

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

QUALITY STANDARD TOPIC OVERVIEW

1 Quality standard title

Suspected cancer

2 Introduction

2.1 *NICE quality standards*

NICE quality standards are a concise set of prioritised statements designed to drive measurable quality improvements within a particular area of health or care.

The standards are derived from high-quality guidance, such as that from NICE or [accredited](#) by NICE. They are developed independently by NICE, in collaboration with health, public health and social care practitioners, their partners and service users. Information on priority areas, people's experience of using services, safety issues, equality and cost impact are considered during the development process.

NICE quality standards are central to supporting the Government's vision for a health and social care system that is focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for people who use services, as detailed in the [Health and Social Care Act \(2012\)](#).

The quality standard development process is described in detail on the [NICE website](#).

2.2 *This topic overview*

This topic overview describes core elements of the quality standard. These include the population and topic to be covered, key source guidance to be used to underpin potential quality statements, any related quality standards, published current practice information and national or routine indicators and performance measures.

If the source guidance is not NICE guidance, it should meet the minimum quality criteria defined in NICE's [accreditation programme](#).

3 *This quality standard*

This quality standard is expected to publish in May 2016.

3.1 *Population and topic to be covered*

This quality standard will cover recognition and referral of suspected cancer in children, young people and adults. However, as quality standards contain a limited number of statements, it will not be possible to include a statement for each cancer site. Stakeholders are therefore asked:

- whether they can suggest key areas for quality improvement relating to the recognition of possible cancers that are general to many types of cancer?
- whether they can suggest key areas for quality improvement relating to the referral of people with suspected cancer that are general to many types of cancer?
- although, this quality standard cannot cover all specific types of cancer within its scope, are there any significant areas for quality improvement around the recognition and referral of suspected cancer that relate to specific types of cancer that cannot be covered by general quality statements?

It is noted that some published quality standards on cancer already contain statements relating to referral when cancer is suspected. As part of development of the quality standard for suspected cancer, the Committee will

consider any overlaps, duplication and the need for amendment (please see section 3.3).

NICE quality standards focus on aspects of health and social care that are commissioned at a local level. Areas of national policy, such as national cancer screening programmes and national targets for cancer referrals, are therefore not covered by this quality standard.

3.2 Key development sources (NICE and NICE-accredited sources)

Primary source

- [Suspected cancer: recognition and referral](#) (2015) NICE guidelines NG12

Other sources that may be used

- [iRefer](#) (7th edition, 2012) The Royal College of Radiologists

Key policy documents, reports and national audits

Relevant policy documents, reports and national audits will be used to inform the development of the quality standard.

- Public Health England (2015) ['Be Clear on Cancer' ovarian cancer awareness campaign: local pilots](#)
- Public Health England (2015) ['Be Clear on Cancer' lung cancer awareness campaign: regional pilot](#)
- NHS England (2014) [Waiting Times for Suspected and Diagnosed Cancer Patients 2013-2014](#)
- Department of Health (2013) [2010 to 2015 government policy: cancer research and treatment](#)
- Department of Health (2013) [National cancer strategy: impact assessment](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Anal \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Oesophageal and Gastric \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Teenagers & Young Adults](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Pancreatic \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Head and Neck \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Skin \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Brain and Central Nervous System \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Soft Tissue Sarcoma \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Specialised kidney, bladder and prostate cancer services \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Testicular \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Penile \(Adult\)](#)

- NHS England (2013) [Cancer: Malignant Mesothelioma \(Adult\)](#)
- NHS England (2013) [Complex Gynaecology -Specialist Gynaecological Cancers](#)
- Department of Health (2012) [Direct access to diagnostic tests for cancer: best practice referral pathways for general practitioners](#)
- Department of Health (2012) [Cancer early diagnosis campaigns outlined](#)
- Department of Health (2012) [National campaign to promote awareness and earlier diagnosis of lung cancer](#)
- Department of Health (2011) [Be Clear on Cancer: national campaign to promote earlier diagnosis of bowel cancer](#)
- [Improving outcomes a: strategy for cancer](#) (2011) Department of Health
- Department of Health (2011) [The national cancer strategy](#)
- The King's Fund (2011) [Referral management: Lessons for success](#)
- Royal College of General Practitioners (2011) [National Audit of Cancer Diagnosis in Primary Care](#)
- National Cancer Action Team and Royal College of General Practitioners (2010) [Primary Care Cancer Audit](#)

3.3 Related NICE quality standards

Published

- [Dyspepsia and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease in adults: investigation and management](#) (2015) NICE quality standard QS96
- [Prostate cancer](#) (2015) NICE quality standard 91
- [Sarcoma](#) (2015) NICE quality standard 78
- [Metastatic spinal cord compression](#) (2014) NICE quality standard 56
- [Children and young people with cancer](#) (2014) NICE quality standard 55
- [Colorectal cancer](#) (2012) NICE quality standard 20
- [Lung cancer](#) (2012) NICE quality standard 17
- [Ovarian cancer](#) (2012) NICE quality standard 18
- [Patient experience in adult NHS services](#) (2012) NICE quality standard 15
- [Breast cancer quality standard](#) (2011) NICE quality standard 12

In development

- [Bladder cancer](#). Publication expected December 2015
- [Breast cancer \(update\)](#). Publication expected June 2016
- [Skin cancer](#). Publication expected August 2016

Future quality standards

This quality standard will be developed in the context of all quality standards referred to NICE, including the following quality standards scheduled for future development:

- Brain metastases
- Haematological malignancies
- Head and neck cancer
- Managing symptoms with an uncertain cause
- Oesophago-gastric cancers
- Pancreatic cancer

The full list of quality standard topics referred to NICE is available from the [quality standard topic library](#) on the NICE website.

Existing indicators

NICE Clinical commissioning group outcomes indicator set:

- [Cancer: diagnosis via emergency routes](#). 1.9
- [Cancer: early detection](#). 1.11

4 Further information

See the NICE website for more information about [NICE quality standards](#) and the [progress of this quality standard](#).