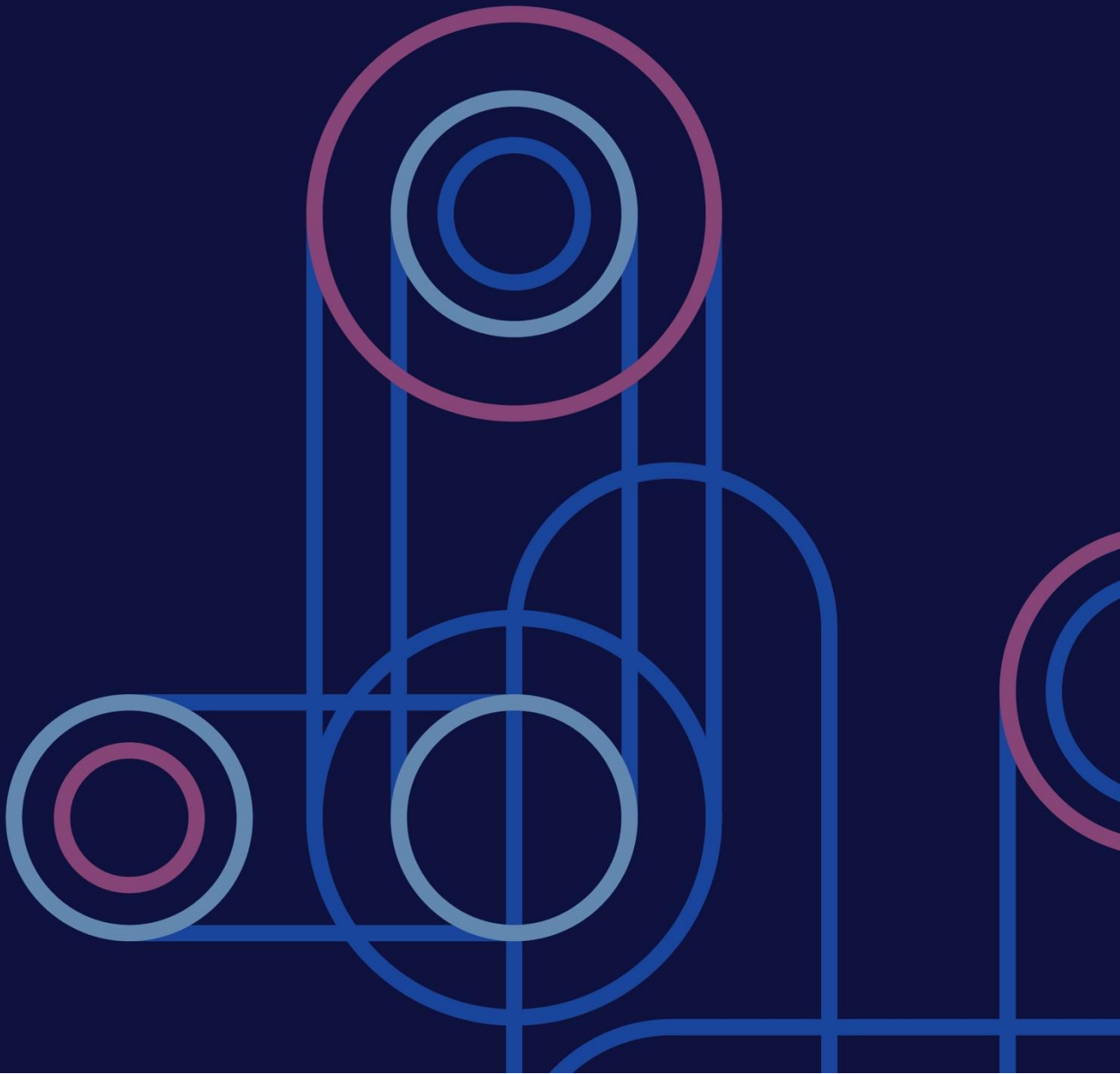


CASE STUDY

*Providing health impact evidence for national
government appraisals and decision-making in the
United Kingdom*

2025



Basic information	
WHO Region	EURO
City or Country	United Kingdom
Timeline	2021 – ongoing
Type of intervention	Policy; analysis
Primary level of implementation	National
Primary sectors involved	Urban planning; housing; health; finance; transport; environment
Primary health outcomes or challenges	Health inequalities; NCDs; mental health; well-being; urban development

Case description

In the United Kingdom, urban development policies and investment decisions have often overlooked health outcomes, with limited cross-sector coordination or inclusion of health objectives in national appraisal systems. Recognizing this gap, researchers from the Tackling Root Causes Upstream of Unhealthy Development (TRUUD) consortium initiated a collaboration with the national government to embed systematic consideration of health impacts into urban policy and funding processes. Their central innovation – the Health Appraisal for Urban Systems (HAUS) model – provides a quantitative, economic valuation framework to help policymakers assess the health costs and benefits of development options and direct investments toward healthier urban environments.

The HAUS model synthesizes evidence from over 200 causal pathways linking the urban environment with more than 70 measurable health outcomes, assigning unit costs to each outcome to estimate both impacts and economic value. Its design allows policy analysts to compare scenarios rapidly, producing standardized, monetized health estimates for use in formal government appraisal and decision-making. A version of HAUS for the UK central government’s use was developed jointly by researchers at the Universities of Bath and Bristol through TRUUD, with co-development from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The goal was to strengthen upstream prevention by ensuring that urban health evidence informs business cases, MHCLG appraisals, and local funding allocations.



Exploring implementation of HAUS in government guidance - break out group at TRUUD conference. United Kingdom: 2024. © TRUUD.

In 2023, the TRUUD team presented HAUS at a cross-government seminar attended by MHCLG, HM Treasury, and the Department of Health and Social Care – an engagement that led to a formal workplan with MHCLG’s Analysis and Data Directorate and the establishment of an interdepartmental group to support the integration of HAUS into national appraisal systems. The group includes representatives from the finance, transport, housing, and environment ministries, signaling a significant institutional commitment to join up evidence and investment for health. Following formal adoption of HAUS by MHCLG in 2025, TRUUD’s researchers are continuing to evaluate how HAUS is being used in government processes, tracking its uptake in departmental guidance and local authority applications.

Parallel efforts focus on expanding capacity for economic valuation and systems thinking at subnational levels. Two conferences co-organised with MHCLG in 2024 and 2025 convened more than 150 stakeholders from central and local government, the private sector, and academia to explore the broader use of HAUS in urban development appraisal. The events demonstrated widespread interest among combined and local authorities and the private and community sectors in applying the model to understand the health implications of planning decisions, despite variations in local technical

capacity. Cross-sector working groups were established to address these disparities and ensure the tool is refined to meet diverse user needs.

HAUS's potential impacts are substantial. Modelling in related TRUUD applications suggests that integrated regeneration approaches could generate tens of millions of pounds in long-term health benefits, while national adoption could improve transparency and equity in public investment. Embedding HAUS within appraisal systems ensures that urban health benefits are valued alongside traditional economic indicators, allowing ministries and city authorities to allocate budgets more efficiently across sectors. This approach aims not only to improve population health but also to enhance fiscal prudence, resilience, and interdepartmental coordination within government.

Strategic Highlight

The United Kingdom's experience with the Health Appraisal for Urban Systems (HAUS) model demonstrates how integrating economic valuation into policy appraisal can transform the way governments plan and fund urban health. The collaboration between TRUUD researchers and MHCLG shows that public budgets can be reoriented toward prevention without requiring new health-specific spending. By quantifying health outcomes in monetary terms, HAUS enables decision-makers to identify where existing infrastructure, housing, and planning investments can deliver the greatest health and equity returns.

This approach embraces fundamental elements of strategic action. It is complexity-informed, mapping hundreds of interlinked determinants of health across urban systems. It is efficient, embedding health valuation in standard appraisal tools used across policy sectors, and adaptable for use at national or local levels. It is equity-oriented, revealing how development decisions differentially affect vulnerable populations. Together, these features make clear that investing in healthy urban environments yields long-term savings and productivity gains across government portfolios.

The HAUS case also highlights how framing health in economic terms can shift institutional incentives. Rather than relying on health departments to advocate for preventive investment, it embeds health within the value systems of finance, housing, and infrastructure ministries. Early evidence suggests that this reframing increases cross-departmental collaboration, with Treasury and line ministries beginning to incorporate health impacts into mainstream project appraisals. This represents a significant cultural and methodological step toward aligning public spending with population health outcomes.

As governments seek to ensure that limited budgets meet growing health needs, economic valuation tools like HAUS provide a practical entry point. They show that improving health through the urban environment is not a cost, but a measurable return on investment – one that can be calculated, justified, and embedded within fiscal decision-making.

Further Information

- [The HAUS \(Health Appraisal of Urban Systems\) Model](#)
- [Valuing the 'external' social costs of unhealthy urban development](#)
- [Developing and testing an environmental economics approach to the valuation and application of urban health externalities](#)
- [Using health evidence to influence healthier urban development: a qualitative evaluation of a researcher-practitioner collaboration](#)
- [Promoting health in government development funding and strategic decisions](#)
- [Taking a systems approach for creating healthy urban places to Westminster](#)
- [TRUUD: National government](#)