Giving Healthwatch NICE Teeth

A guide for local Healthwatch organisations:

How to use resources from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
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How this guide came to be

A note from Sir Bill Taylor,
Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen Chair

As a North West Network we have co-developed this guide which can be used by every local Healthwatch across the country. We envisage this guide will enable and support local Healthwatch to incorporate National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) evidence-based practice into our work, and increase our confidence when challenging local services.

This guide came about as at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen we have an imaginative and creative approach to problem solving and service development. I guess that’s truly getting more for less. Like others, our Board thrives on individual commitment, vision and stamina. Our small staff team is both hard working and talented, working hard and productively with key partners to improve the local services.

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen first met with NICE to explore how we could improve our work locally. At the meeting we found kindred spirits in terms of developing the best possible quality of service for local citizens. We further saw opportunities to develop the collaboration between NICE and ourselves to create a North West Healthwatch approach.

Our approach with NICE was quite honestly because we wanted to better utilise resources produced by NICE to ensure our work uses their tried and tested national guidance and standards. We’ve already benefitted locally by incorporating NICE guidelines into reports and seen our local Hospital Trust develop action plans for improvements based on our recommendations supported by NICE guidelines.

This document is in itself yet another example of our far sighted perception of the benefits of joint working and sharing good practice as a network. We hope that the benefits of the guide is that it will strengthen our positive impact on local provision with hard, sought in the field, evidence.

Sir Bill Taylor
Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen Chair
NICE and Healthwatch

Since their inception local Healthwatch organisations are having a positive impact in carrying out statutory functions and improving local provision.

As a statutory body it’s vital to ensure the work completed by local Healthwatch is done to a high standard.

While local Healthwatch is commissioned and structured differently around the country, and each will have its own local priorities, there are many local Healthwatch functions that NICE resources can support.

The resources produced by NICE can help local Healthwatch in a number of ways, including:

- **Issues Raised**
  Understanding the guidance and quality standards for best practice developed by NICE can support Local Healthwatch establish whether their local services are providing adequate care.

- **Recommendations**
  Recommendations to providers and commissioners must be achievable and realistic. Using NICE resources, such as their guidance and quality standards for health and social care, can ensure recommendations are based on the current evidence of what is effective and good value care.

- **Engagement**
  Knowing what the recommendations are for best practice/care can help a local Healthwatch develop relevant questions and research techniques.

Within this document Local Healthwatch in the North West have identified functions which can be enhanced by NICE resources, and provided hints and tips, and case studies of best practice.

- Enter and View Visits
- Obtaining the views and experiences of the public
- Providing information to the public
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of the public in commissioning, provisions, and scrutiny of services
- Healthwatch role on the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Recommending investigations or special reviews
NICE basics

What is NICE?

NICE is the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. It is an independent public body that provides national guidance and advice to improve the quality and productivity of healthcare, public health and social care in England.

What does NICE do?

NICE develops national guidance, standards and information on safe, effective and value for money practice; helping to improve outcomes for people using health and care services, and aiming to reduce variation and inequalities.

What is NICE guidance?

NICE guidance contains recommendations on safe, effective and value for money practice based on the best available evidence. They provide an objective and authoritative summary of the research and evidence, and an assessment of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of health and social care interventions. Guidance aims to promote both individualised care and integrated care, and cover a range of topics, including:

- Preventing and managing specific conditions
- Improving health
- Managing medicines in different settings
- Providing social care and support to adults and children
- Planning broader services and interventions to improve the health of communities.

Many guidance recommendations are for individual health and social care practitioners, who should use them in their work in conjunction with their professional judgement and discussion with people using services.

Some recommendations are for local authorities, commissioners and managers - and cover planning, commissioning and improving services; others are for service providers, schools, and local and national organisations and partnerships in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Guidance recommendations are also useful for people who use health and social care services (including people who purchase their own social care), their families and carers, and organisations representing their interests.

See www.nice.org.uk/guidance
What are NICE Quality Standards?

NICE quality standards provide short and clear descriptions of high-priority areas for quality improvement in a defined care or service area. They have 2 main components:

1) quality statements: typically 5-8 statements, detailing a concept or requirement for high-quality care or service provision.
2) quality measures: for each statement in order to assess the quality of care or service provision specified in the statement.

Each quality statement is accompanied by a description of its implications for different audiences e.g. service providers, health, public health and social care practitioners, commissioners, and people using services and carers.

Quality standards consider all areas of care, from public health to healthcare and social care. Evidence relating to effectiveness and cost effectiveness, people's experience of using services, safety issues, equality and cost impact are considered during development.

See www.nice.org.uk/qualitystandards

What are NICE Pathways?

NICE Pathways visually present everything NICE has recommended on a particular topic - providing quick and easy access to the full range of NICE guidance, quality standards and implementation support tools.

They offer an easy-to-use, intuitive way of accessing recommendations and resources from NICE about health, public health and social care.

See http://pathways.nice.org.uk
Using NICE resources to support local Healthwatch

As previously noted, there are many local Healthwatch functions that resources produced by NICE are able to support.

Below are some examples of how your local Healthwatch can use them. These examples were gathered from local Healthwatch in the North West through two engagement events hosted by the North West Network in partnership with NICE.

1. Enter and View visits

- I can use and promote Information for the Public (lay version of NICE guidelines) at events / consultation meetings to help patients make individual choices and the right choice for them.

- I can use a NICE guideline and its associated quality standard to develop questionnaires and build assessment tools.

- I can use a NICE guideline and its associated quality standard to identify recommendations to help services improve.

- I can read relevant NICE guidelines prior to enter and view visits so that I am better informed on that topic.

- I can use NICE guidelines and shared learning examples to help us to focus our quarterly/ yearly planning for particular topics that we will work on for that period.

- I can brief the Healthwatch Chair on agenda topics related to relevant NICE guidelines to present information at the board meetings to build on knowledge we provide.

- I can share our learning and experience with others through the NICE Local Practice Case Studies www.nice.org.uk/sharedlearning

- I can investigate and review enter and view visit training for staff / team using NICE guidance to support impact of our work.
Hints and Tips:

- Use the NICE Quality Standard for the topic you are interested in - turn the quality statements or the description of what they mean for different audiences into questions. Use these in the questionnaire for your service review.
  - For example, quality statement 5 (understanding treatment options) in the quality standard on patient experience in adult NHS services (QS15) states that patients are helped by healthcare professionals to understand the relevant treatment options, including the benefits, risks and potential consequences of care. If you were assessing whether a service delivers a good experience for patients you could ask patients the question “have healthcare professionals supported you to understand the relevant treatment options, including the benefits, risks and potential consequences of care?”

- Share learning and prevent duplication of effort by working with other local Healthwatch organisations to keep each other informed on enter and view programme themes and how resources produced by NICE were used to support that work.

Case example 1:

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) incorporated NICE guidelines during their Enter and View visit to their local Emergency Department. Whilst developing recommendations for service improvement Healthwatch BwD reviewed NICE clinical guidance to support recommendations. In one of the findings Healthwatch BwD referred to NICE clinical guideline 138: “Give the patient information, and the support they need to make use of the information, in order to promote their active participation in care and self-management”. This supported their recommendation of ensuring all patients have a clear understanding of their care pathway before leaving, resulting in an improvement plan being developed by the Hospital Trust.

Case example 2:

Healthwatch Cheshire West representatives and staff have used NICE guidelines in a number of areas. Information from NICE about infection control has been used to research and inform if something is being done correctly. The information has also formed additional reading following specific Infection Control training which many of the representatives have completed.

One NICE document in particular, “Using Quality Standards to Improve Care Homes for Older People”, is referred to in their Enter and View training package and used for research.
2. Obtain the views and experiences of the public

- I can look at the NICE website to see what NICE has produced. The guidelines and quality standards can support our work plan themes and help establish whether local services are using these in practice.

- I can use the NICE guideline on community engagement to help communicate what good engagement looks like.

- I can use NICE guidelines to form questions around what ‘good looks like’ in order to benchmark public views and their first-hand experience.

- I can use specific NICE guidelines to help build evidence-based objectives for project work to gather the public’s view and experience of a service or care.

- I can ensure that the lay versions of NICE guidance ‘Information for the Public’ are accessible to members of the public, and can signpost to them during conversations.

- I can use NICE guidelines to direct our thinking and inform our starting point for conversations.

- I can use NICE guidance to cross reference with what the public ‘should’ be getting from health, public health and care services to empower and inform them.

- I can provide training on, and share information about, NICE resources with our Healthwatch staff, engagement workers and volunteers so they can draw on them when engaging with members of the public.

- I can use the NICE quality standards on patient experience in adult NHS services (QS15) and service user experience in adult mental health services (QS14) as a framework to understand patient and service user experience.

- I can use NICE guidance and shared learning examples to help us focus on the yearly/quarterly planning for particular topics that we will work on for that period. I will also share learning from this with other Healthwatch organisations.

Hints and Tips

- NICE produces versions of all its guidance for patients, carers and members of the public. They are called Information for the Public - click on the ‘information for the public’ tab on the guidance pages.

- Use the audience descriptors for patients/service users from relevant quality standards to understand the quality of care being provided by local services.
Case example 1:

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen engaged with refugees and asylum seekers as part of their #personfirst programme, which aims to engage with seldom heard residents and enabling them to share their experience and concerns. One of the main findings from engagement with this group of residents was that communication barriers between residents and healthcare professionals resulted in heightened anxieties, and not being able to understand their condition or medicines they were prescribed. Healthwatch used the NICE clinical guideline 138 Patient experience in adult NHS services to support the recommendation that “General Practitioners should ensure asylum seekers and refugees understand their care pathway. GPs should review their appointment time to ensure residents are able to fully understand the care they will require, and have enough time to ask questions.”

Case Example 2:

Healthwatch Salford has been working with children and young people to gather views and experiences of emotional wellbeing and mental health services. In the priority setting exercise, local people said that children and young people needed to have more of a say on mental health and emotional wellbeing services. Healthwatch Salford worked with a group of young people (carers, service users, people from hard to reach groups and those involved with the Youth Council) to design a questionnaire, an engagement tool and a lesson plan to gather views of children and young people on these services. The young people were involved in promoting the work, supported by Healthwatch Salford staff. The response was phenomenal. Around 400 responses were received.

The public health team worked with Healthwatch Salford using a range of NICE guidance on young people’s mental health services to inform the analysis of the responses.

This was then developed into a report in partnership with the young people and presented back to leaders in the city. The information in the report helped to shape the transition plan around Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the local review around services for people aged 0-25 years. By using NICE Guidance, the recommendations in the report were guaranteed to be evidenced based from a clinical perspective, whilst also respecting and responding to the needs and wishes of local young people.

“Using the NICE guidance helped us to look at the recommendations for services and to map the responses. It provided a structure for the themes identified from the information we gathered and helped us to back up our recommendations with best practice and guidance.”

Clare Mayo
Chief Officer
Healthwatch Salford
Case example 3:

Healthwatch Salford Engagement Officers search through the NICE Pathways to find any that are relevant to the services we are working with. NICE Pathways are then used to understand more about the way in which the services work, along with helping us to understand what the patient might expect when being referred to a service.

The NICE Pathways can then be used to help build questions around the parts of a patient’s pathway. This helps them to think about the different parts of a service that people will experience and to structure our questions around this. Using NICE resources in this way helps people to think about their journey and helps them stay on track when they are interviewing them. We also use the information from NICE to help us to structure our case studies in a clear and logical manner.

Case example 4:

Healthwatch Blackpool developed a set of 30 questions based on NICE Quality Standard 14: service user experience in adult mental health services to collect the views and experiences of mental health service users and those who haven’t accessed mental health services but live with a mental health condition. They ran a series of focus groups to test the questions before publishing an on-line survey which was promoted on their website, through social media platforms and directly with mental health services. In addition they visited a number of groups and spoke directly with people who have a mental health conditions.
3. Provide information to the public

- I can look at guidance so that we are more familiar with what is available and what it says.

- I can make the public aware that NICE produces *Information for the Public* versions of NICE guidance to help them understand their condition and what NICE recommends.

- I can include important message from a NICE guideline on our website or in materials we produce for members of the public, patients, service users and carers.

- I can share / direct people to the NICE website.

- I can link to the NICE website from our website so that our web users can access NICE content more readily; and I can put a clear, accessible description of how people can benefit from NICE.

- I can use and promote NICE Pathways to help members of the public understand what tests, treatment options and care they can expect, and to empower them to ask the right questions of professionals providing care to them. I can print off the relevant pathway to provide a reminder of that information. This helps with signposting enquiries.

- I can add a brief overview of NICE’s role to the information we share with the public in order to inform and educate people about NICE and how people can get involved and use the guidance.

- I can share information from the NICE Public Involvement Programme newsletter for Healthwatch with my networks and members of the public so they are aware of opportunities to get involved with NICE, and of the guidance published recently. Email pip@nice.org.uk to be added to the newsletter mailing list.

- I can signpost people who have ‘lived the experience’ who are interested in joining a NICE committee.

- I can share information with other organisations / voluntary sectors / CVS so they are also aware of recently published guidance and opportunities to get involved with NICE.

- I can use social media to retweet opportunities for people to get involved with NICE through Healthwatch or patient representative organisations.

- I can increase my knowledge on NICE guidance and other NICE resources to ensure patients, carers, public member receive a better experience and service.
Hints and Tips:

✓ Add some information to the Healthwatch website (see example wording below) on how the public can ‘get involved with a NICE working group or committee’; listing the current opportunities with closing dates for application.

Every piece of NICE guidance and every quality standard is developed by an independent committee of people that includes those who provide, commission and use health and social care services. NICE also run consultations, to allow individuals and organisations to contribute to the development of their recommendations. There are opportunities for opportunities for patients, service users, carers and lay people to join a NICE committee or working group.

✓ The following text can be used or modified to put on local Healthwatch websites or in newsletters to help explain to the public what NICE is about.

NICE stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. It is an independent national organisation that works to make care and treatment better for people using health, public health and social care services.

NICE looks at the evidence for different ways of working and different types of treatment and care. Based on this evidence, NICE makes recommendations for health and social care workers so that people get the best possible care. These recommendations can be about a wide range of topics including medicines, surgical procedures, medical devices, promoting wellbeing and preventing ill health, care for people with a range of illnesses and conditions, and care provided by social services. NICE also helps the people who organise, plan and buy services (commissioners) to measure how well services are doing. Local people can use the information from NICE to check if they are getting a good service and the best care. If you are having problems getting a particular medicine treatment or investigation, NICE may have made recommendations that can help you. See their website at www.nice.org.uk

“Nobody knows a disease more intimately than someone who had had it for many years. I think the presence of lay people also helps ground the proceedings a bit: we know when what’s being proposed will be impractical for some people and can make better suggestions.” Lay members’ perspective from NICE
Case example 1:

Healthwatch Cheshire West use guidance from the NICE website to inform responses to individuals who have made signposting enquiries. Two enquiries of note include the availability of drugs for treating Multiple Sclerosis and patients’ rights in relation to obtaining a particular breast cancer treatment.

Further use of NICE guidelines have been made in other signposting activities. For example supporting research into a complaint being made about the quality of care someone should expect to receive. One such example is where Healthwatch Cheshire West was asked for help regarding a hip replacement operation that had gone wrong. The patient’s wife was supported by Healthwatch in making a formal complaint.

NICE guidelines, in terms of best practice, had been used for research and quoted in the initial letter of complaint to the hospital to directly support her case.
4. Promote and support public involvement in commissioning, provision and scrutiny of services

- I can use NICE guidance and quality standards to bring commissioners, stakeholders and the public together, to understand what good quality care and services look like and to raise questions about local quality provision and commissioning.

- I can use NICE guidance and quality standards to build frameworks / guides to support change in practice to reduce the gaps in service quality.

- I can use NICE Pathways to understand whether what is being commissioned or provided takes account of what NICE recommends is best practice and value for money.

- I can incorporate NICE guidelines and quality standards into developing the audit / baseline assessment tools to identify what should be expected from a service i.e. ‘what good looks like’.

- I can support the public to feed into the development of national guidance by providing or signposting to the relevant information on how to get involved with NICE.

- I can promote NICE resources at every opportunity locally - at schools, colleges and Healthwatch member forums to increase the understanding as to how NICE resources can support them in their discussions and interactions with health and care professionals.

- I can train Healthwatch staff to empower and involve the public in their own decision making using NICE guidance recommendations.

- I can signpost individuals to the NICE website to gather information to make individual choices.

- I can use NICE guidance to help the public ask the reason for a chosen treatment / service rather than just accepting, that is, empower them to question.

- I can increase my knowledge on NICE guidance and other NICE resources to ensure patients, carers, public members receive a better experience and service.
Hints and Tips:

✓ The NICE Public Involvement Programme has lots of information about involving patients and the public. Check out the NICE website for more information: www.nice.org.uk/about/nice-communities/public-involvement

Case example 1:

**Healthwatch Rochdale** received concerns from local residents regarding the removal of a Diabetic Retinopathy Screening (DRS) service from one location following a serious incident.

The service is now based at 6 sites, but concerns were raised around accessibility to and from the fixed based sites. Furthermore, there was no public consultation for the relocation of the site.

Healthwatch Rochdale facilitated a Question Time event with the NHS England Greater Manchester Area Team and local residents. Using NICE guidance documents they ensured the public consultation process was effective in supporting all aspects of the community.

Healthwatch Rochdale also highlighted the NICE guidance on **Community Engagement** when NHS England set up a subcommittee for the future service. The NICE guidance documents helped empower Healthwatch Rochdale with knowledge on how to tackle a number of issues which they were confronted with.

Case example 2:

**Healthwatch Cheshire West** representatives used the NICE guideline on medicines optimisation prior to and after scrutiny of services to inform a detailed study on the discharge process at the Countess of Chester Hospital. This was a detailed study by two representatives who made three structured visits looking at different aspects of the process, and where the pharmacy service was scrutinised in detail over a morning period. This provided information for one of three reports published - other reports covered the discharge lounge itself and integrated and complex discharges.
Case example 3:

Healthwatch Manchester have used NICE resources to support a local resident who was in severe chronic pain. Healthwatch were contacted by this resident regarding his GP’s refusal to refer him for pain (denervation) treatment earlier than the usual 12 month cycle. He wished to make a complaint about his GP for this reason. After checking the NICE guidance regarding this treatment and seeing no reason why it couldn’t be brought forward, Healthwatch Manchester wrote to the pain specialist whose prompt response to Healthwatch Manchester and the resident enabled his immediate treatment. The resident didn’t pursue the complaint with his GP.

Case example 4:

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) used NICE guidelines in the formation of a report on the provision of cancer services in the county and as a reference point in a response to a county wide C Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) survey. In the first case the NICE guidelines provided a tangible timeline for the diagnosis, treatment and care pathways to which HWC statistical responses could be measured. This helped form the basis of a number of recommendations that HWC made to the Clinical Commissioning Group reflecting the current state of Cumbria’s cancer care services.

HWC response to the CAMHS survey was strengthened by referencing NICE guidelines as they enabled us to highlight specific areas of the services that were not performing to the standards expected. This enabled us to produce a robust, focussed response to the survey and recommend areas for improvement with achievable targets.
5. Role on Health and Wellbeing Boards

- I can use NICE guidance to inform discussions about the commissioning and quality of local services with Health and Wellbeing Boards / commissioners / providers / appropriate providing bodies.

- I can support public health teams when they use NICE guidelines to provide evidence of good practice.

- I can check and challenge joint health and wellbeing strategies and action plans, commissioning decisions, strategic plans are evidence-based, that is, draw on relevant NICE guidance and quality standards.

- I can question when the Board seeks to take decisions that contradict what the evidence recommends is best practice or the most cost-effective intervention.

- I can help to make sure that NICE guidance recommendations are included in plans to improve the quality of health and social care.

- I can work with patient and carer organisations to help interpret how a NICE guideline should be adapted to our local area and population.

“The local Healthwatch role on the Health and Wellbeing Board is really important - this is where you can hold all organisations in the local health economy to account. It is important to know whether they have used NICE guidance and quality standards to support local commissioning decisions and local service provision. If they are using them locally then we have assurance that we are only buying and providing the most effective care and support for our local population and using our local resources wisely”

Mike Lappin - Healthwatch Stockport
6. Recommend investigations or special reviews

- I can use NICE quality standards for in-depth review / enter and view visits to understand whether there are areas of quality for concern that need further investigation.

- I can use NICE guidance and quality standards when looking at service user complaints to understand whether local care may have fallen short of expected standards.

- I can use NICE guidance and quality standards to back up our findings when we report and escalate issues to the appropriate bodies, for example care quality commission, local safeguarding team, clinical commissioning group.

- I can conduct surveys to find out whether NICE guidelines are being followed, and using the findings to push for improvements.
Keep up to date with the latest from NICE

Subscribe online at www.nice.org/newsletter to:

**NICE News**
A monthly newsletter containing information about new guidance, quality standards and implementation resources launched each month.

**Social Care Stakeholder Update**
A monthly email bulletin detailing social care related activities at NICE.

**Public Involvement Programme bulletin**
A monthly email detailing the latest opportunities to get involved with NICE’s work by commenting on consultations or applying to become a committee member. The bulletin also contains a notice board where Healthwatch organisations can promote opportunities they may have for the public or other organisations working with patients and the public to get involved in. Email pip@nice.org.uk to be added to the mailing list.

Search a unique index of authoritative, evidence-based health, public health and social care information from hundreds of trustworthy and accredited sources. www.evidence.nhs.uk

Download our free NICE Guidance app to have offline access to all NICE’s guidance products while on the move. Use it to browse, search, and bookmark individual sections of guidance. Receive automatic updates and new guidance as soon as it is published on the NICE website. www.nice.org.uk/apps

@NICEcomms

www.nice.org.uk
Sharing success nationally

NICE can help promote nationally the success and impact of local Healthwatch using resources produced by NICE to support improved care. It can do this through feature articles on its website and in its Public Involvement Programme bulletin.

Through its Local Practice Collection, NICE is also interested to receive and share good practice examples of how local Healthwatch has supported local implementation of NICE guidance and quality standards. Make a submission at www.nice.org.uk/sharedlearning

Get Involved with NICE

www.nice.org.uk/getinvolved

NICE wants people to be involved, keeping open lines of communication and telling them what matters to you, your organisation or your community. There are many ways that individuals and organisations can get involved in NICE’s work.

Click on the pink headings below to find out more.

Register as a stakeholder: Healthwatch can register as a stakeholder to help develop a guideline or a quality standard - feeding in the views of their local population and commenting on draft documents.

Comment on a consultation: All guidelines and quality standards are open for consultation during their development. Registered stakeholders can comment on our recommendations.

Talk to NICE: Have a question or comment? Contact us by telephone or email.

Join a committee: NICE committees and working groups are made up of health, social care and other professionals and practitioners, patients, service users, carers and members of the public and technical experts. Healthwatch can direct individuals who wish to work with NICE as a lay member to join a committee.

Come to a meeting: Advisory committee meetings, technology appraisal appeal hearings, public board meetings and some of our other meetings are open to the public and press. Come along and see how we work.

Find out about Citizens Council: Made up of members of the public, our panel debates the overarching moral and ethical issues around our work.

Be an ambassador: Join our growing network of professionals working in health, public health and social care. Help us to share our work.
Local Healthwatch pledges

Use this section to capture how your Healthwatch intends to use any of the ideas in this guide during this financial year.

Healthwatch ………………………………….commits to:

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. To share our experiences and learning from using NICE resources with other Healthwatch organisations via our networks

6. To celebrate our experiences, learning and successes nationally by submitting a case study to the NICE Local Practice Collection www.nice.org.uk/sharedlearning.

Signed:
(Chair / Chief Executive)
Dated:
Contributing Organisations

This guide was developed by local Healthwatch organisations in the North West with support from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

For further information about this guide, please contact:

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