


How to put NICE guidance into practice

A guide to implementation for organisations



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ISBN 1-84629-114-3

Published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
December 2005

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Getting started

About NICE

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.

NICE guidance aims to ensure that promotion of good health and patient care in the NHS are in line with the best available evidence of clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness.

What is the aim of this guide?

This guide aims to help organisations:

- implement NICE guidance and other types of guidance or national policy
- comply with core and developmental standards set in *Standards for better health*
- meet the expectations of the Healthcare Commission.

Using this guide

This guide is split into three parts – the first two focus on organisations directly responsible for implementation, and the third focuses on commissioning organisations. Part 1 is aimed at chief executives and directors who have an overall responsibility for implementation and outlines the principles of implementation. Part 2 is aimed at people working to implement guidance, as part of their day-to-day practice, and has practical steps with examples, action points and ideas. Part 3 provides practical information on how commissioners can ensure the services they receive are in line with NICE guidance.

What is implementation?

Good question. A scan of the literature throws up several definitions of implementation, all including references to methods and processes. Importantly, the literature also emphasises that, to be effective, implementation initiatives need to be integrated into routine organisational activity.

In this guide we have defined implementation as:

A specified set of activities designed to put NICE guidance into practice.

Where did the ideas for this guide come from?

There is no single model for effective implementation. Different organisations will implement NICE guidance in different ways. The content of this guide is based on our work with NHS organisations across the country, feedback received from workshops, and published literature.

National initiatives

The NHS and the environment within which NHS organisations operate are constantly changing. Several national initiatives will have a major impact on the way services are commissioned and funded, which will affect the implementation of NICE guidance.

These national initiatives are:

- **Healthcare Commission assessment** – this considers performance in relation to the core and developmental standards set in *Standards for better health*, as well as the existing and new targets the NHS is expected to achieve.
- **Payment by Results** – this is a national tariff structure, initially concentrating on secondary care.
- **Practice-based commissioning** – this enables groups of GPs to commission care and services that are specific to the needs of their patients. These services will have to incorporate NICE guidance, and NHS organisations will need to develop effective mechanisms for working with GP groups to ensure service delivery in line with guidance.

All of the documents we refer to, as well as other useful information, are listed at the back of this guide

Why implement NICE guidance?


Implementing NICE guidance helps to ensure consistent improvements in people's health and equal access to healthcare. Putting NICE guidance into practice benefits everyone – patients, carers, the public, NHS organisations, healthcare professionals, public health practitioners, policy makers and local authorities.

Meeting standards by implementing guidance

NICE guidance and patient information can help NHS organisations meet the core and developmental standards set in *Standards for better health*. Core standard C5 states that healthcare organisations should take into account nationally agreed guidance when planning and delivering treatment and care.

Technology appraisals are recommendations on the use of new and existing health technologies. The Secretary of State has directed that the NHS provides funding and resources for medicines and treatments that have been recommended by NICE technology appraisals normally within 3 months from the date that NICE publishes the guidance. Core standard C5 states that healthcare organisations should ensure they conform to NICE technology appraisals.

Clinical guidelines provide guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions. Implementation of clinical guidelines forms part of developmental standard D2 which states that patients should receive effective treatment and care that conforms to nationally agreed best practice, particularly as defined in NICE guidance. A helpful way of looking at this is that assessing the impact and planning the implementation of NICE clinical guidelines should start immediately, with implementation itself taking place over a longer, but clearly defined, timeline.



Start planning the implementation of NICE clinical guidelines immediately, with implementation itself taking place over a longer, but clearly defined, timeline

Public health guidance provides guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health. The implementation of NICE public health guidance will help you meet the standards in the seventh domain such as the core standards C22 and C23 and developmental standard D13.

Guidance on interventional procedures covers the safety and efficacy of surgical procedures. Core standard C3 states that healthcare organisations should protect patients by following NICE interventional procedures guidance.

The provision of NICE patient information will help you meet core standard C16. This standard states that healthcare organisations should make information available to patients and the public on their services, provide patients with suitable and accessible information on the care and treatment they receive and, where appropriate, inform patients on what to expect during treatment, care and aftercare.

Following this guide to implementation will help organisations meet the expectations of the Healthcare Commission

Implementation of NICE guidance is an essential part of your organisation's delivery of national guidelines

Part 1.

Principles of implementation

Evidence and experience shows that there are six key components to a successful implementation process:

- board support and clear leadership
- provision of a dedicated resource (a NICE manager)
- support from a multidisciplinary team
- a systematic approach to financial planning
- a systematic approach to implementing guidance
- a process to evaluate uptake and feedback.

The organisation's approach to meeting these components should be clearly stated in an implementation policy. This should be agreed across the organisation or health community and approved by the boards of the organisations involved.

Board support and clear leadership

Top level commitment towards evidence-based practice is at the heart of implementing NICE guidance. Clear leadership will really help to promote a positive culture of improvements in healthcare and related organisations.

Ultimate responsibility for implementing NICE guidance rests with the chief executive, but this is often devolved to other board members such as the medical director or director of public health.

Evidence shows that successful implementation models have:

- a person on the board, such as a medical director or director of public health, who drives the implementation agenda forward
- a clear implementation policy approved by the board.

The board should receive regular reports on implementation, including audits and evaluation, highlighting areas of non-compliance and risk. The board should also sign off declarations for the Healthcare Commission's assessment process around the implementation of NICE guidance.



The board should receive regular reports on implementation and sign off declarations around the implementation of NICE guidance

A NICE manager

Identifying a designated resource or NICE manager who coordinates the implementation of NICE guidance is vital for effective implementation. Supporting this model in a letter dated 14 June 2004, Lord Warner wrote to NHS organisations stating that 'one model that appears to be particularly successful is the provision of a local facilitator, perhaps jointly funded by a number of NHS organisations, working within an agreed service and financial planning framework'.

Responsibilities of the NICE manager

A NICE manager ensures that the day-to-day aspects of implementation are coordinated effectively. This includes:

- disseminating guidance to key groups and arranging educational events
- horizon scanning and forward planning
- coordinating financial plans
- ensuring effective processes for monitoring and feedback
- producing regular board reports.

Ideal candidates

The role of the NICE manager is ideal for someone with a background in clinical governance, pharmacy, quality or public health. Depending on the size of the trust, it might not be necessary to create an entirely new role if the responsibilities can be incorporated into a current position. Across the country, people from a number of different backgrounds have taken on these responsibilities. Examples include:

- clinical effectiveness co-ordinator
- clinical governance manager
- GP prescribing lead
- chief pharmacist/head of prescribing and pharmacy
- medicines management lead
- public health lead
- National Service Frameworks project manager.

Job descriptions and specifications

You can look at real examples of job descriptions and person specifications used to recruit to this post on our website. Key attributes include:

- a thorough knowledge of NHS modernisation policies, NICE guidance and National Service Frameworks
- a thorough knowledge of service delivery within the organisation
- a record of achievement in managing projects and change
- an ability to analyse, challenge and improve current practices
- strong interpersonal and leadership skills
- credibility.

A multidisciplinary team

The most effective implementation models have strong multidisciplinary teams. To be most effective this team should be a decision making body that reports to the board. If appropriate, the team will serve other functions within the organisation in addition to implementing NICE guidance – for example, overseeing clinical governance or audit programmes.

Responsibilities of the team

The team should work with the NICE manager to provide overall coordination, planning and monitoring of guidance implementation. To do this effectively, the team should meet on a monthly basis, shortly after NICE guidance is published (NICE issues guidance on the fourth Wednesday of every month). The team can then consider all new guidance and identify relevant leads and networks to support the implementation of specific guidance topics (see part 2).

The team should work to:

- reduce duplication of work across a health community
- ensure compliance with the core and developmental standards
- ensure that effective audit and monitoring arrangements are in place
- ensure that effective forward planning occurs, and that appropriate financial arrangements are in place.

Who should be on the team?

Effective teams usually have no more than 15 members, from varied disciplines. Experience shows that most teams will require input from the following areas, but it may also be necessary to co-opt people with specific additional skills when a particular area needs to be discussed:

- nursing
- clinical medicine
- pharmacy/medicines management
- patients and the public
- finance
- public health
- clinical governance and audit
- commissioning and general management.

Collaborating across health communities

It is important to consider ways of coordinating work across the health community, especially where clinical guidance crosses the primary and secondary care interface. A collaborative approach will also be critical for implementing public health guidance, which is likely to have an impact on a range of different organisations.

Collaboration across the community reduces duplication of effort and ensures a coordinated, standardised response to each piece of guidance across the locality: this is good for patients, healthcare professionals and everyone involved in healthcare. Working collaboratively across the primary and secondary care interface will help to ensure seamless care.

A systematic approach to financial planning

The importance of clear financial planning to underpin successful implementation of NICE guidance was highlighted in the recent Audit Commission report entitled *Managing the financial implications of NICE guidance*. This report recommends that organisations should aim to develop a sustainable approach to financial planning and outlines steps that should be undertaken when implementing NICE guidance.

Implementation teams will need to consider how to operate financial planning for implementation. They will need to be explicit about how guidance will be assessed in terms of Payment by Results and whether it affects activity that is subject to the national tariff. Where activity is within tariff, the tariff will normally include the cost of implementing NICE guidance, and primary care trusts will probably expect providers to deliver accordingly without additional funding. Teams should specify the process for negotiating funding for implementation between commissioners and providers for activity that is outside of the tariff.

The Audit Commission report recommends that a financial plan should be developed detailing all activities for the forthcoming financial year. This should be based on the forward planning estimates of costs for implementing technology appraisals and the future resource requirements for clinical guidelines and public health guidance. The ongoing costs of implementing past guidance should also feature in any financial planning.



NICE costing templates can be used to predict future costs and savings of guidance

A systematic approach to implementing guidance

It is important to have a systematic approach to implementing guidance. We have suggested the steps described in part 2, which are based on effective models of implementation.

Evaluate uptake and feedback

Effective models of implementation incorporate processes for evaluation, audit and feedback to the board.

Under the Healthcare Commission's assessment process NHS organisations are required to publish an annual declaration on whether they meet core standards and progress towards developmental standards. NHS organisations will need robust mechanisms to monitor implementation to inform this declaration.

These mechanisms will provide reassurance to the board and highlight where implementation is not being achieved.

Part 2.

Practical steps to implementation

If you are responsible for implementing NICE guidance, perhaps as a NICE manager or part of the implementation team, this part of the guide is for you. It focuses on more detailed approaches to getting specific pieces of guidance into practice, including simple steps and examples to make implementation as practical as possible.

There are two components to this part of the guide.

- **General advice.** This will underpin a common approach to implementing all the different types of NICE guidance. This includes planning and horizon scanning, raising awareness, dissemination, audit and evaluation.
- **Steps to implementing NICE guidance.** This includes advice on how to carry out a baseline assessment and develop an action plan. It is split by type of guidance: technology appraisals, clinical guidelines, public health guidance and interventional procedures.

General advice

Get people involved

It is easier to implement a specific piece of NICE guidance if, once it is published, it arrives in an environment where everyone understands the benefits of evidence-based practice, the broad aims of NICE and how they can play a part.

By organising awareness raising sessions and workshops on NICE, its processes and specific guidance, you will encourage a positive reception to the guidance and promote a positive culture towards implementation.

The benefits of implementing NICE guidance are highlighted in our leaflet *Putting NICE guidance into practice*, which you can download from www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=259132

Commenting on draft guidance

Register at
www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=e-newsletter
for regular updates
from NICE

Encourage healthcare professionals to contribute to the development of NICE guidance. This will increase the awareness of NICE and ensure that individuals feel part of the process. Consequently, it makes implementation of the guidance, once issued, easier.

On our website you can find out more about consultations and how to comment. You can be kept informed by registering for the e-newsletter. Each guidance programme has detailed methods manuals that you can also download.

It is also possible to suggest topics for consideration by NICE – click on ‘suggest a topic’ and follow the instructions.

Action points

- Encourage people to sign up for the NICE e-newsletter and web alerts.
- Organise educational sessions on NICE processes.
- Check that stakeholder organisations are registered to take part in guidance development.
- Encourage participation in consultations.

Plan ahead

It is important to identify whether upcoming guidance is relevant to your organisation. Scan the NICE website regularly and track the progress of forthcoming guidance – you could develop a database to help you. You can also register for the NICE e-newsletter to help you keep up-to-date. If guidance is relevant, consider informing key professionals and organisations about the guidance at appropriate stages of the guidance development process. You may also provide details on how they can contribute to its development.

Work with the implementation team to estimate the impact of implementing guidance over the coming year. This will involve:

- horizon scanning using the NICE website
- estimating the probable cost impact of implementation using consultation documents
- estimating capital allocations required (equipment) and revenue costs
- considering staffing and training requirements
- considering capacity issues
- building plans into local delivery planning process.

Onward dissemination

Ensure that relevant organisations and professionals are informed about guidance in a prompt and effective way, both during its development and once it has been published. It is also a good idea to let people know how the guidance will be implemented once it is issued.

To ensure onward dissemination is effective, you could:

- include information about NICE guidance in induction training for all relevant staff
- organise educational forums, building on existing networks where appropriate. This might include cancer networks, local strategic partnerships, drug and therapeutic committees, and public health networks
- arrange for GP based pharmacists to discuss guidance with staff
- develop newsletters, leaflets, prescribing updates or information packs for your different audiences
- include auditing NICE guidance within GP practice incentive schemes
- incorporate guidance into local formularies and drug protocols, and ensure that any shared care protocols are updated.

How NICE will help you

NICE is developing the following tools to support implementation of its guidance. The tools available will depend on the specific needs of the guidance issued. They are all available to download from our website.

Slide sets

Slide sets are intended to support the implementation of a particular piece of NICE guidance. They aim to provide a framework for discussion at a local level for a variety of audiences such as commissioners or clinicians. They do not cover all the recommendations from within the guidance, but contain key messages.

Implementation advice

Implementation advice considers implementation issues that are specific to a piece of NICE guidance and is targeted at those responsible for planning and implementing the guidance.

Costing tools

Costing reports are estimates of the national cost impact arising from implementation based on assumptions about current practice and predictions of how it might change following implementation of the guidance.

Costing templates are spreadsheets that allow local users to estimate the costs of implementation, taking into account local variation from the national estimates.

Evaluate and monitor

Audit uptake

It is important to monitor how NICE guidance is being implemented. One way to monitor implementation is to audit current practice against NICE guidance. Each piece of guidance is accompanied by audit criteria to help you do this.

Some organisations may consider distributing clinical audit projects among junior doctors in different specialities, or they may ask medicines management teams to carry them out. We have examples from NHS organisations that have developed models for this: visit www.nice.org.uk/implementation

Evaluate your action plan

Analyse how effective your action plans have been. Was the identified lead appropriate? Have actions been carried out? How do actual costs compare with those estimated in the action plan? Were timelines met? How can the action plan for implementation be improved?

Success of the overall process

Take into account all audits and evaluations to consider how effective the implementation process has been. Make any required changes to the process to ensure continual improvements in implementation.

Produce an annual report for the board detailing uptake of NICE guidance and how effective the implementation process has been.

When the process works well, it is important to publicise it; sharing learning from success and failure helps everyone.

Diagram 1. Process for implementing technology appraisals



Steps to implementing NICE guidance

The implementation of each specific piece of NICE guidance needs to be planned for and different types of guidance are likely to need different approaches.

Process for technology appraisals

Use diagram 1 to plan for the implementation of individual technology appraisals. We have expanded the key steps in more detail below.

Where possible, planning for implementation could begin when a consultation draft of the guidance is issued. If it is not feasible to start planning at this point, start the process when the guidance is issued and follow the steps given.

Is the guidance relevant?

When the guidance is issued, the implementation team should decide whether it is relevant to the organisation. Consider whether the recommendations will have an impact on other organisations in your health community and if so, whether a collaborative approach to implementation planning is needed.

For example, a technology appraisal may make recommendations on a drug that is used solely in secondary care. Or it may recommend the use of a drug under a shared care protocol, which will have an impact on both primary and secondary care.

If the guidance is not relevant, remember to add it to your organisation's risk register.

Risk register

A risk register is a file that holds all the information on identifying and managing a risk.

It should include:

- a description of the risk
- measures to manage the risk
- information on the status of the risk
- risk owner – the person responsible for managing the risk.

Identify a clinical lead

As soon as possible, identify a clinical lead and a relevant clinical or commissioning network to take a lead on implementation. The clinical lead is likely to be a prominent figure who will champion the guidance and inspire others. If working collaboratively and the guidance covers both primary and secondary care, identify leads in both types of organisation to work together to develop a seamless action plan.

Carry out a baseline assessment

Work with the clinical lead to compare current practice against the recommendations in the guidance. This information could be gathered through informal discussions or by using a questionnaire. This baseline assessment will help identify what needs to change in light of the guidance. Where possible, a preliminary assessment could be based on draft guidance.

Consider, for example, how the recommendations will have an impact on:

- patient numbers
- staffing
- equipment and training
- budget planning
- configuration of services.

Develop an action plan and assess cost

If your organisation is not compliant with the recommendations, work with the clinical lead to develop an action plan. This plan will detail the steps needed to achieve full implementation of the guidance.

At the same time, assess how much it will cost to implement the action plan and achieve compliance. It might be possible to make some of the required changes using existing resources, or there may be potential for savings to be achieved, or capacity freed up to be used for other things.

The action plan and assessment of cost should be discussed and approved by the whole implementation team.

The action plan

Below is an example template for an action plan. The baseline assessment will have identified which recommendations are not currently being carried out. Insert these recommendations into the table and assign actions to each one. Work out what resources are needed for compliance and add those into the table. Spread the responsibility among interested parties to help share the workload. Give realistic deadlines to motivate people to do it. Specifically, remember that when implementing technology appraisals deadlines are particularly important.

Recommendation	Action needed to comply	Resource needed to comply	Who is responsible	When will it be achieved?

You can see real examples of action plans used by implementation teams across the country on our website (www.nice.org.uk/implementation).

Provide funds and implement plan

In most cases, funding for implementing technology appraisals should be made available within 3 months from the date that NICE issues the guidance. In some situations the 3 month funding direction will be waived and this will be clearly stated in the guidance. Once funding is in place, work with the clinical leads to put the action plan into practice.

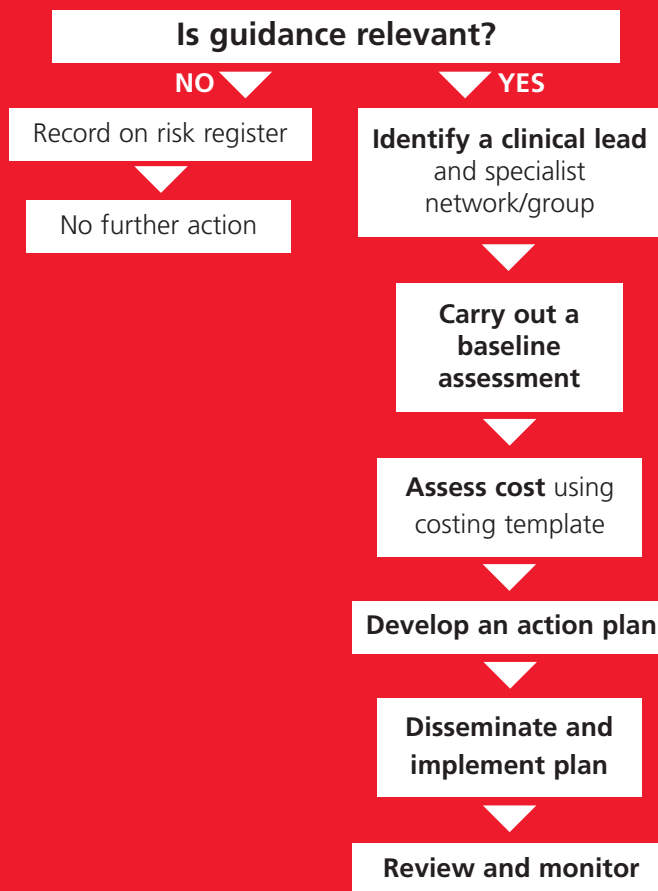
Review and monitor

Implementation of the technology appraisal guidance should be reviewed and monitored, and the results fed back to the board. To assist with this process suggested audit criteria are provided in each specific piece of guidance.



**The NICE
costing template
will help you confirm
the cost of
implementation**

Diagram 2. Process for implementing clinical guidelines



Process for clinical guidelines

NICE guidelines generally cover broad areas of clinical care. Implementation is therefore likely to be complex, potentially involving service changes, staff training and recruitment, plus changes to clinical practice. As a result, full implementation is likely to take place over a number of years.

Use diagram 2 to plan for the implementation of specific clinical guidelines. We have expanded the key steps in more detail below.

Is the guidance relevant?

When a draft of the guideline is issued for consultation, work with the implementation team to decide whether the guidance is relevant to your organisation. Consider whether the recommendations will have an impact on other organisations in your health community and if so, whether a collaborative approach to implementation planning is needed.

If the guidance is not relevant, remember to add it to your organisation's risk register (see page 26).

Identify a clinical lead

Work with the team to identify a clinical lead to take a lead on implementation. The clinical lead is likely to be a prominent figure who will champion the guideline and inspire others. The breadth of most guidelines means that the clinical lead will also need input from a specialist group or network to oversee implementation. In most cases there will be existing groups that can fulfil this function, such as cancer networks or mental health teams. If working collaboratively and the guideline covers both primary and secondary care, identify leads in both types of organisation to work together to develop a seamless action plan.

Carry out a baseline assessment

Once the guideline has been published, the clinical lead should work with the relevant specialist group to compare current practice with the recommendations. This information could be gathered through informal discussions or by using a questionnaire. This baseline assessment will help identify exactly what your organisation is doing now and what needs to change in light of the guideline. The implementation advice provided by NICE should help you.

Consider, for example, how the recommendations will have an impact on:

- patient numbers
- staffing
- equipment and training
- budgets
- service provision.

Assess cost

Assess how much it will cost to implement the guideline using the costing template provided by NICE. It might be possible to make some of the required changes using existing resources, and there may be potential for savings to be achieved, or capacity freed up to be used for other things. Discuss this assessment with the whole implementation team.

Develop an action plan

The clinical lead, in conjunction with the relevant specialist group, should develop an action plan. This should be informed by the costing process and the implementation advice provided by NICE. The plan should detail the steps needed to achieve compliance, and it is likely to include multiple milestones over a period of years. It should be submitted to the implementation team for approval and consideration of financial implications.

An example template for an action plan is given on page 28.

Disseminate and implement plan

Once the action plan and assessment of cost have been approved, the work of implementing the action plan begins.

We have included some notes on dissemination of the guideline and the action plan on page 21. The implementation advice and the slides sets provided by NICE should help you.

Review and monitor

Implementation of the clinical guideline should also be reviewed and monitored by the implementation team, with the results fed back to the board.

Diagram 3. Process for implementing public health guidance



Process for public health guidance

NICE public health guidance is likely to cover broad aspects of disease prevention or health promotion. Implementation will therefore probably be complex, potentially involving several different organisations, staff training and recruitment issues, plus changes to public health practice. As a result, full implementation is likely to take place over a number of years.

We have based the process for implementing public health guidance on our experience of implementing clinical guidelines. We recognise that other models may emerge and we will update this process as appropriate and publish further support around the implementation of public health guidance.

Use diagram 3 to plan for the implementation of individual pieces of public health guidance. We have expanded the key steps in more detail below.

Is the guidance relevant?

Work with the implementation team to decide whether the guidance is relevant to your organisation, or if it will have an impact on other organisations in your health community. In many cases, it is likely that a collaborative approach to implementation planning will be required.

If the guidance is not relevant, remember to add it to your organisation's risk register (see page 26).

Identify a public health lead

Work with the implementation team to identify a public health lead and a relevant network or partnership to take a lead on implementation. Consider involving your local strategic partnership. The public health lead is likely to be a prominent figure who will champion the guidance and inspire others.

For some pieces of guidance it might be a good idea to identify multiple leads to share the work. As the guidance is likely to cover more than one organisation – for example, an NHS organisation and a local authority – identify leads in both types of organisation to work together to develop a seamless action plan.

Carry out a baseline assessment

Once the guidance has been published, work alongside the public health lead to compare current activity with the recommendations. This information could be gathered through informal discussions or by using a more formal questionnaire. This baseline assessment will help identify exactly what your organisation and others are doing now and what needs to change in light of the guidance.

Consider, for example, how the recommendations will have an impact on:

- at risk groups
- staffing
- equipment and training
- configuration of services.

Assess cost

Assess how much it will cost to implement the action plan and be compliant using the costing template provided by NICE. It might be possible to make some of the required changes using existing resources, and there may be potential for savings to be achieved, or capacity freed up to be used for other things. Consider identifying potential longer term savings as a consequence of earlier preventative action. Discuss this assessment with the whole implementation team.

Develop an action plan

The public health lead, in conjunction with the relevant network or partnership, should develop an action plan. This should be informed by the costing process and the implementation advice provided by NICE. The plan should detail the steps needed to achieve compliance, and it is likely to include multiple milestones over a period of years. It should be submitted to the implementation team for approval and consideration of financial implications.

An example template for an action plan is given on page 28.

Disseminate and implement plan

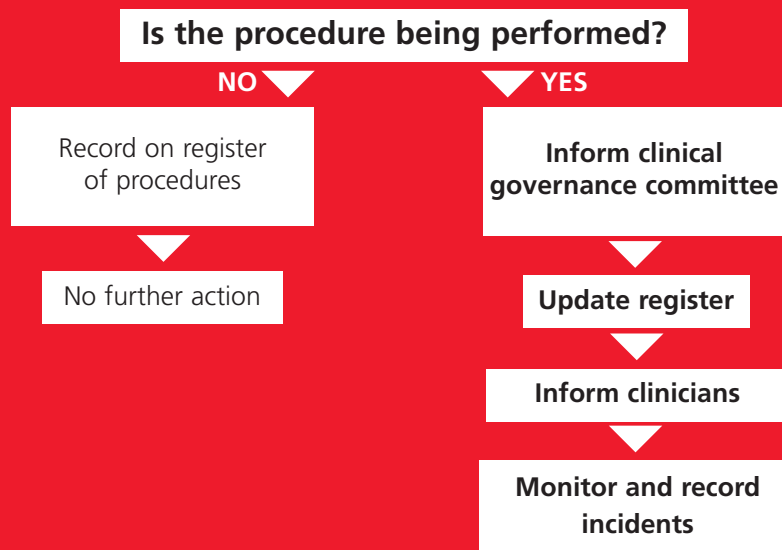
Once the action plan and assessment of cost have been approved by the implementation team, the work of implementing the action plan begins. To ensure effective implementation all relevant organisations should sign up to the action plan – for example, via a local area agreement.

We have included some notes on dissemination of the guidance and the action plan on page 21. The implementation advice and the slides sets provided by NICE should help you.

Review and monitor

Implementation of the guidance should also be reviewed and monitored, with the results fed back to the board.

Diagram 4. Process for implementing interventional procedures



Process for interventional procedures

NICE interventional procedures guidance provides advice on the safety and efficacy of new interventional procedures. In general, this advice falls into three categories: procedures that are approved for normal use; procedures that should not be used; and those that may be used with certain safeguards, often relating to training, special consent or audit of outcomes.

You should ensure that your organisation has systems in place for recording each piece of interventional procedures guidance, and ensure that these systems are widely known and followed by everyone. To facilitate this, many trusts have developed registers of all procedures being carried out by the trust as well as interventional procedures issued by NICE and all procedures notified to NICE.

Use diagram 4 to plan for the implementation of specific interventional procedure guidance from NICE. We have explained the key steps in more detail in the following pages.

Is the procedure being performed?

When new interventional procedures guidance is issued, check your register to see if it is being carried out in your organisation. If it is being performed or is likely to be performed, inform the clinical governance committee.

If the procedure is not being performed and the guidance is not relevant, remember to add it to your organisation's risk register (see page 26).



**Keep your clinical
governance committee
informed of any new
procedures**

Inform the clinical governance committee

Depending on the recommendations in the interventional procedures guidance, the committee may need to put the following processes in place to comply with the guidance:

- provision of information for patients, including consent forms
- arrangements for monitoring and reporting clinical incidents
- appropriate training of staff undertaking the procedure
- audit of outcomes.

Update register and inform clinicians

Ensure that decisions made by the committee are recorded in the register and that relevant clinicians are aware of the outcome.

Monitor and record incidents

Audits should be carried out to ensure compliance with the guidance. A central database within the trust for recording outcomes and incident reports for untoward events would facilitate this process.

Notifying NICE of new procedures

When considering performing a new procedure for the first time, healthcare professionals should check the NICE website to see whether NICE has issued guidance or is in the process of developing guidance on it. If there is no NICE guidance, approval of the clinical governance committee should be sought. The committee should also notify the procedure on NICE's website and update their own register.

Part 3. Implementation for commissioners

The way NHS organisations commission services is changing to support patient choice. In terms of commissioning services where NICE guidance has an impact, as a commissioner you will need to develop processes that take into account the core and developmental standards.

The Healthcare Commission will assess compliance with core standards as outlined in *Assessment for improvement: the annual health check*. It will look at whether commissioning organisations have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the services provided by independent contractors meet the relevant aspects of each standard, and that they have taken account of the standards when commissioning services.

The Healthcare Commission has defined reasonable steps as shown below

- With regard to its independent contractors, the primary care trust (PCT) should have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the services provided by independent contractors are meeting the relevant aspects of the standard. For example, this could be through the work of the professional executive committee (PEC), by reviewing information from the quality and outcomes framework (QOF), or by engaging with local networks (for example, the local dental practice board, local prescribing committee, local optometry committees, etc.).
- For their commissioned services, the PCT should have appropriate mechanisms through which they could identify and, where appropriate, respond to any significant concerns arising from their commissioned services with regard to the element.

For further up-to-date information on the Healthcare Commission approach to inspection visit: www.healthcarecommission.org.uk

In addition, it may be useful to consider ensuring that as a commissioner you:

- are doing all that any other organisation may do in your position
- know the extent of compliance by independent contractors
- have an action plan that addresses ways to improve compliance, giving greater weight where there is greater risk to patients
- appropriately consider and use all available powers and influence over independent contractors, seeking to improve the position. This may include ensuring that service level agreements for existing and new services include the requirement for organisations to take into account the standards relating to NICE guidance
- are aware of the adequacy and quality of information that is available in assessing compliance and take steps to validate and improve sources (for example, the quality and outcomes framework).

Commissioning briefs

Next year NICE will develop additional implementation support tools to help commissioners to implement NICE guidance.

Useful information

Systematic reviews

Systematic reviews of implementation models:

Fixsen DL, Naoom SF, Blase KA, et al (2005) *Implementation research: a synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231). Available from:

<http://nirn.fmhi.usf.edu/resources/publications/Monograph/>

Grol R, Wensing M, Eccles M, editors (2004) *Improving patient care. The implementation of change in clinical practice*. Oxford: Elsevier

Greenhalgh T, Robert G, Bate P, et al. (2005) *Diffusion of innovations in health service organisations: a systematic literature review*. Oxford: Blackwell
BMJ Books

Standards

Department of Health (July 2004) *National standards, local action, health and social care standards and planning framework*. London: Department of Health. Available from: www.dh.gov.uk

Department of Health (July 2004) *Standards for better health*. London: Department of Health. Available from: www.dh.gov.uk

Assessment

Healthcare Commission (July 2005) *Assessment for improvement: the annual health check*. London: Healthcare Commission. Available from: www.healthcarecommission.org.uk

Financial

Payment by Results, search on www.dh.gov.uk

Audit Commission (September 2005) *Managing the financial implications of NICE guidance*. London: Audit Commission. Available from: www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Public health

For information on local area agreements, search on:

- the Deputy Prime Minister's website: www.odpm.gov.uk
- the Improvement and Development Agency website: www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk

The NICE website

The legal status of technology appraisals:
www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=206924

Department of Health letter on implementing guidance:
www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=207288

Implementing interventional procedures:
www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=201822

How you can get involved

You can get involved in our implementation programme. Send us your comments on our support tools – your views will help improve future products. To get involved or to find out more, visit our website, www.nice.org.uk and click on Implementation or email implementation@nice.org.uk

You can:

- join our implementation external reference group
- email us your comments
- tell us about your experiences – we will share them.

Acknowledgements

Many people working to implement NICE guidance will have read *Implementing NICE guidance: A practical handbook for professionals* published by the National Prescribing Centre in 2001. This invaluable book provides checklists, practical examples and further reading. Our guide has evolved from this handbook, essentially updating and building on the foundations provided; our thanks.

We are grateful to the many organisations and individuals that have contributed to the development of this guide. A list of these contributors is available on our website.

To find out more, visit our website www.nice.org.uk/implementation

N0943
ISBN 1-84629-114-3
5k 1P Dec 05



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