

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

HealthTech Programme

Equality impact assessment: Topic selection and scoping

GID-HTE10057 Digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis: early value assessment

The impact on equality has been assessed during this evaluation according to the principles of the [NICE Equality scheme](#).

1. Have any potential equality issues been identified during the development of the scope or during selection, and, if so, what are they?

Several potential equality issues have been identified in line with equality considerations for the included technologies. Key issues include:

- Digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis are accessed via a smartphone, tablet or computer. People will need regular access to a device with internet access to use the technologies and people living in the most deprived areas may have more difficulty accessing these resources. So, digital technologies may not be suitable for some people. People who are less comfortable or skilled at using digital technologies may prefer another treatment option. Additional support and resources may also be needed.
- People with visual or hearing difficulties, cognitive impairment, problems with manual dexterity, a learning disability, people who are unable to read or understand health-related information (including people who cannot read English) or neurodivergent people may need additional support to use digital technologies. Some people would benefit from digital technologies being available in a language other than English.
- People's ethnic, religious, and cultural background may affect their views of digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis. People have the right to make informed decisions about their care, including

the use of digital technologies. Healthcare professionals should discuss the language and cultural content of the technologies with patients.

Osteoarthritis is more common in women, people aged 45 and over, people with overweight and obesity and people living in the most deprived areas.

Age, sex, disability and religion or belief are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

2. What is the preliminary view as to what extent these potential equality issues need addressing by the committee?

The committee should consider all the equality issues when making recommendations. Access to self-management programmes for people with mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis may not be improved for those who are unable to engage with a digital service due to a lack of accessibility, lack of equipment, unavailability of internet connection or lack of experience with computers or smartphones. The committee should consider if there are ways to mitigate potential issues when making its recommendations.

3. Have any change to the draft scope been agreed to highlight potential equality issues?

During the scoping workshop, stakeholders highlighted that there is a variation in access to a device with internet access depending on geographical location. Section 8 of the scope has been amended to reflect this.

Stakeholders also highlighted that people living in less deprived areas may be able to access care privately whilst waiting for access to NHS services. But, people in the most deprived areas may not have the resources to access this care. Stakeholders noted that digital technologies may improve access to care and have the potential to reduce health inequalities across the country.

4. Have any additional stakeholders related to potential equality issues been identified during the scoping process, and, if so, have changes to the stakeholder list been made?

No additional stakeholders related to potential equality issues were identified.

Approved by Associate Director: Lizzy Latimer

Date: 20 March 2025