

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND
CARE EXCELLENCE**

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE DIRECTORATE

QUALITY STANDARDS

Quality standard topic: Fertility problems

Output: Equality analysis form – Topic overview

Introduction

As outlined in the [Quality Standards process guide](http://www.nice.org.uk) (available from www.nice.org.uk), NICE has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups. The purpose of this form is to document the consideration of equality issues in each stage of the development process before reaching the final output that will be approved by the NICE Guidance Executive. This equality analysis is designed to support compliance with NICE's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

Table 1 lists the equality characteristics and other equality factors NICE needs to consider, i.e. not just population groups sharing the 'protected characteristics' defined in the Equality Act but also those affected by health inequalities associated with socioeconomic factors or other forms of disadvantage. The table does not attempt to provide further interpretation of the protected characteristics. This is because it is likely to be simpler, and more efficient, to use the evidence underpinning the quality standard to define population groups within the broad protected characteristic categories rather than to start with possibly unsuitable checklists created for other purposes, such as social surveys or HR monitoring tools.

The form should be used to:

- confirm that equality issues have been considered and identify any relevant to the topic
- ensure that the quality standards outputs do not discriminate against any of the equality groups
- highlight planned action relevant to equality
- highlight areas where quality standards may advance equality of opportunity.

This form is completed by the NICE quality standards internal team at each stage within the development process:

- Topic –Overview (to elicit additional comments as part of active stakeholder engagement)
- Quality Standards Advisory Committee – meeting 1
- Quality Standards Advisory Committee – meeting 2

Table 1

Protected characteristics
Age
Disability
Gender reassignment
Pregnancy and maternity
Race
Religion or belief
Sex
Sexual orientation
Other characteristics
Socio-economic status Depending on policy or other context, this may cover factors such as social exclusion and deprivation associated with geographical areas or inequalities or variations associated with other geographical distinctions (e.g. the North/South divide, urban versus rural).
Marital status (including civil partnership)

Other categories

Other groups in the population experience poor health because of circumstances often affected by, but going beyond, sharing a protected characteristic or socioeconomic status. Whether such groups are identifiable depends on the guidance topic and the evidence. The following are examples of groups covered in NICE guidance:

- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Migrant workers
- Looked after children
- Homeless people.

Quality standards equality analysis

Stage: Topic overview

Topic: Fertility problems

1. Have any equality issues impacting upon equality groups been identified during this stage of the development process?

- Please state briefly any relevant equality issues identified and the plans to tackle them during development.

This quality standard will cover the assessment and treatment of fertility problems. The topic overview has been developed to reflect the populations listed in the scope of the underpinning guidance (NICE clinical guideline 156 Fertility: assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems). This guideline includes consideration of specific populations and consequently these populations will be considered in the development of this NICE quality standard. The populations for which potential equality issues have been identified include:

Age

CG156 includes recommendations which relate to specific age-groups. The guideline development group found that age was the only robust factor in determining IVF success, and hence recommendations about access to IVF therapy have been made on the basis of age.

Disability, gender reassignment and sexual orientation

CG156 includes recommendations for people who cannot, are unable to or would find it difficult to have sexual intercourse. Within this group are same sex couples, people with physical disabilities (which preclude intercourse) and people who have psycho-sexual conditions.

People with cancer and other diseases

CG156 includes specific recommendations in relation to preservation of fertility for people with cancer who may at a later stage of life wish to have a baby.

CG156 includes recommendations for people who cannot or are unable to have sexual intercourse. People with sexually transmitted diseases (such as HIV).

2. Have relevant bodies and stakeholders been consulted, including those with a specific interest in equalities?

- Have comments highlighting potential for discrimination or advancing equality been considered?

This is the first stage of the process which will look to elicit comments from stakeholders.

In addition the Quality Standards Advisory Committees (QSACs) have been recruited by open advert with relevant bodies and stakeholders given the opportunity to apply. To gain a range of perspectives, representation is also being sought from a variety of specialist committee members.

3. Have any population groups, treatments or settings been excluded from coverage by the quality standard at this stage in the process? Are these exclusions legal and justified?

- Are the reasons for justifying any exclusion legitimate?

Surrogacy

CG156 did not include the issue of surrogacy and the NICE quality standard for fertility problems is not expected to cover this issue.

Pregnancy and maternity

CG156 did not include the issue of multiple or recurrent miscarriage and the NICE quality standard for fertility problems is not expected to cover this issue. The forthcoming NICE quality standard on [Pain and bleeding in early pregnancy](#) (publication expected July 2014) may cover this clinical issue.

4. If applicable, do any of the quality statements make it impossible or unreasonably difficult in practice for a specific group to access a service or element of a service?

- Does access to a service or element of a service depend on membership of a specific group?
- Does a service or element of the service discriminate unlawfully against a group?
- Do people with disabilities find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to receive a service or element of a service?

Not applicable at this stage.

5. If applicable, does the quality standard advance equality?

- Please state if the quality standard, including statements, measures and indicators, as described will advance equality of opportunity, for example by making access more likely for certain groups, by tailoring the service to certain groups, or by making reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities?

Not applicable at this stage.

