

Equality and health inequality assessment template for methods and process changes

1. Name of the policy, project, or programme

Integrated topic prioritisation process

2. Directorate or team

Clinical Directorate (process covers all guidance teams)

3. Details of the person responsible for the EHIA (EHIA Owner)

Kay Nolan, Associate Director, Centre for Guidelines

Toni Tan, Senior Technical Adviser, Centre for Guidelines

4. Aims, purpose and outcomes

What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes?

The aim of the initiative is to develop an approach to consistent topic prioritisation across NICE. The approach will determine whether NICE develops guidance on specific topics to ensure guidance production is in priority areas.

How does this fit in with the objectives of NICE?

This work supports the strategic objective to ensure relevancy by focusing guidance activity on what matters most to the health and care system – it explicitly considers the impact on the system in the decision-making framework.

How does it relate to other NICE policies or activity?

This approach will replace the existing Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (CHTE) and Centre for Guidelines (CfG) topic selection processes.

Who will benefit from it?

Users of our guidance will benefit from a unified transparent approach to topic selection and prioritisation across NICE. This will mean there is consistency in the approach to prioritisation of guidance activity, a clear unified front door for potential topics to enter NICE, a clear clarification process and publication of decisions – to that end our stakeholders can hold us to account on our selection of topics against NICE's strategic aims.

What are the main activities involved in implementation?

Implementation steps will include moving from a shadow prioritisation board to a live prioritisation board which will give NICE a single approach to topic prioritisation and decision-making. This will include embedding operational processes across many teams at NICE (guidance producing and cross-cutting) to support the effective implementation of the new approach to prioritisation.

5. Engagement and involvement

This EHIA has been developed by the team developing the proposed approach for prioritisation and the shadow prioritisation board. It will be consulted on as part of the consultation on the topic prioritisation for NICE.

6. Other evidence and information considered

A consultation on the approach will be undertaken with all stakeholders to seek their views on the proposals. As part of this consultation process, we will seek views on whether any of the proposals raise equalities or health inequality issues.

7. Impact and mitigation

Impact and mitigation for protected characteristics or wider determinants of health

| Protected characteristic or wider determinant of health | Impact | Mitigation |
|---|---|--|
| Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age groups covered by NICE guidance products vary, often dependent on the epidemiology of the condition, marketing authorisation and sometimes available evidence on which to base guidance. Some populations may be indirectly disadvantaged because they are not covered within NICE guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes from prioritisation board will be published, and a clarification process embedded so that stakeholders can highlight where NICE may not have fully considered the age equality dimensions of any particular topic. Prioritisation board decisions and records of equality considerations will be recorded and audited to ensure consistency and to identify any unconscious biases of the Board. Prioritisation board equality considerations will be available for guidance developers to draw upon to embed consideration of equalities when work commences. A negative prioritisation board decision for a topic can inform the development of research recommendations that may address inequality dimensions of the topic or evidence base. |
| Disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabled people are likely to be the largest group affected by prioritisation of topics for NICE guidance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes from prioritisation board will be published, and a clarification process |

| Protected characteristic or wider determinant of health | Impact | Mitigation |
|---|---|--|
| | <p>Under the Equality Act 2010, disabilities include progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, or HIV. The aim of the prioritisation approach is to ensure that NICE focuses on what is important to the Health and Care system and as such this should support the prioritisation of topics that explore clinically effective approaches across the health and care system.</p> | <p>embedded so that stakeholders can highlight where NICE may not have fully considered the disability equality dimensions of any particular topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation board decisions and records of equality considerations will be recorded and audited to ensure consistency and to identify any unconscious biases of the Board. • Prioritisation board equality considerations will be available for guidance developers to draw upon to embed consideration of equalities when work commences. |
| Race or ethnicity | None identified | N/A |
| Gender reassignment | None identified | N/A |
| Marriage and civil partnership | None identified | N/A |
| Pregnancy and maternity | None identified | N/A |
| Religion and belief | None identified | N/A |
| Sex | None identified | N/A |
| Sexual orientation | None identified | N/A |
| Socioeconomic status | See comments across all equality strands | See comments across all equality strands |
| Inclusion health and vulnerable groups | See comments across all equality strands | See comments across all equality strands |
| Comments across all equality strands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential for NICE guidance on a particular topic to impact on health inequalities is an explicit criterion in the proposed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICE guidance development processes themselves give explicit consideration to equality and health |

| Protected characteristic or wider determinant of health | Impact | Mitigation |
|---|--|---|
| | <p>prioritisation framework. As such it is expected that all topics that the prioritisation board discuss will have an assessment of the potential for NICE guidance to introduce, reduce or increase health inequalities.</p> | <p>inequality and as such early identification of potential issues (positive or negative) at prioritisation/topic selection should enhance opportunities for addressing these if appropriate during development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation board equality considerations will be available for guidance developers to draw upon to embed consideration of equalities when work commences. • Prioritisation board decisions and records of equality considerations will be recorded and audited to ensure consistency and to identify any unconscious biases of the Board. |

8. EHIA sign off

EHIA Owner: Kay Nolan, Associate Director, Centre for Guidelines

Date: March 2024