

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Centre for Public Health Excellence

Review Decision

Review of the public health guidance on Behaviour Change (PH6)

1 Background information

Guidance issue date: 2007
Three year review: 2010

2 Process for updating guidance

The process for updating NICE public health guidance is as follows:

- NICE convenes an expert group to consider whether any new evidence or significant changes in policy and practice would be likely to lead to substantively different recommendations. The expert group consisted of coopted members to the original committee that developed the guidance, and other relevant experts in the field
- NICE consults with stakeholders on its proposal for updating the guidance.
- NICE amends its proposal, in light of feedback from stakeholder consultation.
- NICE adds any guidance updates to the work programme.

A meeting was held on 21 Oct 2010 to discuss with experts if there is a need to update the Public Health Guidance on Behaviour Change. The following attended:

Gina Netto (Heriot Watt University), Susan Michie (University College London, PHAC member), Gareth Williams (Cardiff University, review author for original guidance), Robert West (University College London, original PDG member), Dominic King (Imperial College London), Ivo Vlaeve (Imperial College London), Theresa Marteau (Kings College London), Michael Hallsworth (Institute for Government), Anna – Maren Ashford (Behavioural Insights team, Cabinet Office).

3 Consideration of the evidence and practice

The expert group considered the following:

- Has any new evidence been identified by the expert panel?
- Have there been any changes in practice or are any of the recommendations out of date?
- What was the perspective of the expert panel?
- Implementation and uptake of recommendations and post publication feedback
- Relationship to other NICE guidance

The panel noted that there has been considerable research and review activity on the general subject of behaviour change, and on the effectiveness of specific behaviour change approaches in different topic areas, since the NICE guidance was published. However, it was generally agreed that this new evidence alone was not sufficient to require the recommendations in the NICE guidance to be revised. One developing area of research - on health-related behaviours and self-regulatory capacity – was identified as a potential

gap in the evidence base assembled for the original guidance. In addition, the panel noted that some work may be required to support national and local application of the guidance, rather than a full update of the evidence.

It was acknowledged that the political landscape has changed since publication. A range of different behaviour change approaches are highlighted in the recent public health white paper, 'Healthy lives, healthy people'. The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee has appointed a sub-committee, under the Chairmanship of Baroness Neuberger, to conduct an inquiry into the effectiveness of behaviour change interventions in achieving government policy goals and helping to meet societal challenges. This sub-committee will consider submissions of evidence from a wide range of organisations and professionals, including NICE. The evidence considered by this committee, and the outcome of the enquiry, will likely have implications for a potential update of the original guidance. The expert group agreed it would be sensible to await the outcome of the inquiry before any further work should be done on updating the NICE public health guidance on behaviour change. and that some work may be needed to be done on *applying* the guidance rather than *updating* the guidance.

Stakeholders were consulted on the proposal to defer the update of the guidance for two years. 15 responses were received. A majority of respondents agreed. However, the consensus was that waiting for two years was unnecessary.

4 Equality and diversity considerations

No evidence was identified to indicate that the guidance does not comply with anti-discrimination and equalities legislation.

5 Review Decision

- The guidance should be reviewed again in October 2011 following the outcome of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee inquiry.

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