Board meeting

18 September 2025

Quality Standards process guide update

Purpose of paper

For approval

Board action required

The Board is asked to:

* Consider the updated process guide for quality standards and approve it for public consultation
* Delegate to Guidance Executive approval of any subsequent changes to the manual post-consultation and response to consultation comments.

Brief summary

The NICE quality standards process guide is scheduled for update to incorporate the [interim process statement](https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg43/chapter/appendix-interim-process-statement-for-a-more-proportionate-approach-to-quality-standard) and to enable flexible approaches to deliver useful and usable outputs.

Board sponsor

Professor Jonathan Benger, Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and interim Director of the Centre for Guidelines.

Introduction

The NICE quality standards process guide is scheduled for update to incorporate the [interim process statement](https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg43/chapter/appendix-interim-process-statement-for-a-more-proportionate-approach-to-quality-standard) and to enable flexible approaches to deliver useful and usable outputs.

Background

NICE quality standards have traditionally been developed after guideline publication using one development approach: the Quality Standards Advisory Committee. In July 2024 an interim process statement was approved by Board to support the changing needs of the health and care system, and ensure NICE outputs are relevant, timely, useable and effective.

This updated process guide incorporates that interim process statement and includes further evolutions intended to reduce duplication of effort for stakeholders and present a range of options that could be employed to ensure timely and useful quality standards.

Main changes

The potential evidence sources used to underpin quality standards has been expanded to include guidelines from developers such as royal colleges and reports from national inquiries. The quality of clinical guidelines will be assessed using AGREE II. Evidence sources not suitable for assessment using AGREE II will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (see section 1.4).

Previously the process guide presented a linear rigid approach to quality standard development using the Quality Standards Advisory Committee. The updated process guide builds on the interim process statement and presents a range of options that could be employed to ensure timely and useful quality standards. These include utilisation of guideline committees and working groups (see section 3).

To reduce duplication of effort in the health and care system, the updated process guide allows for quality standards produced externally to be incorporated into, or cross-referred to from, the quality standard library (see section 3.4).

The length of consultation required for process guide updates is currently 3 months. However, in line with other recent process guide updates we intend on consulting for 4 weeks and changing this stipulation in the process guide itself (see section 10.1).

Cross organisational impact

The updated process guide will support continuing efforts to use guideline committees in the development of quality standards and produce timely and relevant outputs.

Board action required

The Board is asked to consider the updated quality standards process guide and approve it for public consultation.

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