

Guidance for Clinical Guidelines Approval Groups

Clinical guidelines should only be developed when necessary and require approval by the appropriate group, depending on the scope of the guideline. A flowchart summarising the [approval process](#) is provided in [NHSGGC Clinical Guideline Framework and Toolkit](#)

Please notify ggc.clinical.guidelines@nhs.scot, of the outcome of the review, specifying whether the guideline is:

- Approved
- Approved with provisos
- Not approved

New/ Updated Clinical Guidelines Requiring Approval:

Role of the Approval Group:

The approval group is responsible for assessing the guideline in accordance with the criteria set out in the [NHSGGC Clinical Guideline Framework and Toolkit](#). Approval is granted only when all relevant criteria have been satisfactorily met

Scope of the Approval Group's Role:

The approval group is not responsible for evaluating the clinical content of the guideline. Its primary focus is to confirm that all relevant stakeholders and key individuals have been appropriately engaged throughout the guideline's development, review, and consultation process, thereby ensuring the accuracy, validity, and credibility of the clinical content

Consideration of Wider Impact:

The approval group should ensure that any guideline with implications for other specialties, sites, sectors, or directorates has been consulted with the relevant areas prior to approval, ensuring that all involved services have been appropriately engaged in the development process

Evaluation Criteria:

In determining the suitability of a guideline for approval, the approval group should consider the questions and standards outlined in the [AGREEII](#) (Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation II) instrument (updated December 2017). These are detailed in the following six domains:

- Domain 1. Scope and purpose:
 - The overall objective(s) of the guideline is (are) specifically described.
 - The health question(s) covered by the guideline is (are) specifically described.
 - The population (patients, public, etc.) to whom the guideline is meant to apply is specifically described.
- Domain 2. Stakeholder involvement:
 - The guideline development group includes individuals from all relevant professional groups.
 - The views and preferences of the target population (patients, public, etc.) have been sought.
 - The target users of the guideline are clearly defined.
- Domain 3. Rigour of development:
 - Systematic methods were used to search for evidence.
 - The criteria for selecting the evidence are clearly described.
 - The strengths and limitations of the body of evidence are clearly described.
 - The methods for formulating the recommendations are clearly described.
 - The health benefits, side effects, and risks have been considered in formulating the recommendations.
 - There is an explicit link between the recommendations and the supporting evidence.
 - The guideline has been externally reviewed by experts prior to its publication.
 - A procedure for updating the guideline is provided.

- Domain 4. Clarity of presentation:
 - The recommendations are specific and unambiguous.
 - The different options for management of the condition or health issue are clearly presented.
 - Key recommendations are easily identifiable.
- Domain 5. Applicability:
 - The guideline describes facilitators and barriers to its application.
 - The guideline provides advice and/or tools on how the recommendations can be put into practice.
 - The potential resource implications of applying the recommendations have been considered.
 - The guideline presents monitoring and/or auditing criteria.
- Domain 6. Editorial independence:
 - The views of the funding body have not influenced the content of the guideline.
 - Competing interests of guideline development group members have been recorded and addressed.

Breached Clinical Guidelines:

When a clinical guideline has exceeded its scheduled review date and the lead author does not respond or engage, the issue may be escalated to the appropriate approving group.