

2012 UPDATED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH INTERCOLLEGIATE GUIDELINES NETWORK AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

1 RATIONALE

1.1 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) have a shared interest in the drive to improve quality of care for patients through the development of clinical guidelines.

1.2 NICE and SIGN guidelines programmes share the similar purpose of developing recommendations that are based on the best available evidence and that involve all stakeholders using a transparent and collaborative approach.

1.3 Both are founding members of the Guidelines International Network and both have been accredited for inclusion in NHS Evidence.

2 PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

2.1 NICE and SIGN recognise that by working together they can draw on the strength of their organisations and enhance the contribution that they each make towards improving the quality of care for the benefit of patients.

2.2 The purpose of this agreement is to set out how NICE and SIGN will work together, in particular in areas where their work is complementary, and to explain how this partnership will be managed.

3 PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS OF SIGN AND NICE

3.1 The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network

SIGN was established in 1993 to sponsor and support the development of evidence-based national clinical guidelines for NHSScotland and to facilitate their implementation into local practice for the benefit of patients. SIGN aims to ensure appropriate involvement of healthcare professionals, patients and carers in the guideline development process and to employ internationally agreed standards of guideline development methodology. SIGN is part of the Evidence and Improvement Directorate of Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

3.2 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) was set up in 1999 and produces evidence-based guidance and other products that help resolve uncertainty about which medicines, treatments, procedures and devices represent the best quality care and which offer the best value for money for the NHS. In addition it develops Quality Standards and draft indicators for the Quality Outcomes Framework and the Commissioning Outcomes Framework, as well providing the online portal NHS Evidence.

NICE also produces public health guidance recommending best ways to encourage healthy living, promote wellbeing and prevent disease. This guidance is for local authorities, the NHS and all those with a remit for improving people's health in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

4 WORKING TOGETHER

4.1 Exploring common areas of interest

- NICE and SIGN will continue to work towards:
- Identifying and undertaking joint initiatives to reduce duplication of effort and improve efficiency in their respective guideline development programmes
- Providing joint solutions to issues affecting guideline development in the UK
- Working jointly to influence organisations such as Cochrane
- Working through Guidelines International Network and other international endeavours to influence sustainable solutions to issues of common interest to guideline developers across the world
- Investigating possibilities for developing joint research projects on key issues, such as the process and methodology of guideline development
- Identifying and sharing good practice in implementation support

4.2 Sharing information

The two organisations will share information on their future work programmes in order to identify and where possible reduce overlap and duplication. Both organisations should continue to exchange or share search strategies and evidence tables that are relevant to clinical questions developed by the guideline development groups to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of effort.

5 DELIVERING THE AGREEMENT

5.1 Formal meetings will be held twice per year to share work programmes and to enhance the ongoing learning from each other's work. The two organisations will also:

Establish organisational lead contacts, who will be:

NICE: Clinical Practice Centre Director

SIGN: SIGN Director

Report the outcome of our joint working as appropriate

Review the agreement on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of SIGN and NICE. Where appropriate, amend the agreement to reflect any additional requirements.

Professor Mark Baker *Director of the Centre for Clinical Practice, NICE*

Dr Sara Twaddle *Director of SIGN*

