

Place and Wellbeing
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Place and Wellbeing Assessment: How To Guide

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About this report

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Place and Wellbeing Collaborative

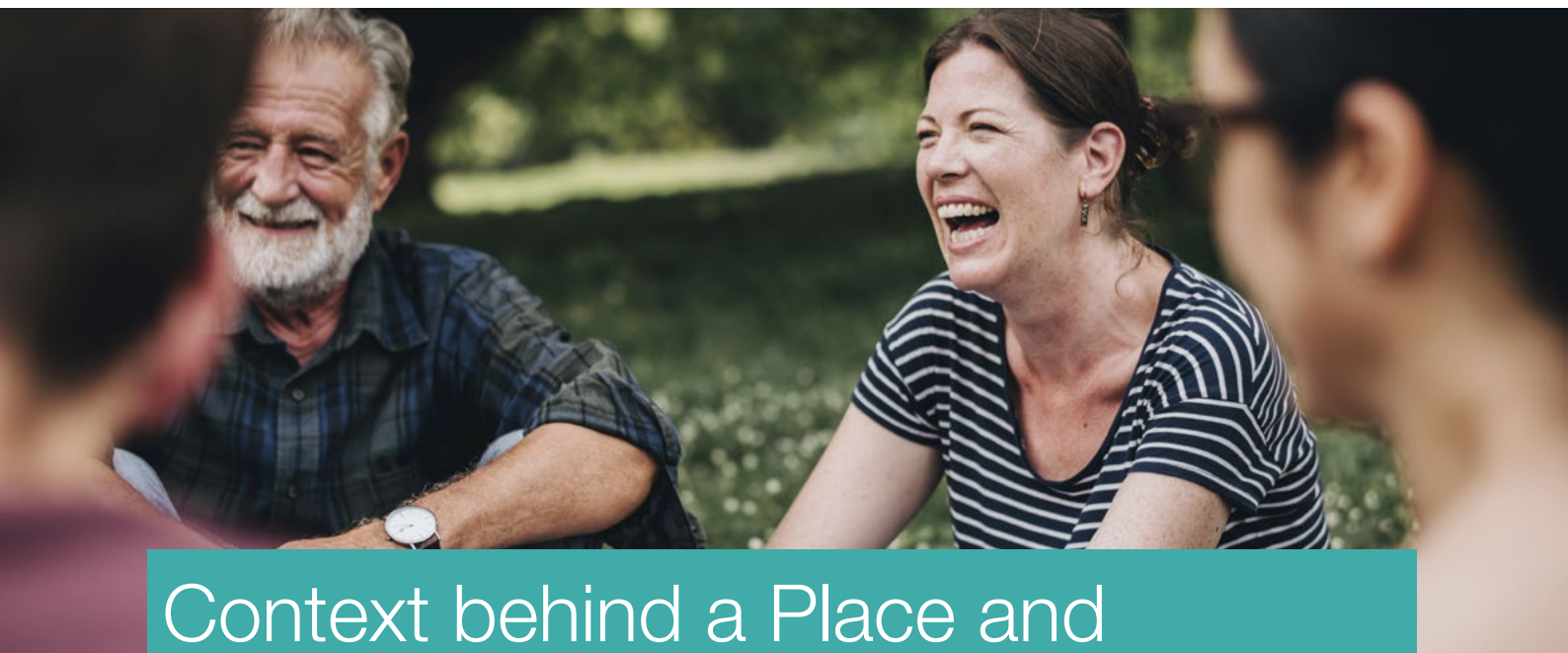
The [Place and Wellbeing Collaborative](#) involves organisations who are working to embed and support closer working around shared ambitions for place and wellbeing in national and local policy and priorities. It consists of representatives from Public Health Scotland, the Improvement Service, Directors of Public Health, COSLA, Heads of Planning Scotland and the Health Improvement Managers Network.

Improvement Service

The Improvement Service is the “go to” organisation for Local Government improvement in Scotland. Its purpose is to help councils and their partners to improve the health, quality of life and opportunities of all people. The Improvement Service’s Planning for Place Programme provides specific support to councils and their partners to collaborate in place-based approaches to planning, resourcing and delivery of places that enable all communities to flourish.

About this guide

This document sets out the context to consider when determining whether to undertake a Place and Wellbeing Assessment as well as being a practical guide to the process for completing one. The guide assumes that users already have some basic understanding of the impact of the places where we live, work and play on the wellbeing of people, planet and reducing inequalities. An understanding of the contribution of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes to improve places is also helpful and more information can be found on the [Improvement Service website](#). This document is guidance on a way to use the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes to enhance our consideration of place when making decisions that impact upon it.



Context behind a Place and Wellbeing Assessment

Why assess place and wellbeing?

Wellbeing is not only the absence of ill-health but is the state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. Many factors affect wellbeing, including the physical and social conditions in which people live, move around, access housing, employment, services and open spaces while feeling safe and included. All these factors contribute to the value and quality of a place. Plans, policies and proposals in any sector can impact on these features of a place and can thus impact wellbeing either positively or negatively. Considering these potential impacts on place and wellbeing can help to mitigate adverse impacts, enhance positive ones and realise co-benefits.

Ensuring that policy and decision making takes full account of the possible impacts on place should facilitate environments that enhance the co-benefits of wellbeing of people and planet and reduce socio-economic inequality.

Considering impact on place and wellbeing may be seen as a distraction in a plan or proposal intended to meet other outcomes. However, doing so helps decision makers to operationalise the [Christie Commission](#) recommendations, the social determinants of health and the [Place Principle](#).

What is a Place and Wellbeing Assessment?

A Place and Wellbeing Assessment brings together a group of stakeholders in a structured process to identify how a plan, policy or proposal will affect a place and its impact on the wellbeing of people and planet. The purpose of an Assessment is to inform decision making about a specific, defined plan or proposal. It should be carried out as early in the decision making process as possible and always before the proposal has been implemented.

A Place and Wellbeing Assessment should be an impartial assessment of positive and negative impacts of a plan or proposal. It should not be used as a means to support a position that decision makers have already decided. Although similar methods may be used, a Place and Wellbeing Assessment should not be confused with the evaluation of plans or policies that have already been implemented. Nor should it be confused with a [Place Standard Tool](#) exercise, which involves facilitating a conversation about a place itself and assessing interventions to improve it.

The range of Place and Wellbeing Assessments

A Place and Wellbeing Assessment may be completed for any plan, policy or proposal, from a high level policy at regional level to a more specific project or proposal at a local scale. This guide enables all to take a systematic approach to identify impacts and make recommendations for consideration to maximise benefits to the wellbeing of people and planet and minimise negative impacts.

All Place and Wellbeing Assessments are bespoke to the decision making process they are intended to inform. An Assessment of a high-level plan may focus on identifying the impact of the strategic outcomes and opportunities for impact in delivery plans that follow from that strategy. An Assessment of a specific project may identify more specific recommendations to consider to improve its impact on place and wellbeing. For example, it can augment proposals for funding applications, asset management decisions of anchor institutions and the location of key services and amenities.

Relationship with other impact assessments

Policy makers are required, by legislation, to complete a range of assessments – for example on equality, human rights, sustainability and the environment. Unlike many other assessments, a Place and Wellbeing Assessment is not a statutory requirement, however this is not indicative of the value of such an assessment. The emphasis in a Place and Wellbeing Assessment on impact on place can add value to other impact assessments which may not always consider Place and impact explicitly. This can include informing the growing use of integrated assessments to ensure Place is comprehensively considered and the range of impacts on wellbeing is identified. Where a detailed Health Impact Assessment is being considered, a Place and Wellbeing Assessment is a good approach to identify impacts for the scoping stage. If further evidence is needed following a Place and Wellbeing Assessment, it may be useful to follow the [guidance](#) on conducting a full Health Impact Assessment. If appropriate, a Place and Wellbeing Assessment can be completed in parallel with other assessments and the findings incorporated into the report.

How does it link to the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme?

The [Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme](#) launched the use of Place and Wellbeing Assessments as an integral part of its ambition to improve Scotland's wellbeing by reducing the significant inequality in the health and wellbeing of its people. A partnership between Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service, the programme objective is focused on the evidenced impact that the places where we live, work and relax have on our health and wellbeing. This impact can be positive or negative and this programme aims to ensure any unintended consequences are fully considered when we make decisions that impact a

place. With so many stakeholders involved in every place this can be a challenging ask. The programme uses Place and Wellbeing Assessments to address this challenge, by offering a starting process to support decision makers in raising awareness of their impact on place. In particular the programme includes awareness on those most being impacted by inequality.

Process for a Place and Wellbeing Assessment

The focal point of a Place and Wellbeing Assessment is the assessment session which pulls together expertise and perspectives from attendees to consider how a plan, policy or proposal is likely to impact on creating a place that promotes wellbeing. Attendees do this by considering the impact on the evidenced features for all our places that, if we get them right, facilitate the community living, working and relaxing there to optimise their health and wellbeing. These features are called the [Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#) and they provide a core structure for the assessment.

Both the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes and the [Place Standard Tool](#) have a common set of evidence research that shared their themes. The difference is that this process considers a plan, policy or proposal for impact on a place while the Place Standard Tool is used to consider the place itself.

In addition, the assessment also considers impact on different population groups, as there is no one “community” but rather multiple micro-communities. Within the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme this means conducting the assessment with a lens on who is experiencing the most significant impact from health and socio-economic inequality in that place. Where it is felt it will add value, attendees can also be asked to consider the impact on Scotland’s National Outcomes.

This is a collaborative process to support work rather than critiquing. It is designed to be a process to support, encourage and promote constructive discussion that can help facilitate identification of optimal impact. There are three stages to the process: before, during and after the assessment session, with each stage being compulsory for a successful assessment to be completed. This process might then repeat itself at another stage in the plan, policy or proposal’s development or with a different collection of people adding their perspective.

Management of a Place and Wellbeing Assessment

While governance arrangements may vary depending on circumstances it is important to have clarity at the beginning of the process. An Assessment may be completed in-house by the organisation developing the policy, as a partnership (for example between the proponent and the local public health department) or be externally commissioned.

In all cases it is crucial to know who the Assessment is going to be reported to. This may be the appropriate steering group responsible for the plan or proposal content or may also be some other forum. The process should always be informing those with the ability to pursue the recommendations that will flow from undertaking a Place and Wellbeing Assessment.

In all cases it is recommended that an Assessment Lead be identified to provide consistent implementation of the steps set out in this guide.



Process for a Place and Wellbeing Assessment

This process is split into three key stages:

1 Preparation 2 Session 3 Report

1 Preparation

Step 1: Decide whether to undertake a Place and Wellbeing Assessment

In some cases there may be a clear trigger for undertaking a Place and Wellbeing Assessment. In other cases the following opportunities need to be in place for an effective Assessment:

- Is the plan or proposal likely to impact place and thus the wellbeing of those impacted by it?
- Is there an opportunity to contribute a place perspective into the plan or proposal?
- Is an Assessment likely to provide useful information to support decision making?
- Are there resources to undertake an Assessment?

At times plan and proposal writers and decision makers can request a Place and Wellbeing Assessment to inform their decision. In other cases interested parties may chose to conduct one. In all cases it is essential to define the specific decision making process/ steering group that the findings and recommendations will be fed in to. If no such process is in place the value of undertaking an Assessment should be questioned.

Step 2: Define the purpose and aims of the Place and Wellbeing Assessment

It is important to define exactly **what** document or decision participants are being asked to consider and the geographical area over which to consider impacts. The length of said document should influence lead in times to allow participants time to review the document in advance of the assessment session.

The opportunity to support decision makers to consider the impact of a plan or proposal on a place is maximised by undertaking the assessment as early as possible in the decision making process. That said, it adds value at all stages from strategy ambitions and draft policy through to action plans and implementation. It is important to define at the outset which stage is under assessment and what document participants are being asked to consider.

It is important to have clarity on the decision makers and processes that a Place and Wellbeing Assessment will feed in to as per Step 1 above.

Step 3: Identify the stakeholders to take part in the assessment session

This is likely to include policy writers, any steering group overseeing the process or other relevant group of decision makers. Their participation during the assessment process will add important expertise to the process as they will have an understanding of the intended objectives. However, a collaborative approach will also consider including participants with other expertise including those from other services, sectors and those reflecting lived experience of different population groups.

It is important to define at the outset what expertise will add value and fresh perspective to the decision making process. The Assessment Lead should carefully manage those invited to attend to ensure a balanced conversation while keeping to numbers that facilitate a quality discussion. Keep it small (maximum of 16), aim for a mix of perspectives and only include those who bring the relevant expertise.

This is also the point to decide who will Chair the Assessment Session. It can be the Assessment Lead themselves, an experienced facilitator or someone chosen for their independence from the plan or proposal being assessed. The Assessment Lead should also identify 2 individuals to take notes during the session to ensure a robust capture of the conversation. These notes will be used to help complete the final report and to inform the subsequent recommendations.

Step 4: Support understanding of the key features of the plan or proposal

In order to identify impact and ensure recommendations for considerations are appropriate, it's important that those going to take part in the assessment session understand key features of the plan or proposal. A simple 'Place and Wellbeing Assessment Briefing Note' to accompany the full document or proposal can help by outlining the following:

- What is the assessment and why is it being carried out? This should include a summary of the purpose and aims of the Assessment (including an outline of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes that it will be considered against) as agreed in step 1.
- Who will be taking part?
- Context about the proposal, policy, plan or strategy
- Context about inequality in the geographic area being considered. This may be detail taken from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) on socio-economic inequalities, from the relevant Local Outcome Improvement Plan and/ or from a deeper dive into Intermediate Zone data on particular age and gender groups being impacted.

Step 5: Send out Place & Wellbeing Assessment meeting invite

Invites will normally need to be sent out at least a month in advance to secure time in diaries and should refer to the further information to come (step 6).

The **Assessment Lead** should set up the meeting. This allows them crucial oversight to implement Step 3 and, in an online session, ensures the session can easily be recorded (with permission of participants) to assist in capturing the conversation and support the final report writing.

Step 6: Issue Place and Wellbeing Assessment documentation to attendees (at least one week in advance of the meeting)

Send out the following documents highlighting that documents need to be read in advance of the session and should be read in the order they are listed:

- The Place and Wellbeing Assessment Briefing Note (referred to in step 4 above)
- The policy, plan or proposal being assessed (the email should also let the reader know how long this document is and if they need to read it all or only parts. This will allow the participant to set aside time to read it.)
- The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes Checklist (the email should advise having this open to make notes when reading the document being assessed)
- Agenda
- Attendees List (with their prior approval to meet General Data Protection Requirements)

For additional information, a link to the [Place and Wellbeing Outcomes Briefing Paper](#) can be provided.

2 Session

This stage forms the bulk of the Assessment process as it is where participants come together not simply to describe the impact on place but to inform recommendations to be considered by the policy or proposal proponent to enhance their impact on place. Sometimes simply identifying impacts and populations most affected is enough to inform recommendations. Sometimes participants or the Assessment Lead referring to the evidence and research that informed the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes on how a place impacts upon wellbeing can help broaden perspectives.

To assist those attending the session to contribute 3 steps are suggested:

Step 1: Welcome and Introductions

Welcome

The appointed Chair for the session welcomes everyone and reminds participants of the following:

- Why everyone has been brought together.
- What everyone is reviewing today outlining all the documentation received in advance and how each of these items will be used in the process. Highlight the content of the Checklist to be used to facilitate discussion and capture the conversation that will focus on impact upon the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, the list of different population groups (specifying if there is a local data profile on groups most impacted by inequality) and the National Outcomes.
- Advise who will be taking notes throughout the session and who will be collating all the information/ outputs from the session.
- Advise everyone if the session is being recorded and confirm consent.

Introductions

Allowing participants to provide brief introductions at the beginning of the session brings an important understanding of who is taking part. The Chair should ask participants to cover the following:

- Name, job title and what organisation they represent.
- A summary of how are they involved in the proposal, policy, plan or strategy that is being discussed at the Place and Wellbeing Assessment session and what perspective they are bringing to the session.

Step 2: Use the Checklist to Facilitate a Structured Discussion

The aim of the session is to inform decisions to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequality. Participants are asked to identify potential impacts of the plan, policy or proposal

on each item in the Checklist, discuss the opportunity to enhance the documents impact on each item and include recommendations for decision makers to consider in achieving the best overall impact on wellbeing.

Recommendations should relate directly to the identified impact on each Place and Wellbeing Outcome and population groups experiencing inequalities who may be impacted by the plan, policy or proposal. They should be developed based on the available research and evidence collected for each Place and Wellbeing Outcome. It can be helpful for the Assessment Lead to provide an indication of the type of evidence informing a Place and Wellbeing Outcome as it is introduced.

Recommendations may be broader than the plan, policy or proposal being assessed. For example, the assessment of a high level strategy may make recommendations about the delivery mechanism for that strategy. It should be made clear where each recommendation is directed and will support the plan, policy or proposal to maximise its benefit to wellbeing.

Participant input on both impact and recommendations should flow from one to the other as each Checklist item is considered. The conversation should be captured using the [Place and Wellbeing Assessment Checklist](#) by the note takers identified in the pre-assessment organisation. An audio recording of the session greatly assists the write up of the session discussion.

Step 3: Next Steps and Close

Chair provides a summary of the discussion that has taken place, explains that the discussion will be written up into a Place and Wellbeing Assessment Report and provides a timescale for completing this.

3 Report

Upon conclusion of the assessment session, the following steps should be undertaken to ensure completion of the Place and Wellbeing Assessment process in its entirety.

Step 1: Produce a report of the session

The Assessment Lead will write up a report of the session using the notes taken during the assessment session as well as any audio recording.

For each Place and Wellbeing Outcome, the report should provide a short description of the discussion. Within the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme, the Assessment Lead also includes a list of relevant research and evidence appropriate to that outcome at this point. The overall aim of a Place and Wellbeing Assessment is to inform decisions to improve impact on place and people, so it should include recommendations for decision makers to consider to achieve this aim. The recommendations should flow from the discussion and will therefore relate directly to the identified impact on each Place and Wellbeing Outcome and the Population Groups included in the Checklist. Crucially, the recommendations need to be clear on what change to the plan content, or its related action plan, should be considered.

To aid the reader reports should:

- Begin with a 'Summary of Findings' with key recommendations that came through during the session
- Be concise and specific – use short sentences and paragraphs rather than verbatim recording of the conversations.
- Follow a similar report template to that used in the [Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme](#).

Timescale: This will depend on the deadlines for those who will be informed by the report, but ideally an initial write up should take place within 3 or 4 days from the session while memories are fresh. To ensure a robust process, the draft report should then be passed to the two individuals who took notes to check clarity and accuracy. The Assessment Lead should decide if they wish to also share the draft report with session participants for an accuracy check.

Step 2: Share the assessment report

The report should be sent to

- Session participants.
- A group with the appropriate authority to consider the recommendations and implement them.
- Assessment Leads and/ or group with appropriate authority to consider recommendations and decide what actions they will take.

Step 3: Next steps

As stated in the introduction of this document, the purpose of an Assessment is to inform decision making about a specific, defined plan or proposal.

Step 1 of the pre-assessment phase advised that in all cases it is essential to define the specific decision making process/steering group that the findings and recommendations will be fed in to. Having fed the Assessment Report into that process or group, the Place and Wellbeing Assessment is complete.

The [Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme](#) provides support around the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the Assessment. For more information, and to follow a similar approach [visit our website](#).

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Place and Wellbeing Collaborative

