

Writing recommendations

Acknowledgement: Rupert Franklin & Roz Ullman

What are recommendations?

- The end point of each review and the main output of the guideline
- The actions that healthcare professionals should perform in order to effectively manage the care of people with a particular condition
- Based on the group's interpretation of the evidence

Developing recommendations

- Drafts written after discussion of each evidence review
- Revised during course of development (particularly because recommendations are often linked)
- Finalised towards the end of development

“Writing the recommendations is one of the most important steps in developing a clinical guideline. Many people read only the recommendations, so the wording must be concise, unambiguous and easy to translate into clinical practice. Each recommendation, or bullet point within a recommendation, should contain only one main action.”

*National Institute for Health and Care Excellence - Guidelines Manual (2012).
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Recommendations should:

- be clear, accurate and easy to understand
- focus on what the healthcare professional has to do
- include only the necessary information
- use plain English

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Recommendations should:

- indicate the strength of the recommendation
- acknowledge patient involvement in decision making
- be clearly defined actions and circumstances
- follow NICE's standard advice when referring to drugs, and ineffective interventions

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- Example edits

Before edit	Suggested edited recommendation
Continuation of this therapy beyond 3 months should be supported by evidence of a loss of at least 5% of initial body weight from the start of treatment.	Only continue therapy beyond 3 months if the person has lost at least 5% of their body weight since starting treatment.

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- Example edits

Before edit	Suggested edited recommendation
<p>If you have concerns regarding development or behaviour but you do not think the signs and/or symptoms are suggestive of [condition], consider first referring to another appropriate service. These services will then refer to the [condition] Team if it is apparent that this is necessary.</p>	<p>If you have concerns about development or behaviour but you do not think the signs or symptoms suggest [condition], consider referring to another appropriate service.</p>

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- Example edits

Before edit	Suggested edited recommendation
<p><i>[Previous recommendation has two questions listed that the clinician needs to ask during screening]</i> Ask the following third question if the person answers 'yes' to the initial questions.</p>	<p>Ask the following third question if the person answers 'yes' to either of the initial questions.</p>
<p>Offer [treatment x] as an alternative to [treatment y] for people with a major comorbidity.</p>	<p>Offer [treatment x] instead of [treatment y] to people with a major comorbidity.</p>

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Writing recommendations – Prophylactic phototherapy

Basic issues to consider

Is it effective

Is it cost effective

Is there strong evidence or some doubts eg subgroup

Writing recommendations – Prophylactic phototherapy

Current rec for babies with jaundice

“Use either fiberoptic phototherapy or conventional ‘blue light’ phototherapy as treatment for significant hyperbilirubinaemia in babies less than 37 weeks”

What recommendation would you write for prophylactic phototherapy for low birth-weight babies

Choosing key priorities for implementation

Selection criteria

KPIs should

- have a high impact on outcomes that are important to patients
- have a high impact on reducing variation in care and outcomes
- lead to more efficient use of NHS resources
- promote patient choice
- promote equality

Selection criteria from a NICE point of view

- In addition, the GDG should attempt to identify recommendations that are particularly likely to benefit from support from NICE's Implementation Support Team.

Selection criteria from a NICE point of view

- Criteria include whether a recommendation:
 - relates to an intervention that is not part of routine care
 - requires changes in service delivery
 - requires retraining of staff or the development of new skills and competencies
 - highlights the need for practice to change
 - affects and needs to be implemented across a number of agencies or settings (complex interactions)
 - may be viewed as potentially contentious, or difficult to implement for other reasons.

Voting for key priorities

- 1st round – GDG each vote for their top 10
- Voting can be anonymous or by show of hands
- Results fed back to group
- 2nd round – voting only on recommendations which received sufficient votes
- Continues until consensus reached OR it's clear there is no consensus