Scanning for Social Impacts

Assessing the social impacts of an intervention for the different groups of people involved helps us to identify unintended negative impacts on those people. For example:

a) The service may be set up in a way that makes it difficult for certain groups to access e.g. frequent paediatric appointments at a specialist centre far from a patient's home leading to frequent time off school for the child (that can negatively effect the child's educational progress) and time out of work for a parent/carer (that could impact on how much the parent can work);

OR

b) The care that we offer not having the benefits that we intended, either because our service does not meet their needs and/or because the service has negative impacts on parts of their life that outweigh any benefits of the intervention e.g. the impact of in-centre haemodialysis treatment on quality of life, including journeys to hospital and time spent in a healthcare setting, outweighs the benefits for many patients.

Once aware of the gaps we can work to prevent or mitigate the negative impacts e.g. home dialysis and conservative kidney care (no dialysis and active monitoring) are more beneficial for certain groups of patients and allow them more time and energy to participate in family and community life than if they were undergoing in-centre haemodialysis.

To scan for social impacts, follow the following process:

Step 1. Identify groups whose social circumstances may be affected by your service or service change. These may include staff, carers/families, local community members or even supply chain workers, in addition of course to the patients themselves. Thinking carefully about your service or project, make a note of the possible social impacts on different people in the relevant boxes of the **Social Impacts Table (downloaded separately)**. Use the social determinants of health listed on the table as well as any others you can think of to guide your thoughts. For example, how is patient access to employment impacted by a service, which might for example involve multiple visits to the hospital and therefore time off work? Highlight the boxes/impacts that seem as if they may be most significant.

Step 2. Where possible, find out which impacts are most important to the groups concerned. You may suspect for example that carers taking time off work to bring their relative to hospital will be an important impact. If possible, check this assumption with them – perhaps using a quick survey or focus group. Their concerns may be different altogether.

Table 1: Scanning for social impacts

What are the positive or negative social impacts on each of these groups?

Think about the social determinants of health:

EDUCATION, WELLBEING, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SATISFACTION & QUALITY OF LIFE, ACCESS TO SERVICES, INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY NETWORKS, HOUSING

Population groups	Impacts (positive or negative)	How will it be measured?
Patients		
Staff		
Wider Community (e.g supply chain)		
Vulnerable groups (staff and patients can fall into this group) -Unemployed, or those receiving benefits -Carers (including single parents) -Disable people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems) -Ethnic minorities -Homeless, or those without fixed or permanent accommodation (refugees asylum seekers)		