

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

## NICE guidelines

### Equality impact assessment

#### HIV testing: encouraging uptake among at risk groups

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

#### **1.0 Scope: before consultation (To be completed by the developer and submitted with the draft scope for 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)

1. The scope focuses on populations at higher risk of HIV and this guidance seeks to replace PH33 and PH34 on HIV testing in black Africans and HIV testing in men who have sex with men respectively.
2. The groups specifically covered are people who have not been diagnosed with HIV and:
  - who live in areas or communities with a high prevalence of HIV
  - whose lifestyle or sexual behaviour puts them at risk
  - who have an illness that may be indicative of HIV infection.
  - This includes under-16s who can provide informed consent to an HIV test.
3. It will not cover:
  - All antenatal services so will not cover for example vertical transmission from an HIV-positive mother to her child.
  - People at risk because they inject drugs.
  - People who cannot provide informed consent to an HIV test.

4. A focus on 'those at higher risk' potentially means that those at lower risk may not be considered fully in the guidance. This does potentially raise a number of equality issues in groups considered not at higher risk across the protected characteristics. The focus of the guidance is on settings and communities and thus does not set out to 'discriminate' on the basis of the protected characteristics. The scope is not suggesting that HIV is not present in these communities/populations (lower risk). The scope has focused on those at higher risk based on the epidemiological data – and specifically focuses on increasing testing to reduce undiagnosed infection in those at increased risk of exposure as well as the barriers and facilitators to the uptake of HIV testing in these groups. Additionally because HIV is an infectious disease, reducing the levels of HIV in high risk groups may lower the risk of infection in other populations so potentially may benefit the lower risk groups.
5. Higher risk groups are specifically defined in the scope they will consist of and represent a cross sections of protected characteristics (race, disability, marital/civil partnership status, religion and belief, age, socioeconomic status). Exploration of barriers and facilitators to testing uptake, and effectiveness and cost effective way to increase uptake of testing among specific sub-groups taking into account these characteristics may be beneficial. .
6. The key activities outlined in the scope include increasing awareness. Within population categorised as high risk there may be potential equality issues regarding the way in which this is done. Consideration needs to be given to the format of information delivery for example those with visual impairments or those for whom English is not their first language. This should be considered in the guidance development process
7. There is also a potential equality issue regarding access to testing and services and transient communities such as homeless people and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The scope and subsequent guidance development process should be aware of this and make provision to consider this in the guidance development process
8. Age – treatment advances mean that people are living longer with HIV and so Older people living with HIV have been identified as a subgroup that may need potential consideration during guidance development.

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?

The committee will need to consider the above issues particularly in terms of the evidence base and thinking about settings for the delivery of interventions to reflect some protected characteristics.

The focus of the scope on higher risk populations is justified. The exclusion of antenatal services is justified given the existing antenatal screening programme currently universally offered in England.

Completed by Developer - James Jagroo

Date – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Approved by NICE quality assurance lead - Kay Nolan

Date 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**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?

A number of points of clarification were raised by stakeholders that related to protected characteristics. These included:

- the perception that some ‘at risk populations’ such as people who inject drugs (PWID) are excluded from the scope.
- populations living in areas of ‘high risk’ are potentially at risk and that the scope should consider this.
- the specific inclusion of prisons and other places of detention such as

immigration removal centres and initial accommodation centres

- consent to testing in those with limited capacity for example those who are critically ill.
- the consideration of specific combinations of protected characteristics for example men who have sex with men (MSM) with learning difficulties

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

The stakeholder comments have been responded to and the scope has been changed to clarify points related to what the guideline will cover, inclusion and exclusion, and settings. The language of the scope has also been changed to reflect a move away from the language of risk so that the scope focuses on people who may have undiagnosed HIV. Specific changes to the scope in response to stakeholder comments about equality are:

- People who inject drugs are now included within the scope
- Populations living in high risk areas are not excluded from this piece of work (see section 1.1 of the scope) so no change is required
- This guideline focuses on encouraging uptake of HIV testing among people who may have undiagnosed infection. In its development the wider implementation aspects and where testing sits in the wider HIV context may be considered by PHAC – in the scope, section 1.6, bullet 12 (p.5) makes reference to “*links to services following a test*” as a possible main outcome; and bullet 13 makes reference to the wider planning and delivery barriers and facilitators as possible main outcomes.
- Prisons and other places of detention are not excluded from this guideline. Section 1.2 (p.2) outlines that the *settings that will be covered* are – “wherever HIV testing is, or could be, delivered and promoted. The scope has been change to make this more explicit with specific reference to ‘custodial settings – prisons, initial accommodation centres and immigration removal centres’ – see section 1.3, bullet 2 (p.3).
- The issue of consent to testing in those with limited capacity is still excluded in this piece of work as it is seen to be a wider and more complex issue that is broader than ‘HIV testing’ alone – the issue of opt out testing is potentially part of this work and this will be raised with PHAC going forward – the scope section 1.6, bullet 13 makes reference to the wider planning and delivery barriers and facilitators as possible main outcomes
- The specific issue of MSM with learning difficulties and other combinations of protected characteristics that may impact testing are not excluded from this piece of work and although not explicitly mention are implicitly included.

The issues outlined above were not seen discriminate on the basis of the protected characteristics

2.3 Is the primary focus of the guideline a population with a specific disability-related communication need?

If so, is an alternative version of the 'Information for the Public' document recommended?

If so, which alternative version is recommended?

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 but as outlined in 2.2 particular groups such as MSM with learning difficulties (raised by stakeholders) as well as other groups may require specific consideration in terms of the format of guideline documentation

Updated by Developer: James Jagroo

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Approved by NICE quality assurance lead: Kay Nolan

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