

A mechanism for the consideration of SHTG national advice on health technologies: a guide for NHS Boards

Purpose

Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG) advice is provided to inform NHS Boards' use of [health technologies](#). SHTG advice identifies health technologies that can improve or transform health outcomes and deliver patient and system value. SHTG advice is based on an objective assessment of the evidence, taking into account clinical effectiveness, cost effectiveness, safety, and patient and clinical expert views.

NHS Boards are required to consider advice from SHTG. Boards are encouraged to have formal mechanisms in place to receive, consider, and communicate SHTG advice.

Developing a formal process for the consideration of SHTG advice is intended to support Boards to:

- optimise patient outcomes and safety
- ensure value for money, through efficiency savings and improved resource utilisation
- identify health and care system benefits
- enhance the consistency and transparency of decision making on health technologies and thereby increasing understanding of issues around equity of access.

SHTG has worked with Scottish Government to develop a guide for Boards who are seeking to develop or improve their process for considering advice on health technologies. The guide supports Boards to develop a mechanism that will work well within their structures, matches their available skills, facilitates decision making and accountability, and promotes local ownership.

We know that health technologies are critical to the effective delivery of a range of services covering diagnosis, therapy, monitoring and rehabilitation. In identifying a formal process for the consideration of advice, this guide provides Boards with an opportunity to increase efficiency, improve sustainability and achieve best value. The Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG), part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland, has a proven track record for supporting NHS Scotland to deliver value-based health and care and to take enhanced, evidence based decisions on non-medicine technologies which can have real impact on improving patient outcomes. We strongly recommend the use of this guide so that benefits for patients and healthcare providers can be realised.

John Burns, Chief Operating Officer, NHS Scotland and Professor Jason Leitch CBE, National Clinical Director

A mechanism for Health Boards to consider SHTG advice

Receiving SHTG advice

1. The Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG) develops advice on health technologies for NHS Scotland via health technology assessment (HTA) methodology.
2. Boards should identify a senior responsible person (SRP), who will notify SHTG of the best 'landing zone' into their Board; that is, the individuals, teams, or governance groups that are best placed to receive SHTG advice on health technologies.
3. SHTG will disseminate their advice via the [SHTG website](#) and these targeted distribution emails or landing zone contacts.

Considering SHTG advice

4. Each Board will develop its own mechanism for considering SHTG advice. The process for consideration of advice may use existing structures/groups or require the creation of new ones. The process should facilitate the consideration of advice on health technologies from other sources; for example, HTA agencies across the UK, including the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Examples of existing processes used within Boards are presented in Appendix 1.

5. Boards are expected to align the consideration of SHTG advice with their responses to the actions set out within [Medical Devices Policy Framework and Action Plan](#).
6. When considering SHTG advice, each Board will need to consider their local context, for example:
 - their relevant local specialties, services, and treatment provision
 - the proposed use of the technology within their local patient pathways
 - resource, workforce and service implications.
7. For the purpose of continuous improvement and audit, the group that considers the SHTG advice should record the outcome of their consideration and inform their SRP. Decisions may be categorised as follows, and should include justification for the decision:
 - follow the recommendations with the SHTG advice
 - follow recommendations subject to conditions
 - not follow recommendations
 - not applicable.

Feedback from Boards' consideration of SHTG advice

8. SHTG will contact each Boards' SRP to request feedback on how the advice was considered within their Board. SHTG will send the request three months after publication of the advice (to capture receipt of the advice) and again at 12 months (to capture actions taken). Feedback is only required for advice that carries a recommendation, but all feedback on all SHTG advice is encouraged.

9. A report on how SHTG's advice has been considered will be collated, including responses received from Boards. The information will be used by SHTG to monitor impact and will be shared with Scottish Government policy teams and made accessible via the SHTG website. *An example of the report is presented in Appendix 2.*

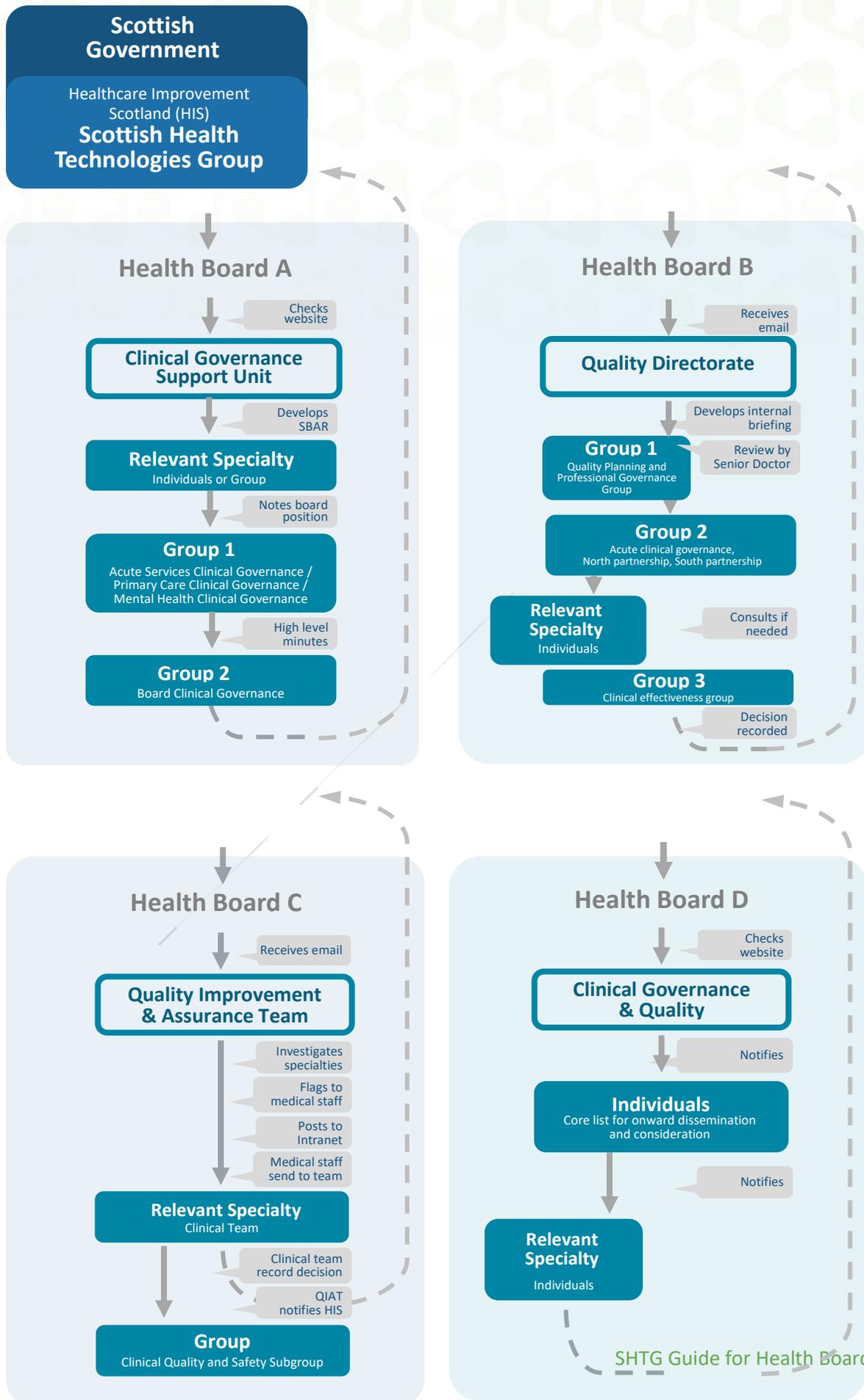
SHTG

March 2024

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Appendix 1 - Examples of NHS Board processes



Appendix 2 – Example report

Report - Consideration of SHTG advice by Health Boards in NHSScotland

Advice on [Health technology name] [published here](#) on [date] by Scottish Health Technologies Group

NHS Board 1 *Considered by:* Consultant, nominated as Board representative by the Board's Quality Directorate

Decision: This Health Board will follow recommendations subject to conditions. Further review and discussion is required to consider potential cost and resource implications and ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place. This will require further discussion through the Strategic Management Group (SMG).

Date: xx/xx/xx

NHS Board 2 *Considered by:* Consultant Cardiology consultant, nominated as the Board's representative by the Quality Improvement Team

Details of Decision: Follow recommendations. The outcome of SHTG has been used to secure financial support to develop our service, and SHTG advice has been referred to in information leaflets for patients.

Date: xx/xx/xx

NHS Board 3 *Considered by:* Clinical effectiveness Group

Decision: Our Health Board will not follow these recommendations. Implementing the advice would require more resources e.g. revision of the whole consent process. Due to finance considerations, we are not in a position to take this forward just now.

Date: xx/xx/xx

NHS Board 4 *Considered by:* Chair of Planning and Performance group.

Decision: This advice is not applicable to this Health Board as we do not provide these services.

Date: xx/xx/xx
