



NIHR Health Technology  
Assessment programme

**NHS**

*National Institute for  
Health Research*

# How the HTA programme works with policy customers



# Working with policy customers

Research funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment (NIHR HTA) programme directly influences key decision-making bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). This organisation and other policy customers use HTA evidence based research to help raise standards of care in the NHS.

## The HTA programme and NICE

The NIHR HTA programme commissions independent Health Technology Assessment reviews to support NICE committees deliver national guidance on new and existing treatments or interventions, and on medical diagnostic technologies to the NHS in England and Wales, through its Technology Appraisals and Diagnostic Assessments respectively.

The assessment reviews commissioned on behalf of NICE provide independent, reliable and rigorous evidence assessment of the benefits, harms and costs of particular healthcare treatments, tests or diagnostic technologies for those who plan, provide or receive care in the NHS.

Assessment reports are prepared by on-contract academic or specialist centres within the UK.

### The HTA programme also supports NICE by:

- commissioning primary and secondary research in response to key NICE research recommendations, to inform future appraisals and guidelines
- occasionally commissioning reviews in support of NICE's guidelines and public health programmes
- providing a peer review service for completed NICE guidelines by seeking comments from external experts.



## Assessment Reports for NICE

Several types of assessment report are produced to tight deadlines to support and enable NICE committees to give timely guidance to the NHS.

- Evidence Review Group (ERG) reports assess the strength and quality of the research evidence submitted by manufacturers to NICE as part of the evaluation of single new drugs or devices close to when they are first licensed. Assessment is rapid with reports produced within eight weeks. These support NICE Single Technology Appraisal Committee guidance.
- Technology Assessment Reports (TARs) identify, assess and synthesise the research evidence (including data submissions) from across a number of interventions in a given healthcare area, typically providing estimates of the relative effectiveness and cost effectiveness of a range of intervention options. TARs are large research reviews, delivered within 26-28 weeks. These reports act to support NICE Multiple Technology Appraisal Committee guidance.
- Diagnostic Assessment Reports (DARs) identify, assess clinical outcomes and synthesise the research evidence for single/or multiple diagnostic technologies in a given healthcare pathway, typically providing estimates of the relative effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the diagnostic technology options. These reports act to support NICE Diagnostic Assessment Committee guidance.

### The Technology Assessment Review centres are:

- Aberdeen Health Technology Assessment Group
- Liverpool Reviews and Implementation Group (LRiG)
- Peninsula Technology Assessment Group (PenTAG)
- Sheffield School of Health and Related Research (SchARR)
- Southampton Health Technology Assessment Centre (SHTAC)
- York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) and Centre for Health Economics (CHE)
- Warwick Evidence Review Group (WERG)
- Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd (KSR)
- BMJ Evidence Centre (BMJEC)

## Contract management

In managing the TAR contracts on behalf of the Department of Health, the HTA programme oversees the specialist and academic centres' work programmes to ensure the timely delivery of high quality reports (though does not undertake any of the research itself).

The HTA programme is responsible for managing capacity and allocating research teams to produce reports which support NICE's appraisal process, or that meet the urgent needs of other policy customers. The team at HTA liaise closely with all the policy customers and each report is monitored to ensure that it is delivered within the required timescale.

Reports for NICE's Single Technology Appraisals are mainly based on evidence submissions from manufacturers, and the reports are published on the NICE website. Diagnostic Assessment Reports and Technology Assessment Reports, both for NICE and other policy customers, are managed through a process of peer and editorial review by the HTA programme and are published in the *Health Technology Assessment* journal.

To date, the NIHR HTA programme has commissioned over 250 reports on behalf of NICE and over 120 for other policy-makers, to support evidence-informed policy and practice.



## Other policy customers

The HTA programme also regularly commissions the specialist centres to use their skills to prepare reports for other policy customers. These reports are tailored in size specifically to support policy customer's needs for their decision making process.

**HTA Assessment Reports (HTA TARs)** usually comprise a systematic review of the evidence for an intervention in a specific healthcare area and often a specially designed economic model used to independently assess the cost-effectiveness of the intervention options, plus any other necessary components.

Recent policy customers have included:

- NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme
- National Specialised Commissioning Team
- Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs
- Organ Donation Task Force
- National Screening Committee
- Policy Research Programme
- Joint Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination



## Further information

For the latest information on our work, details of application deadlines and support when making an application please:

Visit: [www.hta.ac.uk](http://www.hta.ac.uk)

Email: [hta@hta.ac.uk](mailto:hta@hta.ac.uk)

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The HTA programme is managed by the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC, HTA), based at the University of Southampton.



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