

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

NICE guidelines

Equality impact assessment

Social work for adults with complex needs

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

1.0 Checking for updates and scope: before scope consultation (to be completed by the Developer and submitted with the draft scope for consultation)

1.1 Is the proposed primary focus of the guideline a population with a specific communication or engagement need, related to disability, age, or other equality consideration? Y/N

If so, what is it and what action might be taken by NICE or the developer to meet this need? (For example, adjustments to committee processes, additional forms of consultation.)

Yes, this guideline focuses on adults with complex needs. Many complex needs and equality characteristics may result in a communication or engagement need. Depending on the particular needs of committee members with lived experience this may impact on committee processes (over and above the usual committee processes such as avoiding jargon), for example some adjustments may be necessary to gain access to meetings, provisions for support workers may be needed, support before and after meetings could be considered, adaptation of meeting materials (different size of font or colour), printing materials. The committee may also consider consulting with specific groups, such as people with communication needs, to get their views heard.

1.2 Have any potential equality issues been identified during the check for an update or during development of the draft scope, and, if so, what are they?

The guideline population is by definition 'complex' and therefore most of the protected equality characteristics interact with their health and social care needs. Below it is described how the equality characteristics would lead to or interact with their complex needs and/or may lead to a higher likelihood of the need for social work support.

- Age

- Young adults who have transitioned from children's to adults' health and social care services may have specific support needs to ensure that they can live as independently as they wish.
- Ageing adults with complex needs may have additional physical health problems associated with age (for example frailty) which may increase difficulty with accessing support.

- Disability

People with complex needs may have physical, mental health, cognitive, communication needs or disabilities and disorders (including behavioural and social communication disorders), learning disability and sensory and communication impairments.

- Gender reassignment

For adults with complex needs who had gender reassignment this might be an additional characteristic that may make them more vulnerable or make them feel isolated.

- Pregnancy and maternity

Adults with complex needs who are pregnant or who are parents may need support during the pregnancy to help them to ensure their own and the baby's wellbeing. They may also need support with parenting (both maternal and paternal) to make sure that they are able to care for dependent children.

- Race

It has been [reported](#) (by the Mental Health Foundation) that in the UK people from black and minority ethnic groups have a higher likelihood of some mental health conditions, that their outcomes may differ and that their levels of engagement with social and mental health services can be poorer compared to people from white backgrounds.

- Religion or belief

These might be associated with particular attitudes (positive or negative) or sensitivities towards social work and the people who might use it).

- Sex

Prevalence of some conditions varies by sex, for example, anxiety is more common in women. There are also conditions that are directly linked to sex, such as post-natal depression. Suicide is more common in men. Complex needs may therefore

interact with these factors.

- Sexual orientation

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or non-binary people are likely to be at higher risk of discrimination and isolation. They may also experience homophobia or bullying. This would be detrimental to mental wellbeing and may impact on other complex needs that the person has.

- Socioeconomic factors

People with complex needs from lower socioeconomic background may need help to navigate the social care system to help them get the support that they are entitled to (both financial and personal). Some socioeconomic factors and social deprivation would also directly link to a higher need for social work support.

- Other definable characteristics:

- refugees
- asylum seekers
- migrants (wording changed based on stakeholder feedback)
- people who are homeless
- prisoners
- people with offending behaviour (wording changed based on stakeholder feedback)
- people with traveller status
- people who do not have an advocate
- people who leave care (this was brought up by stakeholders)
- people under coercive control (this was brought up by stakeholders)
- people experiencing domestic abuse (this was brought up by stakeholders)
- people in modern slavery (this was brought up by stakeholders)
- people subjected to trafficking (this was brought up by stakeholders)
- autistic people (this was brought up by stakeholders).

All of the above may be associated with a higher degree of difficulty in accessing services and with a higher likelihood of vulnerability and stigma.

- people for whom English is not the first language
- people with poor literacy

It may be more difficult to convey information even with the help of an interpreter and people who are less proficient in English may also experience difficulties in accessing services.

1.3 What is the preliminary view on the extent to which these potential equality issues need addressing by the Committee?

There are many NICE guidelines that are related to different facets of this topic and the committee will consider whether and when it is relevant, applicable and appropriate to cross-refer to these other guidelines to ensure that the social work support can be tailored to the individual.

For groups where equality issues have been identified (box 1.2) the committee will consider whether data should be analysed separately and whether separate recommendations are required on a case-by-case basis to promote equality.

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