

## **Module 6: Presentation of guidelines and plain language versions of guidelines**

### **Format for guidelines and plain language versions of guidelines**

We aim to write our guidelines in clear language and to define any terms. Each guideline includes an introduction, which explains:

- Why the guideline is needed. This includes evidence of any differences in treatments or outcomes across Scotland.
- A short summary of the lived experience perspective.
- What the guideline aims to do, and who it is aimed at.

Each guideline has:

- a clear statement of the question or issue that has been considered
- a brief explanation of the treatment options available
- a summary of the conclusions drawn from the critical appraisal of the evidence
- the recommendations that the group has made from this evidence
- key recommendations that the guideline development group feels should be prioritised
- good practice points if the group feels it is important to give guidance on best practice based on their experience
- tools and activities to help put recommendations into practice
- recommendations for further research
- a section called 'Provision of information' which gives examples of information people may find helpful at key stages of care and treatment
- brief details of the search strategy and databases used.

Having a clear template for the final guideline can really help the development process. It lets the guideline group figure out early what information they need and how they'll organise it, making the process easier.

You can get guidelines for free on the SIGN website in PDFs. Some are also available as apps in the Right Decision Service (RDS). It's a digital service for Scotland with tools like websites and mobile apps. It helps you to make healthcare decisions quickly using the newest evidence, even when you're on the move.

### **Different versions of guidelines**

We produce:

- the full guideline, which has the guideline group's recommendations, how they were made and the evidence behind them
- a quick-reference guide, which is a summary of the main recommendations and other information

- a plain language version that explains the guideline's recommendations in a way that anyone can understand
- we make our guidelines as widely available as possible to make it easier for the recommendations to be put into practice.

### **Plain language versions of guidelines**

We produce versions of the clinical guidelines for people with lived experience of conditions to:

- help them to understand what the latest evidence says about diagnosis, treatment and taking care of themselves
- encourage them to be fully involved in decisions about management of their condition
- point out any areas where things aren't clear.

Plain language versions of guidelines include:

- a brief summary of the condition
- a summary of tests, treatments and procedures we recommend
- how professionals can support people to help themselves
- further sources of information.

A small group of professionals and people with lived experience work on the plain language version. A public partner from Healthcare Improvement Scotland also joins this group. They give an honest user perspective to decide what goes into the simplified versions of guidelines. This helps us make sure our info is easy to access, friendly and clear for everyone.

The group picks out recommendations that can help folks be more involved in decision-making. They ask these questions to decide which ones are useful for people with firsthand experience and their families:

- can they help people understand their condition better?
- do they show people the interventions with the most proven benefits?
- do they suggest lifestyle changes and ways to manage the condition?
- do they point out treatments without evidence, and is it helpful for people to know this?

Plain language versions of guidelines are written directly to people with lived experience using a question and answer format. They're a translation of the guideline and only include the recommended procedures and interventions. Sometimes extra information is added to help people understand the recommendations better. These simple versions also point people to other sources of information like third sector organisations. People with lived experience on the group often know about helpful groups and can suggest them.

Consultation with a wider group of people ensures that the plain language version is accessible to everyone. The purpose of consultation is to ensure the plain language version is:

- readable
- relevant
- useful
- written in a sensitive way.

When asking for feedback, it's crucial to use a range of methods suited to fit the audience. For instance, when involving children and young people, a group chat might work better than asking for written feedback.

Plain language versions of guidelines are free on the SIGN website as PDFs. They might also come in other forms like apps in RDS, video animations or audio. We pick the format based on the topic and who it is for. We talk to people who have experience of the topic to choose the best format.

### **Do the quiz**

**To complete this module, take a few minutes to do the end-of-module quiz. It's a quick way to make sure you've learned everything you need.**