



## **Scottish Health Protection Network Guidance Group (SHPN-GG)**

(Version 2.0 FINAL)

# **Review of External Guidance for Acceptability of Use in Scotland Methodology**

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## 1. Summary

This document outlines the methodology for assessing guidance produced externally to the Scottish Health Protection Network (SHPN). External guidance documents may be suitable for use in Scotland but require assessment to ensure that they are appropriate for the health protection needs of the Scottish population.

## 2. Background

The SHPN is involved in developing and supporting the development of guidance that plays an important role in health protection decision-making processes. Such guidance relates to the management of specific communicable diseases and disease control, environmental public health and broader issues that are relevant to the delivery of health protection services.

The SHPN Guidance Group (SHPN-GG) has defined two basic categories of health protection guidance:

- Evidence-Based Guidelines (EBG),
- Good Practice Guidance (GPG).

These categories are described in the '*SHPN Framework for Health Protection Guidance Development*'.

Ideally, guidance specific to Scotland would be produced internally by SHPN Topic Groups (SHPN-TG) and the SHPN-GG. However, as an alternative, guidance produced externally by recognised public health organisations outside Scotland (e.g. Public Health England (PHE), European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC), Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organisation (WHO)) may be identified.

Where guidance produced by relevant bodies (such as those listed above) already exists, this may be suitable as an alternative to developing internal SHPN sponsored guidance documents. However, a formal process of assessment is needed to determine the appropriateness of using such externally developed guidance in Scotland.

This document therefore provides a quality assurance checklist (Appendix 1) to assess the suitability of using externally produced guidance in Scotland. The checklist is primarily based on two internationally recognised guideline assessment methodologies:

- Appraisal of Guidelines for Research & Evaluation II (AGREE II): a generic tool for the assessment of healthcare guidelines, and;
- Guideline Implementability Appraisal (GLIA): a more specific tool providing additional assessment criteria linked to guideline adherence.

In addition, the checklist broadly follows the Content Review Tool (CRT) currently used to determine the suitability of guidance documents eligible to be held on the Scottish Health Protection Information Resource (SHPIR).

Externally produced guidance that satisfies the quality assurance criteria set out in this document will automatically be deemed as suitable for inclusion onto SHPIR, but will still require assessment using the SHPIR CRT for clinical governance purposes.

### **3. Scope**

For clarity, SHPN-GG has adopted the following definition to define the scope of externally produced guidance that it will consider:

*External guidance:*

*SHPN-GG will only consider the approval of documents which are considered to be equivalent to SHPN-Good Practice Guidance or SHPN-Evidence Based Guidelines (see SHPN Framework for Guidance Development).*

However, external guidance out with this scope may still be made available on SHPIR where appropriate (e.g. if there is no practical alternative).

### **4. Selection (Step 1)**

SHPN-Topic Groups (SHPN-TGs) agree their priorities for guidance development within their topic area, based on a consensus approach. The following are suggested as criteria to help guide the selection of suitable subjects:

- the topic aligns with national priorities or has been previously identified as high priority;
- the topic relates to:
  - a significant burden of care and/or illness
  - premature mortality;
  - reduced quality of life
- there is no current SHPN guidance on the topic
- there is capacity to support development of guidance

Ideally, guidance specific to Scotland would be produced internally by SHPN. However, as an alternative, guidance produced externally by recognised public health organisations outside Scotland may be identified for potential use in Scotland.

Guidance produced externally to the SHPN requires assessment to ensure that it is suitable for the health protection needs of the Scottish population. Relevant external guidance documents will typically be identified by SHPN-Topic Groups (SHPN-TGs) using the above criteria.

The appropriate SHPN-TG will then propose a review of an identified external guidance document for its acceptability of use in Scotland by submitting a request to the SHPN-Guidance Group (SHPN-GG). This should provide a brief overview of the anticipated requirement for the guidance in Scotland and information on other relevant national/international guidance currently available.

## 5. Assessment of acceptability (Step 2)

The external guidance document should be reviewed by the relevant SHPN-TG against the quality assurance checklist provided in Appendix 1. The following three questions should also be posed to the group in consultation with relevant stakeholders to reach a consensus if the guidance document is acceptable for use in Scotland as is, with supplementary information or not at all:

- Q1. Are you content to approve the acceptability of use of this guidance in Scotland?  
*If no, please indicate the concern: \_\_\_\_\_*
- Q2. If yes, are you content to approve the guidance **as-is** or is an **addendum\*\*** required to document caveats in Scotland ?
- Q3. If you feel an addendum is required please indicate the nature of the concern or caveat to be captured ?

**\*\*Addendum Note**

*The intention is for an addendum to be used to record notable differences in application in Scotland (caveats). It is not intended that addendums are created to record all nuanced differences.*

The SHPN-TG should determine how extensive the stakeholder consultation process needs to be and the length of the consultation period to apply which should be within a duration of 2-4 weeks. A SHPN-GG healthcare scientist will assist with this process if required. Following the consultation the decision to accept the guidance document for use in Scotland (with or without supplementary information) rests with the SHPN-TG.

### Lead SHPN-TG

An SHPN-TG is required to lead the review process, and become the owner of the guidance document in the context of SHPN governance for this and any future reviews. On occasion external guidance may span more than one SHPN-TG. Where this occurs, the relevant SHPN-TGs should all review the guidance document but agree which single SHPN-TG will take the lead and own the guidance within SHPN. Where a guidance document spans a more significant proportion of health protection, the SHPN-Coordination Group shall do so.

On occasion, there may be uncertainty as to which SHPN-TG is best placed to lead the review or if the topic is within the scope of SHPN. Where this occurs, the matter shall be escalated to SHPN-Coordination Group for a decision on behalf of the network.

### Purpose of the checklist

The checklist has been developed to ensure consistency is maintained in assessing external guidance documents. Although no formal scoring system is employed, an 'approved' status will only be applied to guidance documents meeting all the 'essential' checklist criteria. It is expected that the

number of 'desirable' criteria satisfied will vary depending on the type of guidance document reviewed i.e. good practice versus evidence based. Typically, the more desirable criteria that are met, the more suitable the document will be for use.

## **6. Requirement for supplementary information**

In some instances, it may be decided by the SHPN-TG that a Scotland specific addendum (Appendix 2) is required for use alongside the external guidance document. This should be produced by the SHPN-TG prior to completion of the checklist within this methodology.

Once produced, the addendum should be reviewed for acceptability by the SHPN-TG and relevant stakeholders. The SHPN-TG should determine how extensive the stakeholder consultation process needs to be. A period of 4 weeks (minimum) should be afforded for the consultation period.

## **7. Approval (Step 3)**

Final approval shall be obtained from the SHPN-TG and SHPN-GG by submitting the guidance document, checklist and the final version of any addendum as follows:

- The SHPN-TG signs-off for scientific and technical content
  - If all the 'essential' criteria on the checklist are met, the SHPN-TG will confirm that it is content to approve the scientific and technical content.
- The SHPN-GG signs-off for quality assurance, and
- The SHPN-Coordination group sign-off in respect of scientific and technical content when the content is overarching to health protection

Following approval, the SHPN-GG will confirm the guidance designation as 'SHPN approved' for use in Scotland. The guidance (and addendum, if necessary) will then be made available on the HPS website and on SHPIR. A note will be kept on SHPIR to confirm that the quality assurance for the external guidance has been completed and satisfies the criteria set out within this methodology document.

However, external guidance which does not obtain SHPN-GG approval may still be made available on SHPIR (e.g. if there is no practical alternative), until it is superseded by either internally produced SHPN guidance or externally produced SHPN-GG approved guidance.

## **8. Proposed review period**

Normally SHPN sponsored guidance documents are subject to review within three years of initial completion. SHPN approval of external guidance will therefore also last only for a three year maximum period.

After that initial period, any SHPN approved external guidance will have to be re-approved to permit continued designation as 'Approved External Guidance'. The review protocol outlined in this document and the checklist provided in Appendix 1 should be completed afresh on the third

anniversary of initial SHPN approval, to determine if the guidance document should be retained and approved again, replaced or deleted.

In addition, as external approved guidance is not SHPN-TG authored, a more frequent “light touch” review will also be necessary to ensure that it is still relevant and current. All documents held on SHPIR are already expected to be reviewed annually for continued suitability. The annual SHPIR check should also be employed as the mechanism for an annual check of approved external guidance. Normally the annual SHPIR document check is signed off by an HPS Clinical Lead (or delegated authority). In the case of SHPN approved external guidance, the relevant SHPN-TG is required to sign off the annual SHPIR check alone or in combination with an HPS Clinical Lead (or delegated authority), to verify their agreement that the documents continued retention is agreed by the whole group.

### Appendix 1: Quality assurance checklist for assessing the suitability of external guidance



#### Quality assurance checklist for assessing the suitability of external guidance

<b>Details of guidance document:</b> (Document name, who was it published by, date published)		
<b>Sponsor SHPN-TG/CG:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name of reviewer:</b>		
<b>Answer where applicable</b>		<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Essential criteria</b>		
A. Does the guidance document address health protection issues such as communicable disease risk assessment, risk management or risk communication?		
B. Has the document been published by a recognised international or government sponsored health protection organisation or agency (e.g. PHE, CDC, WHO)?		
C. Does the document refer to the UK context or if it is non-UK sourced, is the information generally applicable to Scotland? <i>(Please refer to Section 7 if it is deemed that supplementary Scotland specific information is required)</i>		
D. Can the document be categorised using the SHPN-GG Framework to classify the type of guidance it constitutes? If yes, which category of SHPN guidance: <i>(Please tick one)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Based Guidance (EBG)</li> <li>• Good Practice Guidance (GPG)</li> </ul>		
<b>Desirable criteria</b>		
a. Has the document been published within the last three years?		
b. Are the overall objectives of the document specifically described?		
c. Are health protection questions specifically described?		
d. Does the document clearly define the target (patient) population?		
e. Does the document clearly define its intended audience?		
f. Has the document been developed by a multidisciplinary group or is there evidence that the content was circulated for consultation to a multidisciplinary audience during development?		
g. Has the document been externally reviewed prior to publication?		
h. Are the strengths and limitations of the body of evidence/recommendations clearly described?		
i. Are the benefits of each recommendation presented alongside any potential side effects/risks?		
j. Does the document provide unambiguous (explicit) advice? <i>I.e. The document is internally consistent throughout.</i>		
k. Is the document operationally orientated? <i>I.e. The recommendations are easily identifiable, different management options for the condition/health issue are discussed, facilitators/barriers (including resource implications and the anticipated ability to perform recommendations without the necessity for acquisition of new knowledge or skills) to the application of the recommendations are discussed.</i>		
l. Have competing interests been listed?		
<b>Any further details / notes:</b>		
<b>Based on the above assessment:</b>		<b>Chair name and signature</b>
<b>Does the SHPN TG/CG recommend that the guidance document is approved:</b>		<b>Date</b>
<b>Does the SHPN-GG consider the guidance document to be approved:</b>		

**Appendix 2: External guidance addendum template**

**SCOTTISH HEALTH PROTECTION NETWORK**

*Promoting and Supporting Good Practice*

## External Guidance Addendum

This guidance has been approved for use in Scotland by the Scottish Health Protection Network Guidance Group (SHPN-GG). The guidance should be used in conjunction with the addendum outlined below.

<b>Guidance name:</b>	
<b>Name of sponsor SHPN- Topic/ Coordination Group and individual providing addendum information:</b>	
<b>Date of guidance sign-off by SHPN-GG:</b>	
<b>Addendum required:</b>	