

Contributing to public health guidance – a guide for the public

Factsheet 5: Helping to put NICE recommendations into practice (implementation)

This factsheet is one of a series that describes how individuals and organisations can help NICE develop public health guidance.

- Factsheet 1: How NICE develops public health guidance
- Factsheet 2: How organisations representing public interests can get involved
- Factsheet 3: How individuals can get involved
- Factsheet 4: Support for community members involved in developing guidance
- **Factsheet 5: Helping to put NICE recommendations into practice**

The series aims to:

- help community members and organisations representing public interests take part in developing NICE public health guidance
- explain why NICE wants them to be involved
- explain what community members and organisations can expect if they do get involved
- explain how NICE supports individuals and organisations throughout the development of guidance.

What is NICE?

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent organisation that helps those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider community deliver high-quality health and social care. We provide the following types of guidance or advice:

- Clinical guidelines – recommendations for the NHS about the treatment and care of people with specific conditions
- Health technology guidance – recommendations for the NHS on new and existing medicines, diagnostic techniques, treatments and procedures
- Public health guidance – recommendations for local authorities, the NHS and others on promoting and maintaining good health and preventing disease
- Social care guidance – recommendations for local authorities and service providers about care for people using social care services

Different types of guidance apply to different parts of the UK. NICE also has other related responsibilities, such as developing quality standards for the NHS, local authorities and other providers of health and social care services in England. In all our work, we aim to ensure that our methods and guidance promote equality. For more information about our work see www.nice.org.uk

What do we mean by ‘community members’?

We use the term ‘community members’ in this series to cover all groups of people who contribute to NICE public health guidance from a public or community perspective. This includes people with direct experience of public health activities (such as people who have used a service to help them quit smoking) and their carers, as well as individuals involved in health-related voluntary and community action (paid or unpaid).

Helping to put NICE recommendations into practice

NHS organisations (such as clinical commissioning groups and GP practices) and local authorities are expected to follow the recommendations in NICE public health guidance. This involves looking at what they are doing at present, and making changes as needed. Local authorities and NHS organisations need to work with voluntary and non-governmental organisations (and sometimes the wider public and private sectors) to put NICE public health guidance into practice. For some public health guidance (such as ‘Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity’), local authorities rather than the NHS will be best placed to take the lead.

NICE has a programme of work to help people put its recommendations into practice at a local level. This includes producing materials to encourage and help organisations and professionals to introduce NICE recommendations into their work. These materials may include:

- practical advice about how to put the recommendations into practice
- educational material for individual practitioners
- information on how organisations can assess (‘audit’) their current practice against the recommendations in the guidance
- a report or statement that discusses the likely costs or savings of putting the recommendations into practice throughout England
- a spreadsheet (known as a ‘costing template’) that allows organisations to work out the likely costs or savings of putting the recommendations into practice in their local area
- information to help the people who commission services to ensure that they have what they need (in terms of number of staff members, equipment, available training) to act on the recommendations in the guidance.

Other materials are sometimes also produced, if they would be useful for a particular guidance topic. For example, a factsheet for employers on what they can do to encourage their employees to stop smoking; a list of resources

(such as training materials) that might help organisations to put the recommendations into practice.

More information about the work of the NICE implementation team, and the materials that support putting NICE public health guidance into practice, can be found on the NICE website (www.nice.org.uk/usingguidance).

How voluntary and community groups can promote guidance

Community and service user groups, local Healthwatch, voluntary and non-governmental organisations and charities can use their networks and influence to publicise guidance, and encourage and support its implementation locally and nationally.

They can do this in a number of different ways including:

- publicising the guidance on their website, through social media and in mailings to their members
- including important messages from NICE guidance in their leaflets and other materials for the public
- helping to interpret how guidance should be adapted to their local area and population
- conducting surveys to find out whether NICE guidance is being followed, and using the findings to push for improvements
- helping to make sure that recommendations from NICE public health guidance are included in local plans to improve health
- encouraging NICE recommendations to be included in contracts to deliver local services
- supporting health and local authority professionals when they seek funding to implement NICE recommendations
- working with local authorities, NHS organisations, and other community advocates helping put NICE recommendations into practice locally.

How can members of the public and local groups help make sure NICE's recommendations are being followed?

NICE produces public health briefings for a range of different topics on which it has already produced guidance or advice. These short briefings are meant for local authorities and their partner organisations in the health and voluntary sectors, in particular those involved with health and wellbeing boards. Other local groups and members of the public may also find them useful. The briefings can be found on the NICE website:

www.nice.org.uk/localgovernment/PublicHealthBriefingsForLocalGovernment.jsp

Members of the public, local Healthwatch and other local groups can tell the Care Quality Commission (www.cqc.org.uk) whether they think local arrangements for improving the health of local people are suitable and in line with NICE recommendations.

Local organisations working with communities to put NICE guidance into practice

By involving local communities in putting NICE public health guidance into practice, local authorities, NHS organisations and voluntary or non-governmental organisations can help ensure that the recommendations from NICE are used in ways that are suitable for the people they affect.

In addition, the characteristics of an area (such as the ethnic make-up or affluence of the local community) and differences in health (called health inequalities) between different groups will need to be taken into account by local organisations before public health guidance is implemented.

There are many national policies and local requirements for the NHS and local authorities to involve people using services and local communities in their activities. Working together to put NICE public health guidance into practice is one way that organisations can work towards fulfilling these requirements.

NICE has produced guidance on working with local communities to improve health. 'Community engagement to improve health' is available from the NICE website (www.nice.org.uk/PH9).

Many terms in this factsheet are described in the NICE website glossary – www.nice.org.uk/website/glossary