

Overview of technology appraisals: a factsheet for patient and carer organisations

The National Institute for Care and Health Excellence (NICE) has written this overview for national patient and carer organisations who participate, or are interested in participating, in NICE's technology appraisals.

We aim to give you an introduction to technology appraisals followed by a description of the process and how you can get involved.

In this document, we will refer to you as 'you' and sometimes as 'patient and carer organisation', we will refer to the Public Involvement Programme as 'we' and the NICE technology appraisal programme as 'NICE'.

While this document is an overview, there are other supplementary documents signposted throughout for more in depth information on particular areas. They are:

- Scoping technology appraisals: a factsheet for patient and carer organisations.
- Developing technology appraisals guidance: a factsheet for patient and carer organisations
- Hints and tips on nominating patient experts.

We have also written a document for individual patient experts on how they can participate in technology appraisals called:

- Hints and tips for patient experts.

We also have guides on the methods and process of technology appraisals and these are available on the NICE website. These are not specifically written for patient and carer organisations. They are:

- [Guide to the methods of technology appraisal](#)
- [Technology appraisal process guides](#)

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the Public Involvement Adviser for technology appraisals, Heidi Livingstone at heidi.livingstone@nice.org.uk or 020 7045 2183.

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1 Overview of technology appraisals for patient and carer organisations

1a What are NICE technology appraisals?

The word 'technology' includes all types of medical intervention – for example, drugs, medical devices, types of operation and health education programmes.

In the context of NICE a 'technology' frequently means a particular drug.

1b When does NICE appraise new technologies?

When NICE is informed that new technologies (or drugs) will soon receive their licence (are safe to be sold to the NHS) most come to NICE to be appraised. You will also hear the term Marketing Authorisation which means that a technology is both safe and may be sold in the UK.

1c Why does NICE appraise new technologies?

The purpose of the appraisal is to decide whether the new technology works well (is clinically effective) and is good value for money (cost effective). If NICE decides it is both these things then it will recommend the technology.

Often, a new technology may be better but more expensive than a previous technology. Every time NICE recommends the use of such a technology (drug or medical device) to the NHS, savings from existing budgets have to be made to pay for the new treatment. In practice, this often means that something else can no longer be paid for. NICE needs to be as certain as possible that the effectiveness and benefits of the new therapy would outweigh the potential cut of a service or treatment for patients with the same or other conditions.

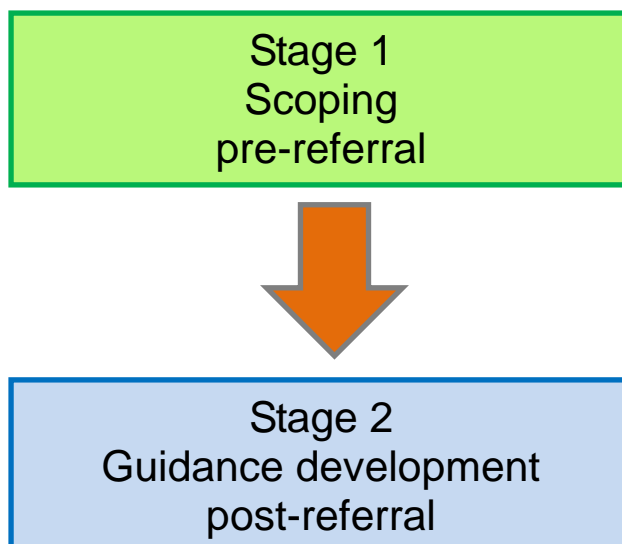
NICE technology appraisals guidance is mandatory; it helps reduce variation in availability of a technology across the country. When NICE recommends a technology for use in England, NHS England must make sure it is available to those people it could help, normally within three months of the guidance being issued.

1d What is the technology appraisal process?

Technology appraisals have two stages:

1. scoping (pre-referral).
2. guidance development (post referral).

At NICE, we think it is important for patient and carer groups to be involved in both stages to make sure their views can be included.



1e What is the difference between single technology appraisals and multiple technology appraisals?

Most of the technology appraisal guidance that we produce is single technology appraisal (STA) guidance, which means one technology (usually a drug) for one condition. We also produce multiple technology appraisal (MTA) guidance. This is usually for one condition and several technologies (usually drugs) but may also be for one technology and several conditions.

We aim to produce guidance as close to the licence for a drug being issued so most new topics tend to be single technology appraisals as the process for appraising them is quicker than for multiple technology appraisals. When published guidance is reviewed, it turns into a multiple technology appraisal. The process for both types of appraisal is very similar and any differences will be included clearly in this document.

1f How long does NICE take to produce a technology appraisal?

It will usually take NICE about 43 weeks to develop single technology appraisal guidance and 60 weeks for multiple technology appraisal guidance. This is the time it takes from your invitation to participate in the appraisal (after scoping and referral) to the publication of final guidance.

1g How does NICE choose the technologies for appraisal?

The majority of potential topics are identified via the National Institute for Health Research [Horizon Scanning Centre](#) at the University of Birmingham. The topics will then go through the NICE topic selection process and must meet specific criteria to be considered for the technology appraisals programme.

1h Who makes the decision about which technologies should be recommended?

An independent committee called the NICE technology appraisal committee considers the evidence and makes recommendations on the use of technologies in England. Its members come from a variety of backgrounds, including the NHS and healthcare professionals, academics, health economists and lay members.

1i How is the decision made?

The committee makes decisions based around all the evidence, which include:

- Written evidence from the
 - Patient and carer organisation(s)
 - Manufacturer(s)
 - Professional organisation(s)
 - Patient and clinical experts
- the academic group's report (either Assessment Group for multiple technology appraisals or Evidence Review Group for single technology appraisals)
- responses given by experts to the committee's questions.

Based on all the evidence, the committee considers 2 main things:

1. Clinical effectiveness – how well the technology works, compared with current treatment in the NHS.
2. Cost effectiveness – is the technology good value for public money, compared with current treatment in the NHS?

For more information on why NICE makes these decisions, see question 1c above, and for more information on committee decision making see Hints and tips for patient experts.

1j Glossary

Patients and patient groups have told us that a glossary would help them better understand clinical and technology terminology used by NICE. You can browse or search by term using the NICE glossary which you can find on the NICE website (<http://www.nice.org.uk/website/glossary/glossary.jsp>).

Alternatively, if you prefer a PDF version of a glossary of technology appraisal terms please ask Heidi Livingstone (heidi.livingstone@nice.org.uk) in the NICE Public Involvement Programme.

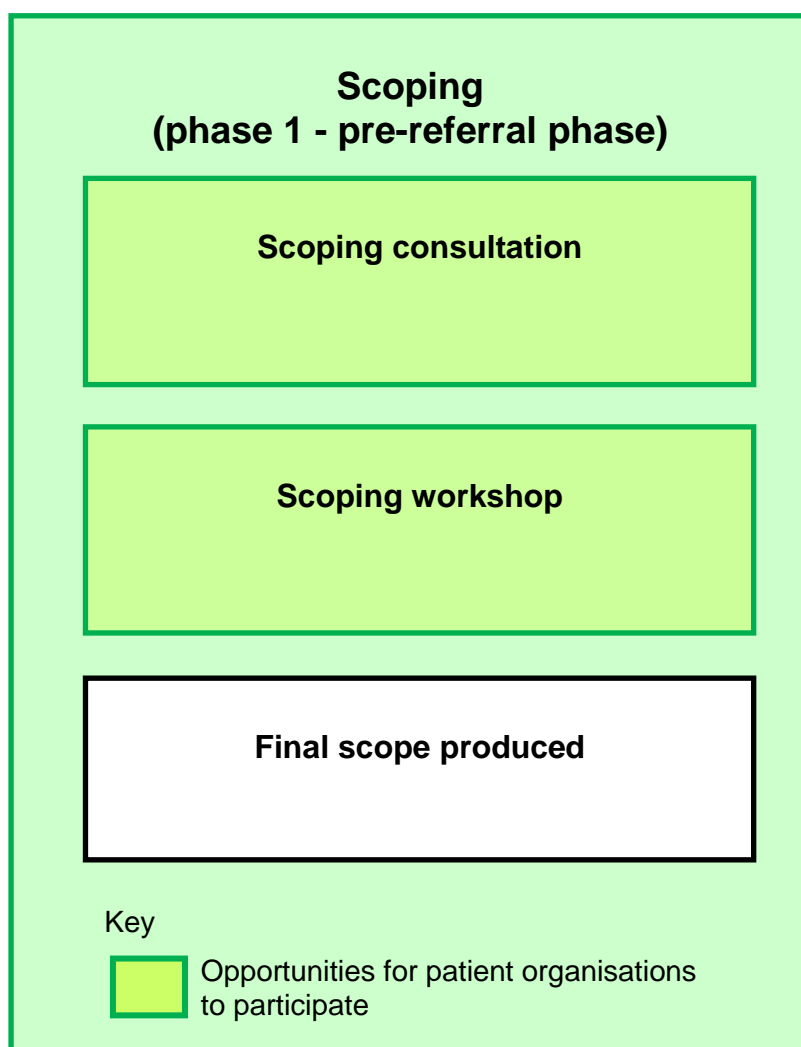
2 How patient organisations can get involved in technology appraisals

2a Scoping (pre-referral – before a topic is referred to NICE for appraisal)

There are two opportunities for you (a patient and carer organisation) to get involved in scoping:

1. The scoping consultation (this is a written consultation). The consultation is on the draft scope, draft remit and the provisional matrix. NICE will send you a consultation reply form where you can enter your comments.
2. The scoping workshop (oral consultation). The workshop takes place after all the written comments have been received so that they can be included in the discussion.

Patient organisations can participate in either the written scoping consultation or the scoping workshop, although **we recommend you do both**.



For more information on scoping – see the factsheet on scoping for patient organisations.

2b Guidance development (post-referral)

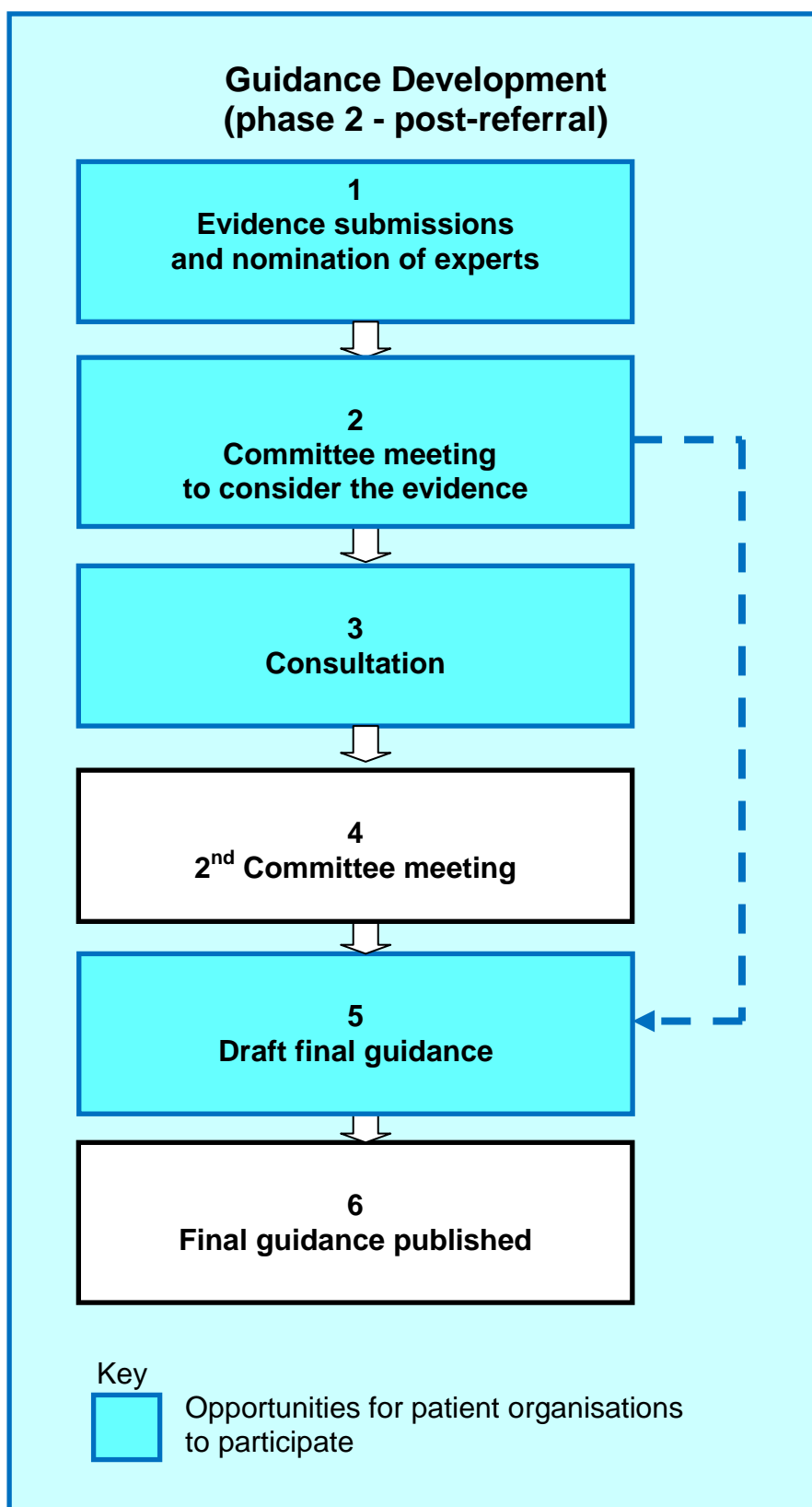
There are three ways that patient organisations can get involved:

1. Providing a written organisational submission
2. Nominating experts to attend the committee and provide a written statement:
 - a. patient experts
 - b. clinical experts.
3. Commenting on the appraisal consultation document or (ACD) and the final appraisal determination (FAD).

Additionally for multiple technology appraisals, the patient groups and other consultees will be invited to comment in writing on the assessment report produced by the independent academic group. NICE will send you the report and invite you to comment before the first committee meeting.

Please see diagram of post-referral guidance stages overleaf.

The Public Involvement Programme recommends that patient organisations use all opportunities to participate.



For more information on scoping – see the factsheet on developing technology appraisals for patient and carer organisations.