

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND  
CARE EXCELLENCE**

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE DIRECTORATE**

**QUALITY STANDARDS**

<b>Quality standard topic:</b> Multiple sclerosis
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<b>Output:</b> Equality analysis form – Meeting 1
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## **Introduction**

As outlined in the [Quality Standards process guide](http://www.nice.org.uk) (available from [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)), NICE has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups. The purpose of this form is to document the consideration of equality issues in each stage of the development process before reaching the final output that will be approved by the NICE Guidance Executive. This equality analysis is designed to support compliance with NICE's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

Table 1 lists the equality characteristics and other equality factors NICE needs to consider, i.e. not just population groups sharing the 'protected characteristics' defined in the Equality Act but also those affected by health inequalities associated with socioeconomic factors or other forms of disadvantage. The table does not attempt to provide further interpretation of the protected characteristics. This is because it is likely to be simpler, and more efficient, to use the evidence underpinning the quality standard to define population groups within the broad protected characteristic categories rather than to start with possibly unsuitable checklists created for other purposes, such as social surveys or HR monitoring tools.

The form should be used to:

- confirm that equality issues have been considered and identify any relevant to the topic
- ensure that the quality standards outputs do not discriminate against any of the equality groups
- highlight planned action relevant to equality
- highlight areas where quality standards may advance equality of opportunity.

This form is completed by the NICE quality standards internal team at each stage within the development process:

- Topic overview (to elicit additional comments as part of active stakeholder engagement)
- Quality Standards Advisory Committee – meeting 1
- Quality Standards Advisory Committee – meeting 2

**Table 1**

<b>Protected characteristics</b>
<b>Age</b>
<b>Disability</b>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>
<b>Race</b>
<b>Religion or belief</b>
<b>Sex</b>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>
<b>Other characteristics</b>
<b>Socio-economic status</b> Depending on policy or other context, this may cover factors such as social exclusion and deprivation associated with geographical areas or inequalities or variations associated with other geographical distinctions (e.g. the North/South divide, urban versus rural).
<b>Marital status (including civil partnership)</b>

**Other categories**

Other groups in the population experience poor health because of circumstances often affected by, but going beyond, sharing a protected characteristic or socioeconomic status. Whether such groups are identifiable depends on the guidance topic and the evidence. The following are examples of groups covered in NICE guidance:

- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Migrant workers
- Looked after children
- Homeless people.

## Quality standards equality analysis

### Stage: Meeting 1

#### Topic: Multiple sclerosis

**1. Have any equality issues impacting upon equality groups been identified during this stage of the development process?**

- Please state briefly any relevant equality issues identified and the plans to tackle them during development.

The quality standard aims to ensure that service provision and high quality care is provided to all groups of people. Draft statements 1 and 2 recognise that people with MS might have cognition problems that cause difficulties in taking in information, and that this needs to be considered by healthcare professionals providing information. Draft statement 1 recognises that people may need access to interpreters or advocates to receive information and support at the time of diagnosis.

**2. Have relevant bodies and stakeholders been consulted, including those with a specific interest in equalities?**

- Have comments highlighting potential for discrimination or advancing equality been considered?

Standing members for Quality Standards Advisory Committees (QSACs) have been recruited by open advert with relevant bodies and stakeholders given the opportunity to apply. In addition to these standing committee members, specialist committee members from a range of professional and lay backgrounds relevant to this topic have been recruited.

The first stage of the process gained comments from stakeholders on the key quality improvement areas which were considered by the Quality Standards Advisory Committees (QSACs).

**3. Have any population groups, treatments or settings been excluded from coverage by the quality standard at this stage in the process? Are these exclusions legal and justified?**

- Are the reasons for justifying any exclusion legitimate?

The quality standard covers the diagnosis, treatment and management of multiple sclerosis in adults (18 years and over). It excludes children and young people under the age of 18 years. This exclusion is in line with NICE guideline CG186. It is due to the small number of children and young people with MS and because differential diagnosis and the complexity of diagnosis are different for children and adults.

**4. If applicable, do any of the quality statements make it impossible or unreasonably difficult in practice for a specific group to access a service or element of a service?**

- Does access to a service or element of a service depend on membership of a

specific group?

- Does a service or element of the service discriminate unlawfully against a group?
- Do people with disabilities find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to receive a service or element of a service?

The draft statements do not prevent any specific groups from accessing services.

**5. If applicable, does the quality standard advance equality?**

- Please state if the quality standard, including statements, measures and indicators, as described will advance equality of opportunity, for example by making access more likely for certain groups, by tailoring the service to certain groups, or by making reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities?

By setting out the need to take account of cognition and language in draft statements 1 and 2, the quality standard should advance equality.

**6. Is an alternative format of the Information for the Public needed e.g. large font, easy read?**

Alternative formats of the Information for the Public are produced where the primary population of the guidance has direct disability-related communication needs. Although it is acknowledged that people with MS may experience visual disturbances as a possible complication of the condition this does not meet the criteria for an alternative format to be produced for this topic.