

Exploring the Social Health and Well-Being Factors of Hydraulic Fracturing

Authors : S. Grinnell

Abstract : A PhD Research Project exploring the Social Health and Well-Being Impacts associated with Hydraulic Fracturing, with an aim to produce a Best Practice Support Guidance for those anticipating dealing with planning applications or submitting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). Amid a possible global energy crisis, founded upon a number of factors, including unstable political situations, increasing world population growth, people living longer, it is perhaps inevitable that Hydraulic Fracturing (commonly referred to as 'fracking') will become a major player within the global long-term energy and sustainability agenda. As there is currently no best practice guidance for governing bodies the Best Practice Support Document will be targeted at a number of audiences including, consultants undertaking EIAs, Planning Officers, those commissioning EIAs Industry and interested public stakeholders. It will offer a robust, evidence-based criteria and recommendations which provide a clear narrative and consistent and shared approach to the language used along with containing an understanding of the issues identified. It is proposed that the Best Practice Support Document will also support the mitigation of health impacts identified. The Best Practice Support Document will support the newly amended Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU), to be transposed into UK law by 2017. A significant amendment introduced focuses on, 'higher level of protection to the environment and health.' Methodology: A qualitative research methods approach is being taken with this research. It will have a number of key stages. A literature review has been undertaken and been critically reviewed and analysed. This was followed by a descriptive content analysis of a selection of international and national policies, programmes and strategies along with published Environmental Impact Assessments and associated planning guidance. In terms of data collection, a number of stakeholders were interviewed as well as a number of focus groups of local community groups potentially affected by fracking. These were determined from across the UK. A theme analysis of all the data collected and the literature review will be undertaken, using NVivo. Best Practice Supporting Document will be developed based on the outcomes of the analysis and be tested and piloted in the professional fields, before a live launch. Concluding statement: Whilst fracking is not a new concept, the technology is now driving a new force behind the use of this engineering to supply fuels. A number of countries have pledged moratoria on fracking until further investigation from the impacts on health have been explored, whilst other countries including Poland and the UK are pushing to support the use of fracking. If this should be the case, it will be important that the public's concerns, perceptions, fears and objections regarding the wider social health and well-being impacts are considered along with the more traditional biomedical health impacts.

Keywords : fracking, hydraulic fracturing, socio-economic health, well-being

Conference Title : ICECCHH 2016 : International Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Human Health

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 12-13, 2016