Covid-19, Just Transition and Health Inequalities

Dr Margaret Douglas

MPH Programme Co-Director, University of Edinburgh

Honorary Public Health Consultant, Public Health Scotland

Chair, Scottish Health and Inequalities Impact Assessment Network

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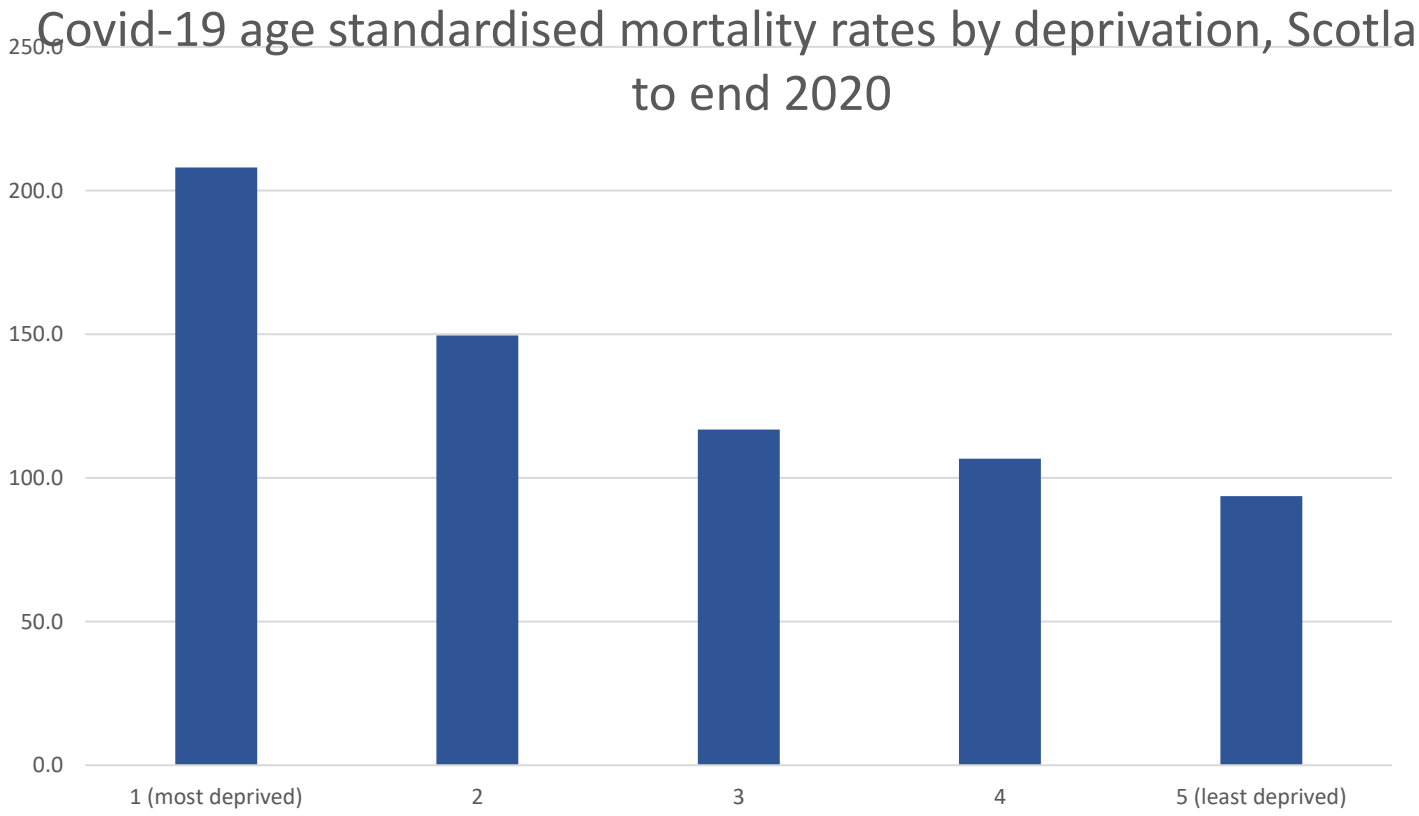
Outline

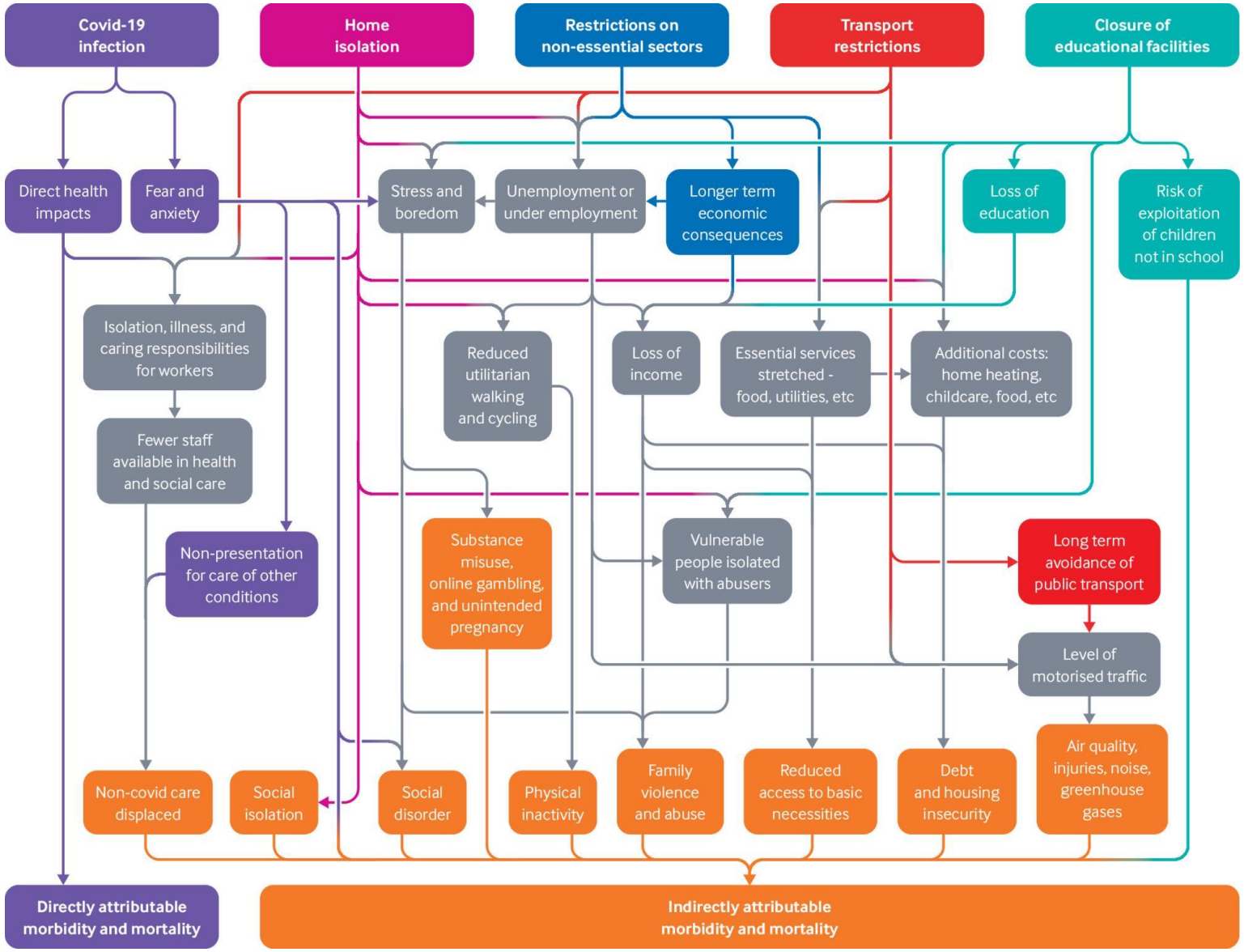
- Brief review of Covid-19 pandemic impacts on health and health inequalities
- Sustainability and health
- Just transition recommendations and health

Inequalities in Covid19 mortality



- Frontline employment
- Overcrowded housing
- Communication barriers
- Pre-existing morbidity
- Poverty

Source: National Records of Scotland. https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats



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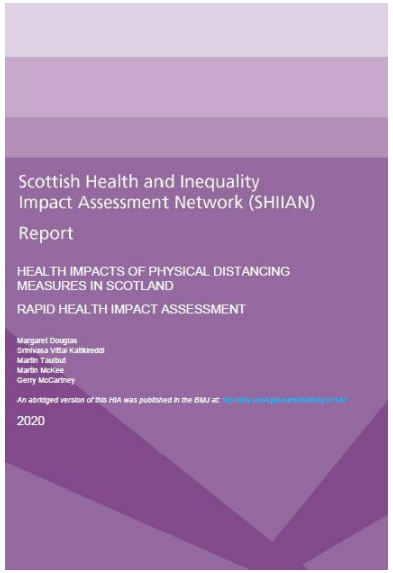
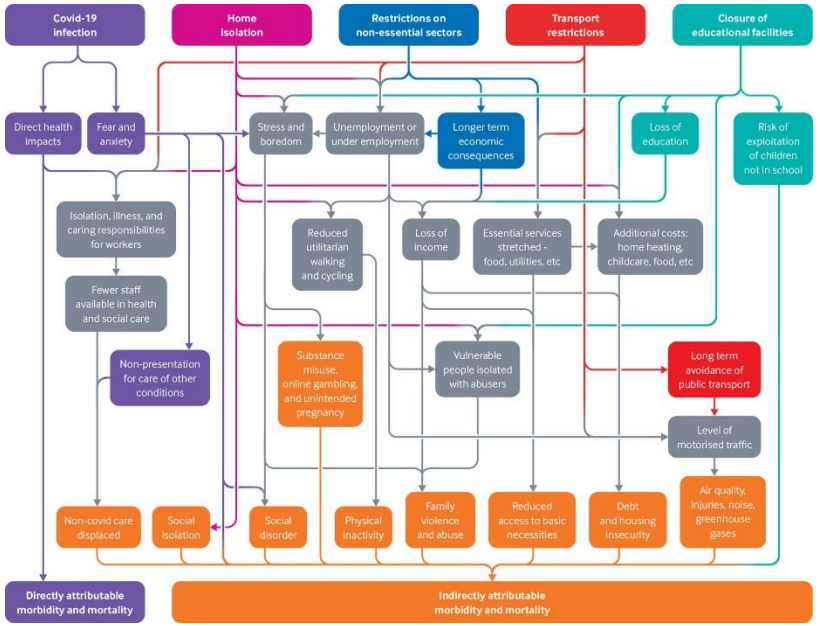


https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HIA_social_distancing-LONG-VERSION-final.pdf

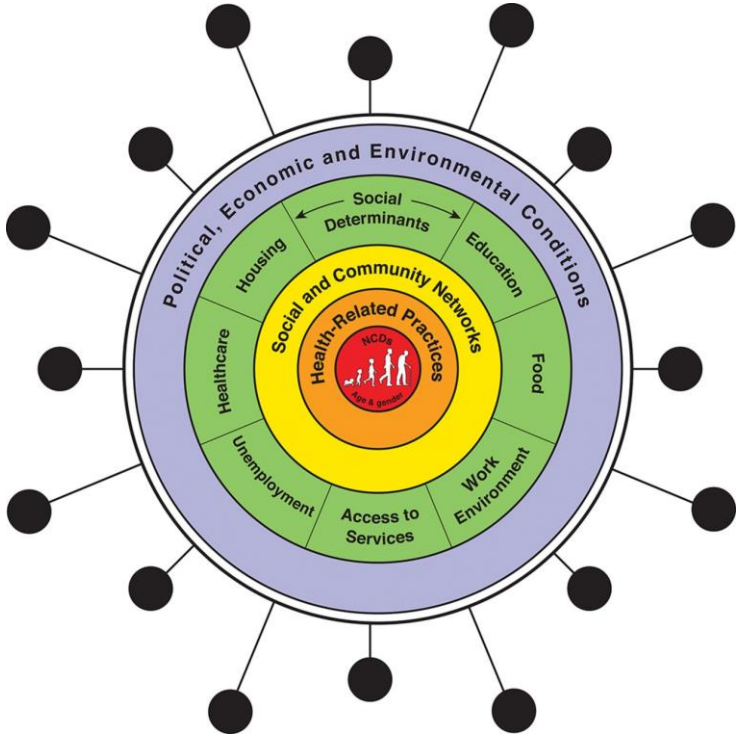
Margaret Douglas, Vittal Katikireddi, Martin Taulbut, Martin McKee, Gerry McCartney
BMJ 2020;369:bmj.m1557 http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmj.m1557

Pathways

- Economic impacts
  - Workplace closures, loss of work, workers isolating/childcare, business closures
- Mental health impacts
  - Social isolation, fear, anxiety
- Family impacts
  - Family violence, loss of education
- Health related behaviours
- Disruption to services
  - Healthcare, other essential services
- Transport and greenspace
- Communities
  - Social disorder, community responses



The syndemic of COVID-19, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the social determinants of health



***Syndemic**:*

'closely intertwined and mutually enhancing health problems that significantly affect the overall health status of a population within the context of a perpetuating configuration of noxious social conditions'

Clare Bambra et al.(adapted from Singer and Dahlgren and Whitehead)
J Epidemiol Community Health doi:10.1136/jech-2020-214401

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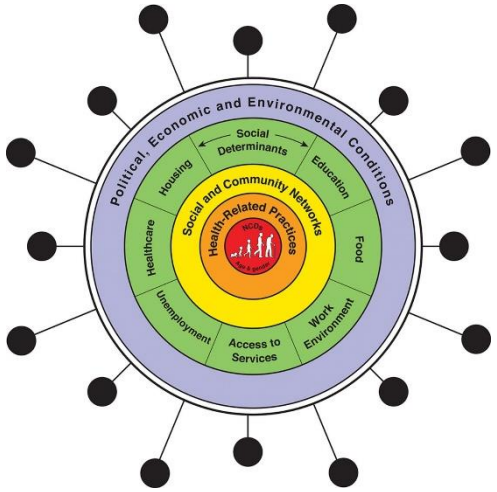
JECH

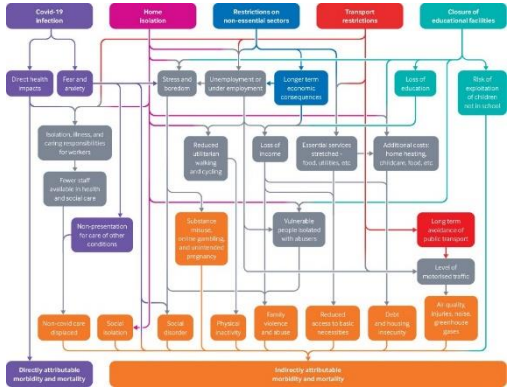
Health Impacts of Climate Change

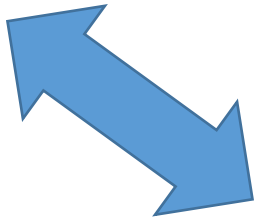
- Flooding
- Storms
- Heat Stress

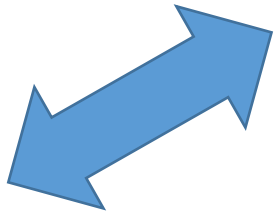
- Food and water insecurity
- Displacement and migration – trauma, new health and service needs
- Social disruption, violence
- Impacts of policy responses

- Vectors, food and waterborne disease
- Allergens
- Air quality


Political, Economic and Environmental Conditions
Social Determinants
Housing
Education
Social and Community Networks
Health-Related Practices
Healthcare
Food
Unemployment
Work Environment
Access to Services

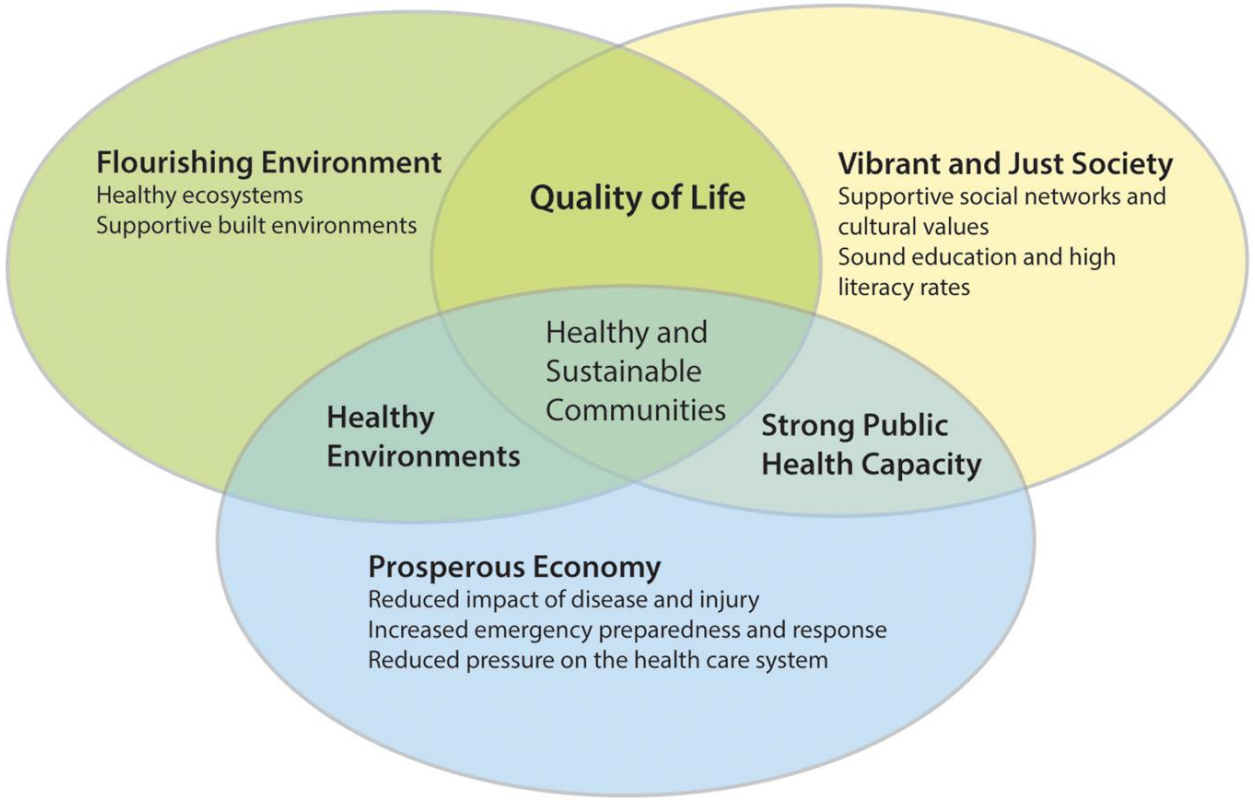

Covid-19 infection
Home isolation
Restrictions on non-essential sectors
Transport restrictions
Closure of educational facilities
Direct health impacts
Fear and anxiety
Stress and boredom
Unemployment or under employment
Longer term economic consequences
Loss of education
Risk of exploitation of children not in school
Isolation, illness, and caring responsibilities for workers
Reduced utilitarian walking or cycling
Loss of income
Essential services stretched - food, utilities, etc
Additional costs: home heating, childcare, food, etc
Fewer staff available in health and social care
Non-presentation for care of other conditions
Substance misuse, online gambling, and unintended pregnancy
Vulnerable people isolated with abusers
Long term avoidance of public transport
Level of motorised traffic
Non-covid care displaced
Social isolation
Social disorder
Physical inactivity
Family violence and abuse
Reduced access to basic necessities
Debt and housing insecurity
Air quality, injuries, noise, greenhouse gases
Directly attributable morbidity and mortality
Indirectly attributable morbidity and mortality





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The model of the ‘Relationship – Public Health and Sustainable Development’ (Kickbusch 2010).



Health Promot Int, Volume 29, Issue 3, September 2014, Pages 558–568, https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/das071

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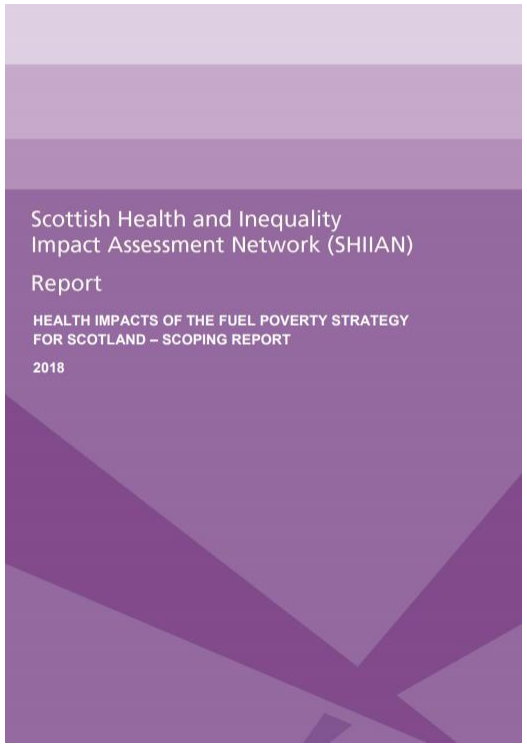
Just Transition recommendations and health

Investment in warmer homes

- Strong evidence of links between warm, energy efficient housing and health
  - Fuel poverty and income
  - Nutrition and food preparation
  - Physical activity
  - Educational attainment
  - Social support
- Impact on house prices and rents
- Employment opportunities
- Inequalities – vulnerability to cold, urban/rural differences, low income, children



https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2018_11_27-HIA-of-the-Fuel-Poverty-Strategy-for-Scotland-1.pdf

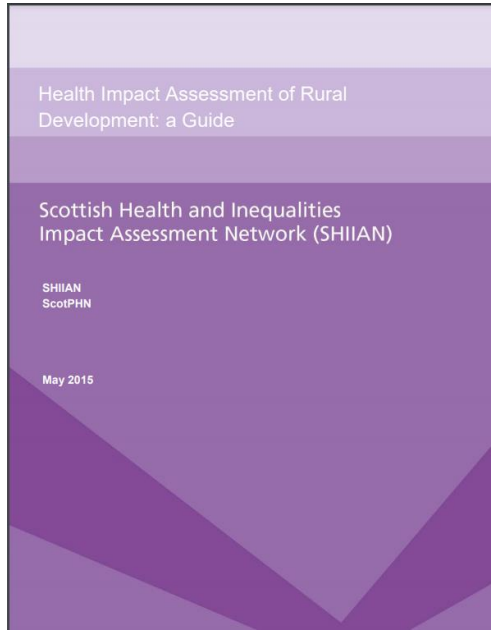
Buses and transport electrification

- Strong links between transport and health – multiple adverse impacts from private car traffic:
  - Air quality
  - Physical inactivity
  - Severance and social connections
  - Injuries
  - Use of public space
- Low confidence in public transport during pandemic
- Inequalities – populations without private car access, rural areas, wider community effects of traffic
- Issues – cost of fares, accessibility, other shared transport, cost and impacts of electric cars

https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/2850/transport-use-health-and-health-inequalities-oct2020-english.pdf

Jobs and skills development, rural development

- Negative impact of unemployment and health
- Issues from rural development:
  - Population movement
  - Community psychosocial impacts
  - Infrastructure demands – traffic, housing, water, services
- Inequalities – younger and older people at higher risk of unemployment and impacts of unemployment
- Who is left behind?

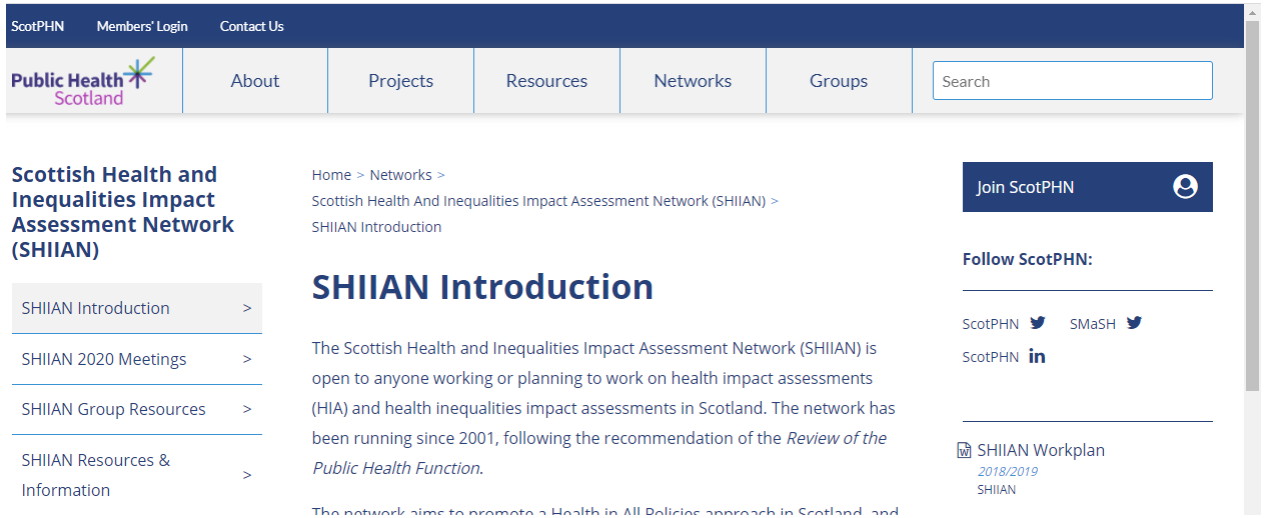


https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2015_05_28_SHIIAN_Final_Report.pdf

Conclusions

- Covid-19 pandemic has had negative impacts on health inequalities
- Strong links between sustainability, health and health inequalities
- Important to consider wider impacts on health and health inequalities when implementing Just Transition recommendations

Thank you



Margaret.Douglas@ed.ac.uk

https://www.scotphn.net/networks/scottish-health-and-inequalities-impact-assessment-network-shiian/introduction/