

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

HealthTech programme

Equality impact assessment: guidance development

One-piece closed bags for colostomies: late-stage assessment

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

Draft guidance consultation

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

The committee thoroughly considered the potential equality issues that were identified during scoping. Key considerations related to one-piece closed bags included:

- People having colorectal surgery who may use one-piece closed bags may have an underlying condition such as cancer or inflammatory bowel disease. People who have been diagnosed with cancer or chronic diseases may be considered disabled under the Equality Act (2010).
- Older people or people with underlying skin conditions may be more likely to have fragile skin that is prone to tearing. They may experience a higher rate of peristomal skin complications due to the continued removal and application of the colostomy bag baseplate. It is also reported that women experience a higher rate of peristomal skin complications compared with men ([D'Ambrosio, 2023](#)).
- Some people may need additional support or may struggle to use certain bags because of a visual or cognitive impairment, reduced manual dexterity or a learning disability. Autistic people may also find certain bags unsuitable or may need additional support. People in a wheelchair, people who are sat

for long periods of time or people with excessive sweating may struggle with the durability and security of certain bags.

- One-piece closed bags are mostly offered in beige, grey or clear colours. A small number of bags are offered in black. People may prefer choosing a bag that most closely matches their skin tone if this is available.

Age, disability, gender and race are all protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010).

2. Have any other potential equality issues been highlighted in the company's submission, or patient and carer organisation questionnaires, and, if so, how has the committee addressed these?

A patient organisation submission reiterated that people using one-piece closed bags may be having cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy. They highlighted that people may experience changes in skin condition or stoma output as a result of this treatment, and this may impact the type of bag that is needed.

A patient organisation submission reiterated that the people with a learning disability or people who are unable to read or understand health-related information (including people who cannot read English) may need additional support to understand the options available to them.

A patient organisation submission also highlighted that there may be unequal access to all bags that are suitable for a person across England. It also highlighted that the level of involvement in decision making for people with colostomy also varies across the country.

The committee fully considered these issues and understood that people with a colostomy are individuals with needs that change over time. It stated the importance of maintaining a wide range of product choice and equal access for people with a colostomy.

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

During the committee meeting clinical and patient experts highlighted changes in body shape or skin condition, such as because of pregnancy, aging or hormonal changes may also impact the type of bag that is needed. The committee understood that people with a colostomy are individuals with needs that change over time, and highlighted the importance of maintaining a wide range of product choice.

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. The draft recommendations emphasise the need for stoma care services to have access to the range of one-piece closed bags available for prescription in the NHS, so that everyone with a colostomy can have the most appropriate bag for them.

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. But, the draft guidance highlights that some people may need additional support to understand the choices available to them, such as because of a visual or cognitive impairment, reduced manual dexterity, a learning disability, or for people who are unable to read or understand health-related information (including people who cannot read English). The draft guidance also highlights that autistic people or people with sensory processing difficulties may also find certain bags unsuitable or may need additional support.

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 draft recommendations emphasise the need for stoma care services to have access to the range of one-piece closed bags available for prescription in the NHS, so that everyone with a colostomy can have the most appropriate bag for them.

The 'considerations for healthcare professionals' section highlights the need to provide people with a colostomy with information about a range of one-piece closed bags that are suitable for them, without the influence of sponsorship. The 'considerations for people with the colostomy' section also reiterates that some bags may work better than others, independently of the clinical evidence available.

Section 3.8 of the draft guidance also highlights that some people may need additional support to understand the options available to them, and that some bags may not be suitable.

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

Yes, these have been discussed in the draft recommendations, sections 'considerations for healthcare professionals' and 'considerations for people with a colostomy' and section 3.8 of the draft guidance.

Approved by Programme Director: Anastasia Chalkidou

Date: 08/10/2024

Late-stage assessment guidance document

1. Have any additional potential equality issues been raised during the consultation, and, if so, how has the committee addressed these?

One consultee highlighted that people often prefer to use a one-piece closed bag that closely matches their skin tone, and that some people find this difficult due to the range of bag colours currently available. They noted that if people cannot find a bag that matches their skin tone, it can make adjusting to using their bag more difficult.

Another consultee highlighted that people with a colostomy have access to a range of bag to meet their needs. They also noted that bags with innovations to the baseplate can be beneficial to people with manual dexterity issues, and bags that make less noise may benefit people with sensory processing difficulties.

The committee thoroughly considered these comments during the committee meeting. Section 3.8 of the guidance document has been amended to reflect this discussion and recommendation 1.1 states that stoma care services should have access to a broad range of one-piece closed bags so that adults with a colostomy can have the most appropriate bag for them.

2. If the recommendations have changed after consultation, are there any recommendations that 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, the order of the recommendations has been amended and small wording amendments have been made but this will not impact access for a specific group.

3. If the recommendations have changed after consultation, 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.

4. If the recommendations have changed after consultation, are there any recommendations or explanations that the committee could make to remove or alleviate barriers to, or difficulties with, access identified in questions 2 and 3, or otherwise fulfil NICE's obligations to promote equality?

The committee acknowledge that some people may find certain bags unsuitable, or may need additional support. The committee understood that people with a colostomy are individuals with needs that change over time. It stated the

importance of maintaining a wide range of choice for people with a colostomy. The committee also concluded that more evidence is needed to allow the clinical and cost benefits of one-piece closed bags to be assessed, and recommended that this is collected across different groups of people.

Additional detail has also been added to section 3.6 to clarify that, although this guidance is for people with a colostomy who use one-piece closed bags, some people with a colostomy may prefer to use 2-piece or drainable bags.

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

Yes, equality considerations are discussion in section 3.8 of the guidance document. Having access to a broad range of bags, the importance of shared decision making and the impact of having a stoma is also discussed in section 1, section 3.2, 3.3 and 3.6.

Approved by Associate Director: Lizzy Latimer

Date: 13/05/2025