposable income for all those people eligible to pay water charges. All people eligible to pay water charges will have less money to spend because the newly introduced cost of water and sewerage services will be additional to their usual living costs.

3.4.2.1 Potential impacts of a reduction in the level of disposable income on health and well-being

A reduction in the amount of disposable income will have impacts on different groups of people:

- the general population;
- people who have the ability to pay water charges;
- people from vulnerable groups (see Box 2.1) who do not have the capacity to pay.

The potential impacts on health and well-being of a reduction in the level of disposable income for different people in the population are shown in Table 3.3. It should be noted that it is not improbable that some of the potential impacts on health and well-being identified as most likely to affect people from vulnerable groups may also occur in people who do have the ability to pay the charges for water and sewerage services.

Table 3.3: The potential impacts on health and well-being of a reduction in the level of disposable income for different people in the population

<i>Outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services</i>	<i>Potential impacts on health and well-being</i>
<p>A reduction in the amount of disposable income</p>	<p><u>For the general population</u> A reduction in the amount of money in the local economy, and the retention of wealth locally, which may have negative impacts for local businesses, e.g. a reduction in the level of customer spend, leading to a loss of business and potentially a loss of jobs, which will then have negative health impacts for employers and employees, and their families</p> <p><u>For members of the community who have access to other sources of water, e.g. wells</u> An increase in risk of water-borne diseases or of poisoning through the consumption of untreated water that could be contaminated</p> <p><u>For people who have the ability to pay</u> A decrease in the level of social activity, decreasing the amount of social contact, and networking, and possibly the level of social support available, leading to negative impacts on mental health and well-being A decrease in leisure activity, whether cultural or entertainment, which may decrease the amount of stress-relieving activity leading to negative impacts on mental well-being If there is an associated cost, a decrease in the level of leisure activities in terms of physical activity or sports, leading to a reduction in the level of physical fitness and an increase in the risk of diseases relating to a sedentary lifestyles</p> <p><u>For people in low-income groups who do not have the ability to pay</u> An increase in the level of stress and anxiety, which could lead to depression, an increase in family tension and a decrease in family cohesion (with the risk of changes to family structure) An increase in the level of stress and anxiety, which could lead to an increase in alcohol consumption or smoking, and an increased risk of alcohol- and smoking related diseases</p>

	<p>A decrease in the money spent on food/good-quality nutritious food, leading to malnutrition for older people, or obesity for people in low-income families (cheap food tends to be high in fat, and calories), increasing the risk of obesity-related conditions, e.g. diet-induced diabetes, and hypertension, and of vascular disease</p> <p>A decrease in money spent on fuel, leading to fuel poverty, and an increased risk of hypothermia in older people</p> <p>A decrease in the money spent on educational material for children, which may lead to limitations on childhood development</p> <p>A decrease in the money spent on dental hygiene products, leading to an increased risk of dental caries and gum disease, especially in children</p> <p>A decrease in the money spent on transport, reducing the capacity to travel to work, visit friends and family, and access basic amenities, services, and leisure facilities, which could have many potential impacts on health including reduced social contact, networking and support, and lack of opportunity to improve health through stress-relieving activities and employment</p> <p>A decrease in the money spent on maintenance and upkeep of property, leading to deterioration in housing conditions, increasing the risk of damp, mould and cold/poor insulation, leading to a range of negative health impacts particularly for children and older people</p>
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3.4.3 Outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on organisations in Northern Ireland

There are three main types of organisation in Northern Ireland that will be affected by the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services:

- public sector;
- private sector, particularly small to medium-sized enterprises;
- voluntary sector.

3.4.3.1 Potential impacts of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on public sector organisations

The outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on public sector organisations in Northern Ireland is an increase in the cost of utilities and therefore in the level of their overheads. As a consequence there will be a reduction in the amount of money available for the provision of services.

The potential impacts on health and well-being of a reduction in the amount of money available for the provision of services are shown in Table 3.4. In addition, the potential negative impacts on the health and well-being for all the community, but particularly for vulnerable groups, of introducing water charges *per se* may also have implications for some public sector agencies, such as health and social services – see Table 3.4 overleaf.

Table 3.4: Potential impacts of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on public sector agencies

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Potential impacts on health and well-being</i>
<p>An increase in the cost of utilities, and therefore an increase in the level of overheads leading to a decrease in the amount of money available for the delivery of public sector services</p>	<p><u>All public sector services</u> A reduction in the volume and/or quality of public services available, which may have negative impacts on mental health and well-being of staff, especially if the reduction in quality or volume means that service users are put at risk, e.g. for health and social services. <i>For the fire services</i>, in particular, which have the potential to use an enormous amount of water, if charging is introduced there may be a compromise in public safety, either in the amount of water used or in the reduction of services.</p> <p><u>For service users</u> A reduction in the volume and/or quality of public services available, which may have negative impacts on health and well-being of service users in different ways according to the services affected, e.g. for users of health services, there may be an increase in mortality or morbidity.</p>
<p>Potential health impacts of charging for water and sewerage services, and a consequent reduction in the level of disposable income particularly for vulnerable groups (see Table 3.3)</p>	<p><u>Health and social services</u> An increase in the prevalence and incidence of dental caries and gum disease may increase demand on dental services An increase in alcohol-related and smoking-related diseases may increase demand on health services An increase in malnutrition in older people may increase demand for health and social services An increase in hypothermia in older people may increase demand for health and social services An increase in the incidence of vascular diseases may increase demand on health services A decrease in mental well-being and increase in mental health problems may increase the demand on health and social services, including increased demand for prescription drugs</p>
<p>Potential health impacts of investment in water and sewerage infrastructure (see Table 3.2)</p>	<p>A reduction in the incidence of water-borne diseases, therefore a reduced demand on services</p>

3.4.3.2 Outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on private sector organisations

The outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on private sector organisations in Northern Ireland is an increase in the level of overheads.

The potential impacts on health and well-being of an increase in the level of overheads for the private sector are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: The potential impacts on health and well-being of an increase in the level of overheads for the private sector

Outcome	Potential impacts on health and well-being
An increase in the cost of utilities, and therefore an increase in the level of overheads	<p><u>For businesses</u> An increased cost to absorb, through a decrease in profits or an increase in costs to consumers or users; a decrease in profits could affect the viability of the business, affecting the number of people that can be employed, and an increase in consumer costs may result in a loss of business and therefore of profits also affecting the viability of the business and the number of people employed. These impacts on business may have negative impacts on the mental and physical health of owners, employers and employees, and their families. These negative impacts may be experienced to a greater extent by small to medium-sized enterprises, which are more likely to employ local people, the outcome of which will be a negative effect on the retention of wealth in the local economy</p> <p><u>For customers & users of services &/or facilities</u> An increase in the cost of goods, services or facilities provided by the private sector, reducing the level of accessibility to those goods, services, & facilities, leading to a range of negative impacts on mental and physical health and well-being, e.g. reduced access to leisure facilities will result in less exercise thereby reducing people’s level of fitness, and reduced access to good-quality nutritious affordable food will result in</p>

	<p>the consumption of poor-quality (cheap, high fat, high calorie) food thereby increasing the risk of overweight, obesity and related conditions. A reduced level of spending by consumers/users will in turn have a negative impact on local businesses, affecting their viability & the number of people that can be employed, leading to a reduction in the level of wealth in the local economy.</p>
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3.4.3.3 Outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on voluntary sector organisations

The outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on voluntary sector organisations in Northern Ireland is an increase in the cost of utilities and consequently a reduction in the amount of money available for the provision of services.

The potential impacts on health and well-being of a reduction in the amount of money available for the provision of voluntary sector services are shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: The potential impacts on health and well-being of a reduction in the amount of money available for the provision of voluntary sector services

Outcome	Potential impacts on health and well-being
<p>An increase in the cost of utilities, and therefore an increase in the level of overheads</p>	<p><u>For voluntary sector agencies</u> A decrease in the volume and/or quality of voluntary sector services provided, which may have negative impacts on mental health and well-being of staff, especially if the reduction in quality or volume means that service users are put at risk; <i>for small local voluntary sector organisations</i> in particular, it may affect viability, the number of people that can be employed, the facilities that can be used, the number of volunteers that can be supervised, the hours of opening or the amount of resources that can be used in support of service delivery. The worst-case scenario would be the withdrawal of services altogether.</p>

	<p><u>For service users</u> A reduction in the volume and/or quality of public services available, which may lead to negative impacts for a variety of vulnerable people, for instance, a decrease in the level of social support resulting in decreased mental and physical health and well-being</p>
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3.5 Potential impacts of different options of charging for water and sewerage services

In the proposal, there are four options for the method of charging for water and sewerage services:

- metering;
- fixed charge plus metering;
- property value;
- fixed charge plus property value.

Each of these four options was assessed for potential health impacts by small groups at the workshop. The results are presented below.

3.5.1 Metering

3.5.1.1 Assessment against the values for the HIA

The principle of using meters to measure water usage as the basis for charging for water and sewerage services was first assessed against the three values for the HIA: fairness, equity, and accessibility – see Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Assessment of metering as a method for charging for water and sewerage services against the values for the HIA

<i>Values for the HIA</i>	<i>Metering as a basis for charging</i>
• Fairness	√
• Equity	?
• Accessibility	X

It was found that metering was fair because the method of charging is based on the amount of water people actually use. However, it is not certain that it is equitable as the greatest impact of this method of charging will be experienced by some of the more vulnerable in society, such as those on a low income, e.g. older people, unemployed people and their families, lone parents and their families, large families, and students. Metering may decrease accessibility because it can induce changes in behaviour that

reduce the perceived availability of water for important health-related functions, particularly for the vulnerable.

Potential health impacts

Overall, the perception that the use of metering as a basis for charging for water and sewerage services is fair meant that this method would generate less negative feelings of anger and resentment. However, the perception that metering as a method of charging for water and sewerage services is not necessarily equitable will affect the mental well-being of the vulnerable in society negatively. As a result, behavioural changes could be induced which would have serious impacts on health (see below, Section 3.51.2).

3.5.1.2 *Assessment of potential impacts on health and well-being*

The potential impacts on health and well-being, mediated through changes in behaviour, as a result of charging for water and sewerage services on the basis of metered usage are shown in Table 3.8 overleaf.

3.5.1.3 Further potential impacts of using metering as a method of charging

A major outcome of charging for water and sewerage services on the basis of metered usage is:

- a reduction in the waste of water.

A reduction in the amount of water wasted may help to keep the charges for water and sewerage services at a lower level as there would be a decrease in water usage and therefore less demand for water and sewerage services, thereby decreasing operational costs. This change in combination with increased investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure may serve to increase the efficiency of water and sewerage management.

These potential outcomes could act to reduce the demands a charge for water would make on the level of disposable income for all people eligible to pay charges. Thus, it could have the potential to ameliorate some of the impacts shown in Table 3.3.

3.5.1.4 Fixed charge plus metered usage

For the option of charging for water and sewerage services on the basis of a fixed charge and metering, it was not possible to identify potential health impacts that are additional or different to those associated with the use of metering alone.

3.5.2 Property value

3.5.2.1 Assessment against the values for the HIA

The principle of using property value as the basis for charging for water and sewerage services was first assessed against the three values for the HIA: fairness, equity, and accessibility – see Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Assessment of property value as a method for charging for water and sewerage services against the values for the HIA

Values for the HIA	Property value as a basis for charging
• Fairness	X
• Equity	X
• Accessibility	?

It was found that using property value as a basis for charging was not fair because the value of a house is dictated by the market, which it is not possible to control, and the housing market is also elastic (i.e. it can fall as well as rise). Nor does property value reflect accurately the level of water usage within a house – a small number of people living in a large highly rated house may not use as much water as a large number of people living in a smaller lower rate house.

Furthermore, the value of a property as a basis for charging is not equitable because it may not reflect the level of income of the owners or tenants: for instance, older people may reside in a high-value property which they have owned for many years but be living on a low level of income such as the State pension, or a private pension that has been affected by the poor performance of the Stock Market – the “property value trap”. It is not certain whether property value as a basis for charging increases or decreases accessibility.

Potential health impacts

Overall, the perception that the use of property value as a basis for charging for water and sewerage services is not fair or equitable meant that it would generate feelings of anger and resentment, which will affect mental well-being negatively. For some of the vulnerable, it may also cause anxiety, worry and stress, particularly in older people.

3.5.2.2 Assessment of potential impacts on health and well-being

The potential impacts on health and well-being, mediated through changes in behaviour, as a result of charging for water and sewerage services on the basis of property value are shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10: The potential impacts on health and well-being of charging for water and sewerage services on the basis of property value

<i>Impact on behaviour</i>	<i>Impact on health and well-being</i>
Relocation to a residence of lower property value	<p>Disruption to social networks, leading to a reduction in social contact and support</p> <p>Disruption to the education of children, with the potential to impede childhood development</p> <p>Depending on the degree of relocation, increase in demand for public sector services in some areas and a decrease in others, affecting the volume and quality of service delivery for users</p>

A further outcome of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services on the basis of property value could be an effect on property value itself. It is conceivable that market property values could decline with the introduction of water charging. This could have negative impacts on mental health and well-being in several ways:

- market value of a property could decline below the property value set for the purposes of charging for water and sewerage services, leading to frustration, stress and a sense of injustice;
- if market value does decline it may affect the capacity of owners to move should they wish, also leading to feelings of frustration, stress and a sense of injustice.

3.5.2.3 Fixed charge plus property value

For the option of charging for water and sewerage services on the basis of a fixed charge and property value, it was not possible to identify potential health impacts that are additional or different to those associated with the use of property value alone.

3.6 Potential impacts of different options for the regulation of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

In the proposal, there are three options for the system of regulation of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, as follows:

- using the system of regulation for water and sewerage services that is established in Great Britain (OFWAT);
- using the system of regulation for other utilities that is established in Northern Ireland;
- establishing a new and independent regulator for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

Each of these three options was assessed by one of the small groups at the workshop, and scored against a series of criteria by the Assessor (EI), which were used as indicators of potential health impacts. All criteria were scored as either 0 or 1. A score of 0 represented a negative aspect to the criterion and therefore a negative impact on health through one or more of the determinants of health. A score of 1 represented a positive aspect to the criterion and therefore a positive impact on health through one or more of the determinants of health. The results are presented in Matrix 3.1.

Matrix 3.1

	<i>GB system - OFWAT</i>	<i>NI Regulator</i>	<i>New Regulator for water & sewerage services in NI</i>
Public confidence in the system	0¹	0²	1
Opportunity for public involvement in the system	?	1	1
Opportunity for public to participate in decision-making	0	?	1
Accountability to public in Northern Ireland	0	1	1
Appropriateness to Northern Ireland context, particularly economic conditions	0	1	1
Links to central NI organisations, e.g. NIHE	0	1	1
Links to local organisations	0	1	1
Understanding of local issues and conditions	0	1	1
Capacity to protect local interests, e.g. environment, leisure	0	1	1
Independence from other influences, e.g. political/economic, culture of privatisation	0	0	1
Technological development to improve service quality	1	1	1
Compliance with EU Directives	1	1	1
Score	2	9	12

As can be seen from Matrix 3.1, the system of regulation that would appear to have the greatest positive impact on health and well-being for the general population, with a score of 12/12, is to establish a new and independent regulator for the introduction and management of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. However, the use of the existing

¹ Lack of confidence on behalf of Northern Ireland public due to perception of a poor record in Great Britain

² Lack of confidence on behalf of Northern Ireland public due to what happened with Phoenix

Northern Ireland regulator was found to have a much greater positive impact on health and well-being for the people of Northern Ireland, with a score of 9/12, than the use of the existing system of regulation used in Great Britain which had a score of 2/12.

The main reasons why a newly established and independent regulator for water and sewerage services would appear to have the greatest positive impact on health and well-being are:

- a newly established regulator would have a “clean” record, and therefore be more likely to inspire confidence in the general public;
- a newly established regulator would not have a pre-established organisational culture and therefore would be able to institute processes and practices that included the public in terms of participation and decision-making about charging for water and sewerage services;
- a newly established regulator would be independent of other influences that may not act in favour of the public, e.g. a culture of privatisation, or macro-economics of Great Britain.

However, it was noted that a newly established regulator would lack experience.

3.7 Suggestions to minimise the negative and maximise the positive potential impacts of charging for water and sewerage services

3.7.1 Suggestions about charging for water and sewerage services in general

Suggestions to minimise the negative and maximise the positive potential impacts of charging for water services *per se* include considering:

- The provision of information about charging for water and sewerage services, what the charges will be used to fund, and the benefits anticipated from investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure (e.g. cleaner beaches and protected waters, and the implications for the tourist industry and local economy)
- Phasing in charges over a period of time, e.g. 10 years
- Using the prevailing economy in Northern Ireland (as opposed to that in Great Britain) in order to set water charges within whichever system of charging that is adopted
- Giving people the choice about which method of charging for water and sewerage services they are prepared to accept
- Using people’s level of disposable income as an equitable method of charging for water and sewerage services, in this way charges would be proportional to their circumstances
- The provision of information and education about household budgeting, particularly over the long term
- For vulnerable groups, the introduction of subsidies to enable them to access water and sewerage services

3.7.2 Suggestions about metering as a method of charging for water and sewerage services

Suggestions to minimise the negative and maximise the positive potential impacts of charging for water services based on usage of water via metering include considering:

- The education of the public about ways in which it is possible to conserve water, and to recycle water
- The provision of information and education of the importance of dental health, and personal and household hygiene, especially in schools
- The provision of family planning information
- The installation of water conservation features/measures in any existing housing
- The promotion of water conservation features/measures in any new housing built
- The provision of subsidies for leisure facilities that require the use of water
- *For vulnerable groups*, the introduction of a system whereby vulnerable groups pay an annual one-off payment instead of charges based on metered use of water
- *For vulnerable groups*, the introduction of a system of metering whereby vulnerable groups pay for only a percentage of units used (i.e. a certain percentage is free of charge) instead of paying for all the units used
- *For vulnerable groups*, the introduction of a system of metering whereby vulnerable groups pay only up to a certain level of units used (i.e. the number of units paid for is capped) instead of charges based on metered use of water
- *For vulnerable groups*, the introduction of a system run by a public body whereby vulnerable groups are banded according to their level of income and pay water charges on this basis

3.7.3 Suggestions about using property value as a method of charging for water and sewerage services

Suggestions to minimise the negative and maximise the positive potential impacts of charging for water services based on property value include considering:

- The establishment of a system of appeal with respect to the value assigned to properties
- The provision of the option for metering for those who fall into the “property value trap”
- The establishment of a post as Advisor, and Support Networks, for those forced to relocate as a result of the discrepancy between the value of their property, and therefore the level of charges, and the level of their disposable income to pay for the water charges
- The installation of water conservation features/measures in housing to which people are forced to re-locate
- For vulnerable groups, the introduction of a discount on the charge levied according to property value

3.7.4 Suggestions about the system of regulation for charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

With respect to potential impacts on health and well-being, it was found that the establishment of a new and dedicated regulator would be the most appropriate system of regulation for the charging of water and sewerage services In Northern Ireland.

Participants also emphasised the importance, especially for mental health and well-being, of the need for the public to have access to the regulator.

The second choice for a system of regulation of charging for water and sewerage services would be the existing Northern Ireland regulator, although for three of the criteria which were considered important by participants the use of the Northern Ireland regulator would have a negative impact on health:

- lack of public confidence due to the relatively recent experience with Phoenix;
- lack of public participation in decision-making;
- being subject to influences that would not act in favour of the public, e.g. a culture of privatisation.

Participants suggested that if the existing Northern Ireland regulator was to be used that the Consumer Council would need to be expanded in order to reflect the new responsibility of regulating charges for water and sewerage services.

3.7.5 Suggestions about public participation in the organisations involved in the provision or regulation of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

Participants were in agreement about the importance of public participation in any organisations involved in the provision of water and sewerage services, and the following suggestions were made:

- the need to recognise the general public as important stakeholders in the introduction and management of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland;
- the need for the general public to be consulted about the mechanisms for governance and accountability of any organisations involved in the provision of, or regulation of charging for, water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

3.7.6 Further suggestion relating to the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

A further suggestion relating to the proposal to introduce charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland include:

- the need for the Department of Regional Development and Northern Ireland Housing Executive to develop clear action plans relating to the construction of appropriate infrastructure for water and sewerage management for both new and existing build.

Part 4: Assessor's Observations

In Part 4, the Assessor (EI) makes observations about:

- the implications of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland;
- weighing the benefits against the harms of introducing such a charge;
- the results of the appraisal, including the favoured option for the method of charging for water and sewerage services, and the favoured option for the mechanism of regulation of charging for water and sewerage services when taking potential impacts on health and well-being into account.

4.1 Implications of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

4.1.1 Public participation and involvement in decision-making

The introduction of charging for water and sewerage services Northern Ireland is a subject of contention for a public unused to having to pay directly for the water they drink or for their effluent to be removed and treated. Everyone will be affected, from individuals to families, from public sector agencies to voluntary organisations, from small businesses to large. It is therefore important not only to allow everyone the opportunity to participate in the shaping of the proposal and the system that is ultimately implemented but also to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to influence the way in which decisions about charging will be made in future. During public consultation about the proposal, this could be achieved by inviting members of the public to give their views about what the best mechanism would be for them to be represented in the decision-making process.

4.1.2 Impact on the economy of Northern Ireland

When considering the number of households or premises that may be subject to charging, the amount of money that could be removed from the general economy of Northern Ireland and spent in a relatively small sector (water distribution, and water and sewerage treatment systems/processes) could run into hundreds of millions of pounds. This could have a considerable impact on the economy, and therefore an indirect impact on the health and well-being of everyone in the population.

It is important to be aware of the potential impacts this loss to the general economy may have, and the way in which it will be perceived by the general public. It is possible that this could serve to increase the degree of dissatisfaction and/or resentment that is currently being expressed about the proposal.

4.2 Weighing the benefits against the harms of introducing a charge for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

The main benefit of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland will be an increase in investment in the infrastructure for water and sewerage services. This may lead to:

- an improvement in the quality of drinking water;
- an increase in the quality of water in reservoirs;
- an increase in the quality of protected waters;
- an improvement in the cleanliness of the coastline, including beaches;
- a decrease in the risk of flooding.

All these benefits are to a certain extent general, or spread across the population, and may only be incremental.

However, for many members of the general public, these benefits may not be tangible. For instance, the general public in Northern Ireland has been receiving potable drinking water for years without having to pay for it directly, and may wonder what the added value to them will be of paying for something that was once free and is not noticeably different. Similarly, an increase in the quality of water in reservoirs may be noticeable only to those who use reservoirs for leisure and recreational purposes. Indeed, an improvement in the cleanliness of beaches may be apparent to those living along the coast and benefiting from an increase in tourism, but may not have much meaning for people living in inland areas who do not have the capacity to visit the coast.

Moreover, it is important to identify whether those who will experience the greatest harm from a decrease in their level of disposable income – e.g. vulnerable groups, small to medium-sized business, small local voluntary organisations – will gain an equal or greater benefit from an increased investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure, or whether the immediate and tangible negative impacts or harms will outweigh the general benefits. It is likely that those most affected negatively will not perceive the benefits of the proposal or benefit from it as much as they will be harmed. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that whatever method of charging is used for the provision of water and sewerage services it is not only fair but also equitable, and takes into account the difficulties that people from vulnerable groups, the farming community, small businesses, and local voluntary organisations will face in trying to meet these new costs.

One of the public sector agencies most likely to experience the impacts of the implementation of a charge for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland are those relating to health and social services. This agency can be expected to experience a reduction in demand as a result of the improvements to water quality whether of drinking water or protected waters (see Section 3.4.1.1, and Table 3.2). However, this agency can also be expected to experience an increase in demand as a result of the impacts on the general public, but in particular on vulnerable groups in society living on a low income, of a reduction in the level of disposable income (see Section

3.4.2.1, and Table 3.3). It is likely that the negative impacts on health may increase demand on health and social services to a greater extent than the positive impacts on public health will reduce it. Moreover, the demands arising as a result of the negative impacts may not fall in the same units, departments and/or specialities in which savings are being made from the reduced demand as a result of positive impacts. In addition, there will be less money available to meet demands, given the increase in overheads that a charge for water and sewerage services brings.

Another public sector agency that may be badly affected by the introduction of a charge for water and sewerage services is the fire service. However, they may also benefit from an increase in the water distribution network, making it easier for them to obtain water in locations where previously it was difficult or impossible.

Therefore, it is vital to ensure that the primary responsibilities of various public sector agencies are not compromised by the introduction of charging for water and sewerage services, and that suitable support mechanisms, and methods of charging, are put in place to enable public sector agencies to continue to fulfil their primary responsibilities.

4.3 Favoured option for the method of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

The option for charging for water and sewerage services that participants agreed to be fair was metering. Although some participants considered metering to be equitable, it was clear from the health impact assessment that the effect of using metering as a basis for charging could induce behavioural changes in various vulnerable groups living on a low income that could compromise their health and well-being both physically and mentally. This would act to compromise equity rather than promote it. For this reason, the use of metering as a method for charging for water and sewerage services would need to be supported by mechanisms to protect the welfare of vulnerable groups.

Several interesting suggestions were made by participants about the ways in which vulnerable groups could be charged without compromising their access to water and sewerage services, and therefore without compromising their mental and physical health and well-being.

It is also important to take into account the needs of and pressures upon small to medium sized enterprises, voluntary sector agencies, and the farming community when deciding upon a method of charging for water and sewerage services.

4.4 Favoured option for the mechanism of regulation of charging for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland

The option for the regulation of charging for water and sewerage services that was perceived to be most appropriate in terms of promoting health and well-being in Northern Ireland was the establishment of a new dedicated regulator.

The second choice was to use the existing Northern Ireland regulator although there were several important deficiencies recognised if this system of regulation was to be employed (see Section 3.6).

The use of the existing regulatory system in Great Britain (OFWAT) was not scored highly against criteria used as indicators for impacts on health. It would also be an unpopular choice as this system was considered to have many flaws, such as:

- a lack of understanding of local issues;
- an inappropriate culture, i.e. one operating within a culture of privatisation;
- a lack of public participation and involvement in decision-making;
- a lack of links to local organisations.

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Screening Tool

Belfast Healthy Cities: Pilot in Community Health Impact Assessment

A Prototype Screening Tool for communities living in the Ards Peninsula

Developed by Erica Ison, The Institute of Health Sciences, Oxford

With support from:

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Introduction

What is Screening?

Screening is the first main stage in the classic or traditional process of health impact assessment (HIA). The function of screening is to **select** proposals on which it will be appropriate and/or effective to continue with the process of HIA.

What is a Screening Tool?

A screening tool is a systematic framework against which users can identify the significance of a proposal and its potential impacts. The use of a systematic framework is important because it makes explicit, and therefore transparent, the basis on which a judgement is made about whether to undertake HIA.

Tool Development

This screening tool was developed for communities living and working in the North Ards Peninsula. Erica Ison constructed the tool using the framework, structure, organisation, and flow she has designed, together with the exercise to help “populate” the tool. However, people who live and/or work in the North Ards Peninsula suggested the contents for the tool during a workshop run as part of the training in community health impact assessment (CHIA) piloted by Belfast Healthy Cities.

Tool Structure

This screening tool is in four main sections:

- Section 1 – this deals with the significance of the proposal, including a summary of results;
- Section 2 – this deals with the communities affected by the proposal, including a summary of results;
- Section 3 – this deals with the potential impacts of the proposal on health and well-being, including a summary of results;
- Section 4 – an overall summary and decision-taking framework.

For record-keeping purposes, which has a bearing on transparency and accountability of the HIA process, there is a box entitled “Documentation Record” at the end of the tool in which users who have screened the proposal record:

- their names;
- the date on which they screened the proposal;
- the documentation (including the title and date of the document) of the proposal that was used for screening.

Instructions

Number of people required to use the screening tool

One person can complete any screening tool. However, it is advisable for more than one person to be involved because this means that the proposal will be screened making use of several people's knowledge and experience and therefore bringing a wider range of views to bear on the judgement. The result or decision taken is generally strengthened by the fact that it is the consensus view of several people. It is ideal if two or more people screen the proposal, but it is advisable that the group is not too large (no more than 4-5). It is also important that one person is responsible for facilitating the screening process, and for recording the decisions of the group.

Sections of the tool to be completed

All sections of the tool must be completed (Sections 1-4), including the summaries at the end of Sections 1-3, and the Record box at the end of the tool.

How to complete the tool

Sections 1-3

The majority of questions in Sections 1-3 of the tool are based on using a scale. Users should circle the number **or** range in the scale that they think is appropriate. If the question is not applicable to the particular proposal, circle n/a in the last column on the right.

Some of the questions are simpler, involving "Yes/No/Don't know" answers. In these cases, circle the appropriate word.

In all cases, instructions appear in *italic* type after the questions, and sometimes inside the boxes themselves – when instructions appear inside boxes, this indicates where users may have to identify additional items not listed in the tool, e.g. adding in stakeholders.

Section 4

To complete Section 4, users will need to refer to the summaries at the end of Sections 1-3.

Proposal being screened

Please write in the box the title of the proposal being screened.

Section 1: Significance of the proposal

Question 1.1a: Will the proposal make demands on local resources?

Question 1.1b: Does the proposal have the potential to cause disruption to the local community?

In both cases, please circle the relevant number or range.

			<i>Direction of effect</i>			
	<i>Negative effect</i>		<i>No effect</i>		<i>Positive effect</i>	
Demand on local resources (see Note 1):						
• environment	-2	-1	0	1	2	n/a
• road system	-2	-1	0	1	2	n/a
• sewage infrastructure	-2	-1	0	1	2	n/a
• healthcare	-2	-1	0	1	2	n/a
Potential for disruption to the community (see Note 2):						
• existing services – level of provision	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• existing services – standards	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• existing services – cost	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• community services – level of provision	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• community services – standards	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• community services – cost	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• existing amenities (see Note 3)	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• existing facilities (see Note 3)	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Note 1: If proposal will increase demand, use negative scores; if it will decrease demand, use positive scores

Note 2: If proposal will reduce the level of provision and standards or increase costs, use negative scores; if it will increase the level of provision and standards and decrease costs, use positive scores

Note 3: amenities include shops, Post Offices, banks, credit unions; facilities include leisure and entertainment venues, and community facilities

Question 1.2a: Is the proposal important to the local community?
Question 1.2b: Is the proposal important to the local economy?
 In both cases, please circle the relevant number or range

			<i>Effect</i>			
	<i>Negative</i>		<i>Neutral</i>		<i>Positive</i>	
Importance to local community:						
• effect on conflict in community	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• short-term effects	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• long-term effects	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• affects quality of life	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• perceived effect on health & well-being	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
Importance to local economy:						
• effect on income generation	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• effect on trade	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• effect on tourism	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• effect on capacity to attract funding	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• effect on inward investment	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• effect on retention of money in local economy	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Question 1.3a: What resources are needed for proposal implementation?
Please circle the appropriate number or range.

	None				Significant	
Resources:						
• Financial	0	1	2	3	4	n/a
• Human	0	1	2	3	4	n/a
• Material	0	1	2	3	4	n/a
• Training	0	1	2	3	4	n/a

Question 1.3b: Which organisations will be stakeholders in this proposal?

Please tick the appropriate column.

Stakeholder	Yes	No	Don't know
• Local Strategy Partnership			
• Local Health & Social Care Group			
• Local health & social care providers, e.g. GPs			
• Health Trusts			
• Health & Social Services Board			
• Housing Executive			
• Registered Social Landlords			
• Education & Library Board			
• Schools & nurseries			
• Further & higher education providers			
• Library Board			
• Employment Board			
• Training and Skills Development			
• Regeneration			
• Environmental Health			
• Early Years Services			
• Youth Services			
• Public Transport			
• Community Transport			
• Private Transport			
• Tourist Board			
• Police			
• Fire Service			
• Probation Service			
• Ambulance Service			
• Voluntary Sector			
• Local businesses – Chamber of Commerce			
• Private developers			
• Trade Unions			
• Residential and nursing home providers			
• Community organisations			
• Others? <i>Please list in box on next page.</i>			

Summary of Section 1

Question 1.1a: Demand on local resources

How many categories have a score of -2 ? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1 2 3 4

Question 1.1b: Disruption to local community

How many categories have a score of -1 or -2 ? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Question 1.2a: Importance to local community

How many categories have a score of -1 or -2 ? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5

Question 1.2b: Importance to local economy

How many economic categories have a score of -1 or -2 ? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Question 1.3a: Resources required to implement the proposal

How many resource categories will require significant investment in the implementation of the proposal (scores of 3 and 4)? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1 2 3 4

Question 1.3b: Stakeholders involved

How many stakeholders will be involved in proposal implementation? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25-29 30 or more

Question 1.3c: Other impact assessments

How many other impact assessments are being undertaken? *Please circle the relevant number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Section 2: Communities affected by the proposal

Question 2.1: What impact will the proposal have on the following resident communities?

	Negative impact		No impact		Positive impact	
North Ards:	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Ballywalter ward	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Kircubbin ward	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Portaferry ward	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Portavogie ward	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Ballyhalbert	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Ballywalter	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Cloughey	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Greyabbey	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Kircubbin	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Portaferry	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Portavogie	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Farming community	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Fishing community	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Arts & crafts community	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
Strangford	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
Others – please specify	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Question 2.2: What impact will the proposal have on the following vulnerable groups in the community?

	<i>Negative impact</i>		<i>No impact</i>		<i>Positive impact</i>	
• Older people	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Children younger than 5 years	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Children 5-12 years	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Young people 13-18 years	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Young people 19-25 years	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Unemployed people	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People on a low income, and their families	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Lone parents, and their families	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Homeless people: street sleepers	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Homeless people: in temporary accommodation	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Homeless people: hidden homeless	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with an acute illness	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with a chronic illness	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with a mental health problem	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People addicted to alcohol	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People addicted to illicit substances	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People addicted to prescription drugs	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with a physical disability	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with a learning disability	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with low/no literacy skills	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• People with low/no numeracy skills	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Minority ethnic groups	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Travellers	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Carers	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Question 2.3a: What impact will the proposal have on the following non-resident groups important to the community?

	<i>Negative impact</i>		<i>No impact</i>		<i>Positive impact</i>	
• Tourists	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Workers	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Others – specify:						
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Question 2.3b: What contribution do the non-resident groups make to the community? Please tick the appropriate boxes.

	<i>Contribution</i>		
	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>
• Tourists			
• Workers			
• Others – specify:			

Summary of Section 2

Question 2.1: Effect on resident communities

Will any resident communities in North Ards be affected negatively (a score of -2)? *Please circle appropriate answer.*

Yes/No

If the answer is "Yes", how many communities will be affected? *Please circle appropriate number.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Question 2.2: Effect on vulnerable groups in the community

How many vulnerable groups in the community will be affected negatively (a score of -2)? *Please circle appropriate number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24

Question 2.3a: Effect on non-resident groups

How many non-resident groups will be affected negatively (a score of -2)? *Please circle appropriate number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5

Question 2.3b: Contribution of non-resident groups

How many of the non-resident groups affected negatively (a score of -2) make a contribution – economic, social and/or environmental – to the local community or area?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Section 3: Impacts on health and well-being

Question 3.1: What impacts will the proposal have on health and well-being? *Please circle the appropriate number or range.*

	<i>Negative impact</i>		<i>No impact</i>		<i>Positive impact</i>	
Direct Effects:						
• Physical health	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Mental health	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
Indirect Effects through:						
• Employment	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Training and skills development	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Education:						
○ pre-school	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ primary school	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ secondary school	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ further or higher	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ adult and continuing	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Housing:						
○ Affordable	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Conditions	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Transport:						
○ Accessibility	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	
○ Availability	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	
○ Affordability	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	
• Environment:						
○ air quality	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ freshwater quality	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ seawater quality	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ soil quality	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ noise	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ vibration	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ traffic volume	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ traffic congestion	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ landscape	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ townscape	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Crime and community safety:						
○ Crime	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Fear of crime	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Antisocial behaviour	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Fear of antisocial behaviour	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Question 3.1 *continued*

	<i>Negative impact</i>		<i>No impact</i>		<i>Positive impact</i>	
Indirect Effects through:						
• Culture	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Leisure	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Sport & physical activity	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Access to services						
○ Healthcare	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ social services	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ respite care	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ childcare	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ education: pre-school	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ education: primary	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ education: secondary	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ education: further or higher	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ education: adult and continuing	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ public transport: availability	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ public transport: cost	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ voluntary services	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Access to amenities and facilities:						
○ Shops	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ Bank	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ credit union	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ post office	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ community facilities	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
• Social environment						
○ social networking	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ social support	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ community participation	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ cross-community communication	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a
○ cross-community integration	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	n/a

Question 3.2: If the proposal has negative impacts, what kind of negative impacts will they be? *Please circle the appropriate number or range.*

					Significant	
• Number of people affected	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Occurrence of short-term effect(s)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Occurrence of long-term effect(s)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Frequency of effect(s)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Severity of effect(s)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Duration of effect(s)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Combination of effects	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
• Differential effect(s) on vulnerable groups	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Summary of Section 3

Question 3.1: Impacts on health

Does the proposal have a direct negative effect on health (a score of -2)?
Please circle appropriate answer.

Yes/No

Does the proposal have an indirect effect on health (a score of -2 in any category)? *Please circle appropriate answer.*

Yes/No

If so, how many categories have a negative impact of -2? *Please circle appropriate number.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Question 3.2: Nature of negative impacts

How many of the categories are significant or tending that way (a score of 3-5)? *Please circle appropriate number.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Section 4: Decision-taking Framework

Table 4.1: Negative effects on the life of the community, its infrastructure and resources. Please read the questions in the central column, then circle “Yes” or “No” as appropriate.

	Will the proposal:	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make demands on local resources? (Question 1.1a – one or more categories with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have the potential to cause disruption to the local community? (Question 1.1b – one or more categories with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a negative effect on the life of the community? (Question 1.2a – one or more categories with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a negative effect on the local economy? (Question 1.2b – one or more categories with a score of –2) 	No

For how many categories in Table 4.1, have you circled “Yes”?

0 1 2 3 4

Table 4.2: Negative effects on health and well-being. Please read the questions in the central column, then circle “Yes” or “No” as appropriate.

	Will the proposal:	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a negative effect on the health & well-being of local communities? (Question 2.1 – one or more local communities with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a negative effect on the health & well-being of vulnerable groups in the community? (Question 2.2 – one or more vulnerable groups with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a negative effect on the health & well-being of non-resident groups who make a contribution to the local community? (Question 2.3 – one or more non-resident groups who contribute with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a direct negative effect on mental or physical health? (Question 3.1 – one or both categories with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a negative effect on health through the determinants of health? (Question 3.1 – two or more categories with a score of –2) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have significant negative effects on health? (Question 3.2 – one or more categories with a score of 3-5) 	No

For how many categories in Table 4.2, have you circled “Yes”?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Table 4.3: Demand on resources and involvement of stakeholder organisations. Please read the questions in the central column, then circle “Yes” or “No” as appropriate.

	Will the proposal:	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> require significant resources for implementation? (Question 1.3a – a score of 3-5 for one or more categories) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involve many other stakeholders? (Question 1.3b) 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be subject/has been subject to other impact assessments? (Question 1.3c – an answer of “Yes” to one or more entries) 	No

For how many categories in Table 4.3, have you circled “Yes”?

0 1 2 3

Collation of responses to Tables 4.1-4.3.
Please fill in the right-hand column.

Table	Number of questions to which the answer was “Yes”
4.1	
4.2	
4.3	

Table 4.4: Deciding Questions.

Please read the questions in the central column, then circle “Yes” or “No” as appropriate.

	Is the proposal:	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at an early stage of design and development, that is, if it is a strategy or policy is it at the consultation stage, and if it is a programme or project is it at an early stage of planning? 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addressing an issue of local concern? 	No
	Does the community:	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have the opportunity to influence decision-making about the proposal? 	No
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have the capacity and resources to take the CHIA process further (that is beyond using this tool)? 	No

For how many categories in Table 4.4, have you circled “Yes”?

0 1 2 3 4

4.5: Other Comments. *Please write any other comments below.*

Documentation Record
Proposal document used for screening:
Date of document:
Proposal screened by:
Date screening took place:

Decision – <i>please circle appropriate phrase:</i>
Take forward for HIA/Do not undertake further stages in HIA process