

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE  
EXCELLENCE**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**NICE guidelines**

**Indoor air quality at home**

The impact on equality has been assessed during guidance development according to the principles of the NICE equality policy.

**1.0 Scope: before consultation**

1.1 Have any potential equality issues been identified during the development of the draft scope, before consultation, and, if so, what are they?

(Please specify if the issue has been highlighted by a stakeholder)

The scope considers the 'whole population' and does not restrict by any of the protected characteristics - air pollution has an impact across the lifetime from conception through to death. Air pollution affects all population groups although some may be more vulnerable than others.

**Socioeconomic status**

Evidence suggests there may be a link between socioeconomic status and air pollution. There may be more pollutants in housing occupied by those from lower socioeconomic groups for example, an increased risk of damp, housing located in areas at increased exposure of externally generated pollutants from traffic or industrial process that make their way into the home.

Those from the most deprived backgrounds generally experience a poorer environmental quality – the 2006 report by Defra, NETCEN national statistics and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) flagged the inequalities in the distribution of pollutant concentrations (NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub>).

**Age, sex, disabilities and other (people with pre-existing conditions)**

Ventilation is a key factor when considering indoor air quality, but there needs to be a balance between draught proofing homes to keep in warmth and the need for

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ventilation to prevent the build-up of radon, environmental tobacco smoke and other potentially harmful pollutants in the home. This may have implications for those at risk of preventable excess winter deaths and experiencing 'fuel poverty and fuel debt'. The NICE guideline on [Excess winter deaths \[NG6\]](#) describes those at risk from preventable excess winter deaths as including people with cardiovascular conditions, respiratory conditions, mental health conditions, disabilities and older people. It also includes those with young children, pregnant women and those on a low income.

The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP) has flagged that children and older people are susceptible to certain conditions, for example asthma, which are exacerbated by poor air quality. There are a higher proportion of children in the most deprived areas in England which has a greater concentration of observed NO<sub>2</sub> and PM10.

1.2 What is the preliminary view on the extent to which these potential equality issues need addressing by the Committee? For example, if population groups, treatments or settings are excluded from the scope, are these exclusions justified – that is, are the reasons legitimate and the exclusion proportionate?

As the scope is inclusive of the whole population, there are no potential equality issues that need addressing by the Committee at present. The identification of particular groups that are at increased risk of the health impact of indoor pollution (as identified in the EIA and any review questions on this topic) is something that the Committee should consider in the process of guideline development.

Completed by Developer: James Jagroo and Chris Carmona

Date: 23/11/2016

Approved by NICE quality assurance lead: Stephanie Fernley

Date: 01/02/2016

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### 2.0 Scope: after consultation (To be completed by the developer and submitted with the final scope)

2.1 Have any potential equality issues been identified during consultation, and, if so, what are they?

Stakeholders noted the following potential equality issues:

- Urban/rural inequalities. A stakeholder noted that this may need to be considered particularly if migration of outdoor air pollution indoors is to be investigated. As outdoor air pollution or ingress of outdoor air pollutants is outside the scope of this guideline, this was not considered to be an equity issue for this guideline and is not listed in section 2 of the scope.
- Unborn children. This group is covered by the equalities legislation that covers pregnant women and has not been added to the list in section 2 of the scope. We will note 'unborn children' in the review protocols as a group to consider if any evidence is available.
- Disadvantaged groups. Stakeholders noted that people on low income or disadvantaged are at increased risk of high levels of indoor air pollution.

One stakeholder noted that dehumidifiers cause financial burden to those on low income. This will be taken into consideration by the committee.

2.2 Have any changes to the scope been made as a result of consultation to highlight potential equality issues?

Low income groups has been amended to disadvantaged groups in section 2 of the scope.

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2.3 Is the primary focus of the guideline a population with a specific disability-related communication need? No

If so, which alternative version is recommended? All versions

The alternative versions available are:

- large font or audio versions for a population with sight loss;
- British Sign Language videos for a population who are deaf from birth;
- 'Easy read' versions for people with learning disabilities or cognitive impairment.

No

Updated by Developer: Sarah Willett

Date: 29/06/17

Approved by NICE quality assurance lead:

Date: xx/xx/20xx

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### 3.0 Guideline development: before consultation (to be completed by the Developer before consultation on the draft guideline)

3.1 Have the potential equality issues identified during the scoping process been addressed by the Committee, and, if so, how?

Yes, evidence review 1 looks at individual and building characteristics that are associated with elevated levels of exposure evidence and evidence review 2 looks at the association between signs and symptoms and exposure levels.

These reviews identified groups that were vulnerable either because of where they live or because of personal circumstances for example if they have a pre-existing condition or if they are pregnant or if they are elderly or very young.

The committee discussed the likely impact on health of poor indoor air quality and noted that this is likely to be greater in vulnerable groups as they are likely to be exposed to higher levels of pollutants. The committee noted the health economic modelling that supports the concept that interventions to improve indoor air quality are likely to have a greater impact in these groups and so recommendations to focus on these groups were justified.

- Urban/rural inequalities. The committee noted that in some circumstances people may not want to open their window to increase ventilation, for example if they live in a heavily-polluted area or an unsafe area.
- Unborn children. Evidence review 2 identified an association between pollutants from some household products during pregnancy and health symptoms in the first year of life. Recommendations were drafted so that advice could be given to pregnant women.
- Disadvantaged groups. The committee discussed that those living in privately rented accommodation were at increased risk as they were more likely to live in a 'non-decent' home with for example damp or mould than those in social housing. This is exacerbated by the fact that they may rely on the landlord to carry out remedial work and are only able to request a housing assessment if the landlord does not carry out the repairs. This means that they may be exposed for longer periods and will have worse health outcomes as a result. Recommendations for local authority staff or health and social care practitioners to be trained to recognise signs of poor air quality, how to access the housing assessment referral pathway and embedding this into existing strategies were justified. The committee also made recommendations to emphasise local authorities should use existing powers to enforce building regulations and standards.

As the context of the exposure is critical in deciding how to avoid or mitigate it, the

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3.1 Have the potential equality issues identified during the scoping process been addressed by the Committee, and, if so, how?

committee did not make any recommendations on specific intervention and instead made more general advice recommendations that are targeted at the population at large as well as professionals in planning, developing/building, managing or letting dwellings,

3.2 Have any **other** potential equality issues (in addition to those identified during the scoping process) been identified, and, if so, how has the Committee addressed them?

- None

3.3 Have the Committee's considerations of equality issues been described in the guideline for consultation, and, if so, where?

The committee discussion and rationale and impact sections detail discussions that the committee had about equality issues.

3.4 Do the preliminary recommendations make it more difficult in practice for a specific group to access services compared with other groups? If so, what are the barriers to, or difficulties with, access for the specific group?

No. The preliminary recommendations include a statement that ensures improving indoor air is addressed and embedded in existing strategies to improve the population's health (for example, a strategy on housing, health and wellbeing, inequalities, or general air quality).

The committee also drafted recommendations for local authority staff and health or social care professionals who visit people in their homes to be aware of the signs of poor air quality.

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3.5 Is there potential for the preliminary recommendations to have an adverse impact on people with disabilities because of something that is a consequence of the disability?

No. People with disabilities were part of the populations targeted in the scope. Though there was no evidence on the impact of poor indoor air quality on people with disabilities, but the committee agreed that the evidence from those with pre-existing condition or from those who spend longer than average time at home could be extrapolated to people with disabilities and so included this group in the recommendation on vulnerable groups

3.6 Are there any recommendations or explanations that the Committee could make to remove or alleviate barriers to, or difficulties with, access to services identified in questions 3.1, 3.2 or 3.3, or otherwise fulfil NICE's obligation to advance equality?

Yes, the committee drafted recommendations that ensure local authorities are aware that affordability may be a barrier to effective and efficient heating and ventilation and that people should be made aware of home improvement agencies that can provide support.

The committee also noted that advice on activities to reduce poor indoor air quality should not stigmatise people.

Completed by Developer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by NICE quality assurance lead \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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### 4.0 Final guideline (to be completed by the Developer before GE consideration of final guideline)

4.1 Have any additional potential equality issues been raised during the consultation, and, if so, how has the Committee addressed them?

4.2 If the recommendations have changed after consultation, are there any recommendations that make it more difficult in practice for a specific group to access services compared with other groups? If so, what are the barriers to, or difficulties with, access for the specific group?

4.3 If the recommendations have changed after consultation, is there potential for the recommendations to have an adverse impact on people with disabilities because of something that is a consequence of the disability?

4.4 If the recommendations have changed after consultation, are there any recommendations or explanations that the Committee could make to remove or alleviate barriers to, or difficulties with, access to services identified in questions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, or otherwise fulfil NICE's obligations to advance equality?



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4.5 Have the Committee's considerations of equality issues been described in the final guideline, and, if so, where?

Updated by Developer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by NICE quality assurance lead \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**5.0 After Guidance Executive amendments – if applicable (to be completed by appropriate NICE staff member after Guidance Executive)**

5.1 Outline amendments agreed by Guidance Executive below, if applicable:

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Approved by Developer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by NICE quality assurance lead \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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