

HealthTech Programme

Digital technologies for managing mild-to-moderate symptoms of hip or knee osteoarthritis

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Have the potential equality issues identified during the scoping process been addressed by the committee, and, if so, how?

The committee considered the equality issues identified during scoping.

Digital technologies are accessed via a smartphone, tablet or computer, people need regular access to a device with internet access to use the technologies. Some people may find it more difficult to use or engage with digital technologies, such as people who are less comfortable or skilled in using digital technology and people who have limited access to equipment and the internet. One committee member noted that local and national charitable organisations and funding may be available to help ensure equity of access to digital technologies and the internet.

Digital literacy skills are needed to appropriately engage with and use the technologies. The committee noted a large digital literacy gap, particularly for those from rural areas. So digital literacy among users, their families and carers was a key consideration. Training for users and their families or carers was discussed as a possible solution to help reduce digital exclusion, with short video instructions suggested at a minimum.

The committee highlighted that people with visual or hearing difficulties, cognitive impairment, manual dexterity problems, learning disabilities, neurodivergent people, those unable to read, write, or understand health-related information (including people who cannot read English) may need additional support to use digital technologies. The need to investigate wider accessibility issues, such as technologies being available in additional languages or easy read format was also highlighted.

The committee agreed that digital inclusion and wider accessibility issues need to be adequately addressed and included within future evidence generation. During scoping it was noted that people's ethnic, religious, and cultural background may affect their views of digital technologies. The committee recommended that digital technologies should be presented as an option, instead of as a replacement for standard care.

2. Have any other potential equality issues been raised in the external assessment report, and, if so, how has the committee addressed these?

The external assessment group did not identify any additional equality issues.

3. Have any other potential equality issues been identified by the committee, and, if so, how has the committee addressed these?

No other potential equality issues or considerations were identified by the committee.

4. Do the preliminary recommendations make it more difficult in practice for a specific group to access the technology compared with other groups? If so, what are the barriers to, or difficulties with, access for the specific group?

No as the digital technologies are recommended as an option alongside standard care.

5. Is there potential for the preliminary recommendations to have an adverse impact on people with disabilities because of something that is a consequence of the disability?

No.

6. Are there any recommendations or explanations that the committee could make to remove or alleviate barriers to, or difficulties with, access identified in questions 4 or 5, or otherwise fulfil NICE's obligations to promote equality?

The equality considerations are discussed in sections 3.19 and 3.20 of the guidance.

7. Have the committee's considerations of equality issues been described in the draft guidance document, and, if so, where?

Equality issues and considerations have been described in sections 3.19 and 3.20 of the draft guidance.

Approved by Associate Director: Rebecca Albrow

Date: 14/10/2025