

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE**

**An Education Strategy to support
implementation of NICE Guidance**

1 Executive Summary

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has an extensive programme to support the implementation and uptake of its guidance. As part of this, the Institute proposes a set of new educational initiatives. The underlying principle is to support organisations responsible for education in developing a NHS and related workforce that understands the context and values underpinning NICE guidance and have the skills to put these into practice.

The Institute proposes three sets of educational activities: (a) Engagement with key partners to ensure that the educational themes identified by NICE are considered in the development and revision of educational standards, learning objectives, and curricula; (b) Education packages and tools to facilitate related learning; and (c) Support for educational initiatives designed to develop future leaders in evidence-based healthcare. These activities relate to a wide range of health and related professional groups at different career stages, and therefore the Institute will adopt a sequential approach in their delivery.

A number of partners, either involved in setting educational standards or in delivering education for these professional group, are identified for collaboration. NICE proposes to work with these partners to ensure that the education themes relevant to the implementation of NICE guidance are taken into consideration in setting standards and delivery of education. These themes include: (a) practical understanding of evidence-based medicine; (b) cost-effectiveness and opportunity costs and their application in setting priorities within healthcare i.e. 'balancing act' between the primacy of patients' welfare and the principle of social justice; and (c) implementing clinical guidelines in practice, understanding potential barriers and levers to implementation.

The Institute will ensure that the proposed educational activities are considered in its annual business planning process and it has the mechanisms to monitor and evaluate their progress.

2 Introduction

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) was established partly as a response to emerging evidence that variations in clinical practice lead to unacceptable inequalities and inefficiencies in health care. The Institute develops national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. Guidance is developed in three key areas: clinical practice, public health and health technology evaluation.

In 2004, NICE launched an implementation programme to support the uptake of its guidance. The programme has three key components: developing tools to help local organisations overcome barriers to implementing NICE guidance; generating “leverage” within the system, by working with other national organisations to facilitate implementation; and monitoring the uptake of guidance. Although considerable progress has been made with these initiatives, it is clear that implementation of NICE guidance within the NHS can still be challenging. To support health professionals in enhancing their knowledge of the latest guidance and applying it in clinical practice, the Institute has developed several online educational tools. These tools have been widely used by the intended target audiences, facilitated by the electronic links of the host organisations.

This document describes a set of new educational initiatives as part of NICE’s implementation strategy. It outlines a general approach to informing knowledge in relation to evidence-based practice and more specifically in relation to guidance topics.

3 Background

NICE guidance is developed mainly to minimise variation in clinical practice and expedite application of effective advances within health care. However, implementing guidance is a complex process largely due to several barriers that preclude professionals from following it. Interventions that facilitate uptake of such guidance include education of health professionals in evidence-based practice. Educational initiatives, therefore, carry the potential to support

implementation of NICE guidelines. A recent survey carried out by the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine highlights that the education on evidence-based medicine in the UK medical schools is generally patchy and mainly focussed on literature searches and critical appraisal skills. Their curricula have little emphasis on skills to put evidence into practice. This points towards a gap in the education of medical undergraduates in particular and other health professionals in general around evidence-based medicine, which could be an impediment to the implementation of NICE guidance.

4 Underlying principles

In order to support implementation of its guidance, NICE aims to work with organisations responsible for undergraduate and postgraduate education to assist in the development of the NHS and related workforce to ensure that it has:

- An understanding of the context and values that underpin the methods NICE employs in developing its guidance (i.e. primacy of patient welfare, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, equity and distributive justice)
- The ethos and ability to provide the best possible health care within a resource limited healthcare system (NHS)
- The ability to communicate the rationale behind NICE guidance to colleagues, patients and public where appropriate
- The ability to utilise every appropriate clinical encounter as an opportunity for health improvement
- The leadership and organisational skills to put its clinical and public health guidance into practice

5 Aims and Objectives

These are as follows:

- To engage with key partners to ensure that the educational themes identified by NICE are considered in the development and revision of educational standards, learning objectives, and curricula of the higher education institutions

- To commission education packages and tools to facilitate learning related to the education themes identified by the Institute
- To develop online education tools to support NICE clinical and public health guidelines and provide these via its web portal
- To ensure that NICE guidance is disseminated to students and trainees in medicine, healthcare and allied professionals as appropriate
- To support educational initiatives designed to develop future leaders in evidence-based health care among health professionals

6 Audience

The initiatives proposed here are to support efforts to meet the educational needs of NHS and related staff in order to improve implementation of NICE guidance. The audience includes the following key professional groups.

- Doctors
- Nurses, Midwives, Health visitors and Dentists
- Pharmacists and other allied health professions
- Public health professionals
- NHS managers

Educational initiatives are proposed to follow the above sequential order of professional groups at three key stages of their careers as follows:

- Future NHS workforce e.g. undergraduate students
- Current NHS workforce in training e.g. GP registrars
- Current trained NHS workforce e.g. consultants, GPs, nurse practitioners, nurse consultants etc.

In addition, this strategy is also relevant to those professionals whose work influences health or healthcare, and whose support is important in implementing the majority of NICE's public health and some of its clinical guidance. These include:

- Professionals working in local authorities (e.g. housing, leisure services, youth services)
- Voluntary sector workers

- Staff working in care homes
- Social workers

7 Partners

The Institute has identified key partner organisations, which are involved either in setting educational standards or in delivering education for each professional group. NICE will collaborate with these key partner organisations (Table 1) to meet the objectives of this strategy.

Table 1: Key partners in education

Professional group	Career stage		
	Undergraduate level	Post-graduate & vocational training	CPD
Doctors	General Medical Council Medical School Council Regional medical school networks Medical schools	Post Graduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) UK Foundation Programme Office Royal Colleges Foundation Schools Post-graduate Medical Deaneries	Royal Colleges NHS organisations Continuous Professional Development (CPD) coordinators
Nurses/ Midwives/ Health visitors/Dentists	Nursing and Midwifery Council Nursing & Midwifery schools (Higher Education Institutions) General Dental Council	Royal College of Nursing Royal College of Midwives Faculty of General Dental Practice	
Pharmacists	Royal Pharmaceutical Society Schools of Pharmacy	Royal Pharmaceutical Society	
Allied health professions	Health Professions Council Higher Education Institutions	College of Occupational Therapists Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists The British Psychological Society Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	

		The British Dietetic Association	
Public health practitioners	Higher education institutions	Faculty of Public Health	
NHS managers	Higher education institutions	NHS Graduate Management Training Schemes	NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement
Non-NHS public and voluntary sector workforce	Higher Education Institutions for Health and Social Care		Social Care Institute for Excellence General Social Care Council Skills for Care and Development Patient advocacy groups

7.1 Engagement approach

NICE aims to engage with its partners at three levels as follows:

- National bodies that are responsible for setting educational standards, registration requirements and professional regulations
- Regional bodies and networks to support regional education agenda and share good practice
- Local higher education, NHS and non-NHS organisations to support and develop examples of good practice and support their education curriculum where possible

8 Educational themes

This section outlines some of the main education themes, considered to be important and of interest to NICE's key partners in the implementation of its guidance. The Institute will work with the organisations listed above with the aim of ensuring that these themes are taken into consideration in the development and revisions of educational standards, learning objectives, curricula and assessments. The education themes are as follows:

- A practical understanding of evidence-based medicine that takes account of all dimensions of evidence
- Concepts of cost-effectiveness and opportunity costs and their application in making clinical decisions and setting priorities within healthcare
- Equity and efficiency and a weighted application of the two principles to maximise health gains within limited resources without compromising fairness
- ‘Balancing act’ between the primacy of patients’ welfare and the principle of social justice i.e. accountability to taxpayers and responsibility towards individual patient’s (professionalism)
- Implementing clinical guidelines in practice, understanding potential barriers and levers to implementation and knowing ways to address these (implementation science)
- Evaluation of existing practice against agreed national standards and ability to change practice to bring improvement (healthcare audit)
- Ability to utilise every appropriate encounter with a patient as an opportunity for health improvement

For each professional group, the learning objectives need to be modified according to the stage of their professional career.

9 Proposed Activities

Following is a proposed set of educational activities, which will help in ensuring progress towards the objectives stated on page 4 in the next three years. However, these proposals will be considered within each year’s business planning process and will be scrutinized accordingly along with the other priorities within the Institute.

Engagement activities

These will involve:

- Working with national organisations and bodies involved in setting education standards and/or curricula for NHS workforce to ensure that the education themes identified above are taken into consideration by

- Engaging with the General Medical Council and participating in the consultation regarding the development of new “Tomorrow’s Doctor” document
- Working with Medical School Council to engage with medical schools in order to support their curricula
- Collaborating with Nursing and Midwifery Council to ensure that the standards and quality assurance framework set by the Council for the education and training of nurses, midwives and community public health nurses take the above education themes into consideration
- Engaging with Royal Pharmaceutical Society to ensure that the professional and educational standards set by the Society take account of the relevant education themes
- Establishing an understanding with Royal Colleges of various medical and surgical specialties to support the education standards, curricula of specialist training, examinations, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) policies
- Engaging with Post Graduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) to allow the relevant education themes to be taken into consideration in setting quality assurance framework and approval process of curricula in relation to specialist training in medicine. NICE will also seek ways to disseminate its guidance to professionals in training through PMETB.
- Collaborating with the UK Foundation Programme Office to support the foundation programme’s standards, curriculum and accreditation in accordance with the education themes. NICE will also explore ways to disseminate its guidance to clinicians in foundation programmes.
- Working with Royal Colleges of Nursing and Midwives to ensure that their education and accreditation policies, training courses and activities take account of the relevant education themes
- Engaging with regional bodies and networks to support the regional education agenda, develop and share examples of good practice, and contributing towards the curricula and evaluation frameworks. This will involve engaging with:

- Foundation schools
- Post Graduate Medical and Dental Deaneries
- Regional advisors, clinical tutors, chair of medical education committees in Trusts, CPD coordinators, and training programme directors of various Colleges
- NHS Graduate Management training Schemes
- Regional medical school teaching networks
- Working with medical schools and NHS organisations (strategic health authorities and Trusts) to support their curricula and education agenda as well as assist them to develop examples of good practice around evidence-based healthcare
- Collaborating with relevant national or regional organisations which share NICE’s objectives around education in order to impart good practice and avoid duplication. Examples of this would include working with the National Prescribing Centre and Department of Health e-learning projects.
- Seeking opportunities to provide educational support outside the NHS to other public sector bodies and major voluntary sector organisations. This is highly relevant to the public sector and voluntary organisations that play a key role in delivering long-term care and prevention services, reaching vulnerable groups, and addressing wider determinants of health. This will include for example:
 - Social Care Institute for Excellence
 - General Social Care Council
 - Skills for Care and Development
 - Patient Advocacy Groups

9.1 *Education packages and tools*

NICE will develop education packages in order to facilitate learning related to the identified education themes. These packages will consist of sets of educational materials and tools to assist tutors while delivering education related to the relevant themes as well as to help students in self-directed learning. This will include:

- Developing and piloting education packages that incorporate the education themes in collaboration with the educational institutions, teaching networks, foundation schools and Royal Colleges. An education needs assessment will be carried out prior to the development of these packages. Some elements in the packages will be specific to individual professional groups while other parts will be generic for wider audience. These packages will support the teaching of evidence-based medicine and will be piloted in one or more higher education institutions. Recent advances in distant and web based learning will be used in development of these packages. Once these are evaluated, other higher education institutions will also be supported to adopt these in their teaching.
- Working with local NHS and other related organisations (SHAs, Trusts, local authorities) to develop and pilot education schemes and packages that incorporates the education themes. These packages could be incorporated into local education frameworks and, if possible, supported by local clinical governance arrangements. Such schemes would complement the Institute's other activities to support local implementation of its guidance.
- Continuing to develop web based learning materials specific to new NICE guidelines. The institute will work towards providing supportive education materials to help implementation of all of its clinical and public health guidelines.
- As the Institute moves towards providing guidance and related support tools in electronic media, all educational materials will also be provided alongside in that format. The Institute will work towards providing a single web portal to provide these supportive educational tools.

9.2 *Supporting leaders in evidence-based healthcare*

As a national leader in evidence-based healthcare, NICE will support educational initiatives designed to provide opportunities for health professionals to develop as leaders in evidence-based health care and acquire skills related to the implementation of NICE guidance. Such initiatives can help in developing and supporting a community of health professionals who have the knowledge and skills to lead professional teams within the NHS

in enhancing the use of evidence in practice. In addition, NICE will also explore opportunities to support generic leadership programmes in the NHS in placing emphasis on evidence-based healthcare. In the first instance, exploratory work will be conducted to determine the need and feasibility of these initiatives. This is likely to involve contacting other NHS and educational organisations who offer similar programmes to provide support and develop these initiatives in partnership to avoid duplication. Box 1 presents some examples to illustrate how these educational initiatives may look like.

Box 1: Examples of educational initiatives to support future leaders in evidence-based healthcare

- Example 1: a short three-day programme in the implementation of NICE guidance targeted at health professionals who have completed their specialist or other professional training e.g. GPs, consultants. This programme could help health professionals who are well advanced in their careers to take up a leading role in implementing guidelines within their organisations. This could be based on interactive seminars, self directed learning, ongoing vocational support and fostering learning sets.
- Example 2: a two-year part-time fellowship programme in the implementation of evidence-based guidelines targeted at health professionals in the earlier aspects of their career e.g. specialist registrars. This programme could generate a community of future leaders in evidence-based health care and allow them to take on leadership roles within NHS to guide implementing evidence into practice. It could offer a mix of educational activities including supervised projects around implementing specific guidance in an area of their interest, interactive seminars, self directed learning, opportunities to work with leaders in implementing evidence into practice and establish learning networks.

10 Evaluation

The Institute will evaluate its activities to ensure that the educational interventions are meeting the needs of its audience. Detailed evaluations of the online education tools and other initiatives will also be carried out.

11 Implementation and Monitoring

The proposed deliverables in this document will be considered on an annual basis at each year's business planning process along with other priorities. Agreed elements of these proposals will be included in the subsequent business plans. An education action plan will be prepared following agreement on each year's business plan. An education advisory group consisting of NICE's key partners will help in ensuring that the planned activities meet the needs of the intended audience and are inline with the themes considered to be important to them.

This will be a three-year 'rolling' strategy with an annual review and update. The yearly review of the agreed milestones and targets on these action plans will inform progress against this strategy. The implementation directorate will be accountable to the institute's board and will present regular progress on the education activities.