

## 1.0.7 DOC EIA

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

## NICE guidelines

### Equality impact assessment

### Child abuse and neglect

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 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?

Completed in previous version of form.

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?

Completed in previous version of form.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 2.0 Checking for updates and scope: after consultation (to be completed by the Developer and submitted with the revised scope)

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

Completed in previous version of form.

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

Completed in previous version of form.

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' 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 deaf from birth
- 'Easy read' versions for people with learning disabilities or cognitive impairment.

Completed in previous version of form.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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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?

Eight review questions sought effectiveness evidence in relation to interventions (early help and response) for forms of abuse which the Committee were concerned may not be covered within the general literature. These were: child sexual abuse, including child sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage, and child trafficking. FGM, forced marriage and child trafficking were also identified forms of abuse which disproportionately affect some ethnic and religious groups. For other questions, these forms of abuse were included within the overall definition of abuse and neglect used in each question. The search strategy included specific search terms relating to these forms of abuse.

Very little evidence meeting the review protocols was identified in relation to FGM forced marriage, and child trafficking. Expert witnesses were therefore invited to provide testimony on each of these topics.

Although the scope of the guideline does not include adult survivors of childhood abuse, the Committee were clear that the views of adult survivors was a key source of evidence. The review questions on views and experiences therefore included adult survivors in addition to children, young people, parents and carers.

The identified potential equality issues were reflected in the data extraction template for the review work.

Equality issues have also been addressed through the recommendations in the following ways:

**Ethnicity:** As noted above, specific review questions were formulated in relation to forms of abuse which disproportionately affect some ethnic groups (FGM, forced marriage and child trafficking). Evidence review and the expert witnesses highlighted how cultural concepts of 'honour' and shame within particular communities can make it difficult for young people and families to seek help. Overall, there was little

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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?

evidence on FGM that met our criteria, and the Guideline Committee have made a research recommendation regarding effective interventions in this area. One recommendation was made about local strategy in relation to FGM (1.2.3). Similarly for forced marriage there was little evidence which met our criteria, and a research recommendation was made. One recommendation was made about local strategy in relation to forced marriage (1.2.3), and one recommendation (1.4.1) highlights the fact that assessment of risk in forced marriage may require a different approach from some other forms of abuse as it may not be appropriate for the family to be involved. For child trafficking, the Committee were able to make three recommendations specific to this form of abuse (1.3.48, 1.3.49, 1.3.50) based on the evidence review and expert witness testimony.

**Religion and belief:** The Committee noted that FGM is linked to some religious belief systems. Overall, there was little evidence on FGM that met our criteria, and the Guideline Committee have made a research recommendation regarding effective interventions in this area. One recommendation was made about local strategy in relation to FGM (1.2.3).

**Disability:** The Committee considered evidence relating to disabled children particularly regarding whether disabled children are at increased risk of abuse or neglect, and specific considerations required as part of assessing and communicating with disabled children (see recommendations 1.1.2, 1.2.7 and 1.3.10). No evidence meeting our criteria was found regarding disabled parents or carers who may be disabled. Recommendations regarding practice with parents or carers are intended to cover disabled parents or carers.

**Long-term health conditions:** No evidence meeting our criteria was found regarding children or parents with long-term health conditions. However, the Guideline Committee were aware in formulating recommendations on recognition that some physical indicators of abuse and neglect may lead to a 'misdiagnosis' of abuse or neglect.

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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?

**Age:** The Guideline Committee noted that there was less evidence on effective intervention for older children and young people, and have made a research recommendation to address this. There was good evidence about indicators of abuse among older children and young people. The importance of adapting communication to children's age and developmental stage is noted in recommendation 1.1.2. Recommendation 1.3.12 highlights the need to interpret possible indicators of abuse or neglect in light of a child's developmental stage. Some evidence regarding young parents was found. However, the Committee did not make a specific recommendation, as recommendations regarding practice with parents or carers are intended to cover parents of all ages.

**Gender:** Some of the evidence reviewed highlighted gender issues in recognition of child sexual exploitation and trafficking. This is addressed in recommendations 1.3.8 and 1.3.49. Evidence on effective interventions following sexual abuse often focused more on girls than boys. One recommendation regarding an intervention following sexual abuse was for girls only (recommendation 1.7.16). This is because the relevant study was with girls only, and the view of the committee was that boys and girls respond differently to interventions, and did not feel it was appropriate to extrapolate the evidence of effectiveness of this intervention to boys. The Committee also noted that many studies involving parents and carers were with mothers/female carers. The Committee made two research recommendations for studies exploring effective interventions with fathers and male carers. Recommendations for parents and carers throughout the guideline are intended to cover both female and male carers.

**Socio-economic status:** There was some evidence relating to how socio-economic factors interact with issues of abuse and neglect. The Guideline Committee made a recommendation relating to provision of practical support as part of early help (1.5.11) in recognition of the material difficulties faced by some families.

**Looked after children:** We reviewed evidence specifically relating to interventions provided for foster carers and foster children (recommendations 1.7.10, 1.12 and

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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?

1.7.13). For interventions provided directly to children and young people, the view of the Committee was that these should be offered irrespective of whether the child was living with birth parents or carers or was a looked after child.

**Children who are adopted:** We reviewed evidence specifically relating to interventions for adoptive parents. The Committee made two recommendations (1.7.11 and 1.7.13) for interventions for adoptive parents.

**Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and child who have been trafficked:** We reviewed evidence relating to children who have been trafficked, and invited an expert witness to provide testimony on this issue. The Committee made three recommendations (1.3.48, 1.3.49, 1.3.50). No evidence meeting our criteria was found relating to unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

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?

No other equality issues have been identified.

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

Where equalities issues were discussed, they are reported in the LETR tables in the full guideline under 'other considerations'.

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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?

In developing the draft recommendations, the committee has sought to ensure that it is not more difficult for some groups to access services than others,

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?

The committee has sought to ensure that the recommendations do not have an adverse impact on people with disabilities. There are three draft recommendations specific to disabled children (recommendations 1.1.2, 1.3.7 and 1.4.7), but these are intended to improve safeguarding for this group.

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?

The committee has made a number of recommendations which seek to address equalities issues. These are detailed in Section 3.1 above.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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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?

The following equality issues were raised during consultation and have been addressed as follows:

#### **Disabled children and children with learning disabilities or neurodevelopmental disorders**

Stakeholders noted the particular communication needs of disabled children, children with learning disabilities or neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism. It was also raised that a number of the 'alerting features' for abuse and neglect detailed in Section 1.3 were also behaviours associated with some disabilities, learning disabilities or neurodevelopmental disorders. These comments have been addressed by:

- Recommendation 1.1.2 – Adding reference to tailoring communication methods to disability, learning disability and neurodevelopmental disorder, including seeking assistance from specialists if needed
- Recommendation 1.1.4 – Adding reference to sensory processing issues in relation to communicating with children and young people
- Recommendation 1.3.1 – Adding reference to communication difficulties
- Sub-section on alerting features – Adding introductory text highlighting that 'alerting features for child abuse and neglect can be similar to behaviours arising from other causes, such as other stressful life experiences or neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism. However, practitioners should continue to consider the possibility of child abuse or neglect as a cause for behavioural and emotional alerting features, even if they are seemingly explained by another cause.' The Guideline Committee included the second sentence in recognition of evidence from Serious Case Reviews and other sources that abuse and neglect of children with learning disabilities or neurodevelopmental disorders is sometimes not identified, as behaviours are seemingly explained by their disability or impairment.
- Recommendation 1.5.6 – Adding reference to practitioner knowledge of typical and atypical child development.

There was an existing recommendation (1.4.6) stating that practitioners conducting

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

assessment in relation to abuse or neglect of disabled children or young people, or those with neurodevelopmental disorders, can access a specialist with knowledge about those children and young people's specific needs and impairments.

### **Children who have suffered past abuse (for example adopted children)**

We received a number of comments relating to children and young people who have experienced non-recent abuse or neglect (for example, children who have been abused or neglected and subsequently adopted). In particular, stakeholders noted that the many of the alerting features described could be due to abuse which had happened in the past. This has been addressed as follows:

- Recommendation 1.3.4 states: 'Take into account that when children and young people communicate their abuse or neglect (either directly or indirectly), it may refer to non-recent abuse or neglect.'
- The following text has also been added to the introduction to the section on alerting features to clarify this: 'Practitioners should also recognise that alerting features may be due to non-recent child abuse or neglect. If the alerting features relate to past child abuse or neglect, but the child or young person is now in a place of safety (for example, in an adoptive family) the child or young person should be assessed to see what support they and their parent, carer, foster carer or adoptive parent need to cope with the consequences of the child abuse or neglect.'

The interventions in Section 1.7 could be offered to children and young people who have experienced non-recent as well as recent abuse.

### **Culture and belief**

Some stakeholders commented that there was insufficient reference to working in a culturally sensitive way. This has been addressed by:

- Recommendation 1.1.3 – adding reference to working with children and young people in a way that is sensitive to culture and belief
- Recommendation 1.1.10 – adding reference to working with parents and carers in a way that is sensitive to culture and belief.

### **Honour-based abuse and breast ironing**

Stakeholders noted that there was no specific reference to honour-based abuse

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

(other than forced marriage) and the practice of breast ironing. In relation to breast ironing, this issue was not included in Working Together at the time the scope was developed. As Working Together was used as the basis of our definition and inclusion criteria, breast ironing was therefore not included in the scope, meaning that we were unable to add this to the guideline. In relation to honour-based abuse:

- Recommendation 1.8.3 – Reference to honour-based abuse as a form of abuse which should be covered by local threshold documents.

### **Online abuse and grooming**

Stakeholders noted that there were few recommendations specifically relating to online abuse and grooming. This was due to a lack of evidence in this area. This has been addressed by the addition of a research recommendation on online abuse and grooming.

### **Gender-specific interventions**

Several stakeholders commented on recommendation 1.7.19 which has been targeted at girls only, based on the research evidence base. The guideline committee reviewed this, and decided to keep the recommendation as being for girls only. The evidence on which the recommendation is based draws on a study with girls only. The guideline committee did not think it was appropriate to extrapolate the effectiveness evidence to boys also.

### **Older young people**

Stakeholders noted that there was less guidance relating to older young people, particularly those living outside of a family or alternative family environment, for example in supported lodgings. There was a paucity of evidence in this area, and this had already been reflected in a research recommendation. Reference to young people living independently has been added to this research recommendation (RR2.7 – full guideline).

### **Parents requiring additional support to engage with services**

Stakeholders noted that a number of groups of parents are likely to need further support in order to engage with services. These comments were addressed by:

- Recommendation 1.1.10 – Adding reference to making adjustments for any factors that may make it more difficult for parents to get support, such as refugee status, long-term illness, neurodevelopmental disorders, mental

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

health problems, disability and learning disability

- Recommendation 1.1.11 – Adding reference to supporting communication, for example by using communication aids or using an interpreter.

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?

The guideline committee were careful in revising the recommendations to ensure that it would not be more difficult for any groups to access services. Recommendations 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.10 and 1.1.11 make reference to ensuring that practice, particularly communication, takes account of potential barriers to accessing services.

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?

The guideline committee were careful in revising the recommendations to ensure that the recommendations would not have an adverse impact on disabled children or parents. Recommendations 1.1.2, 1.10, 1.2.7, 1.4.6, 1.5.6 and the introductory text to the section on Alerting features for abuse and neglect make specific reference to disabled children. Recommendations 1.1.10 and 1.1.11 make specific reference to supporting disabled parents and carers, and supporting any communication needs.

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?

As noted above, several recommendations have been amended in order to better address barriers to services, in particular 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.10 and 1.1.11.

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

Consideration of equality issues, including response to consultation feedback, is documented in the Linking Evidence to Recommendations tables (see full guideline section 3.11.2).

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 \_\_\_\_\_