Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Queensland Clinical Guidelines (QCG) was established in August 2008. QCG's vision is to translate evidence into best practice. Increasing consumer participation and engagement during guideline and associated resource development supports better partnerships between clinicians and consumers and improves patient care.

Who uses the guidelines?

The guidelines are used every day by clinicians including doctors, midwives, nurses and allied health staff such as physiotherapists and social workers to help guide their practice. Additionally, the guideline may be referred to when the Hospital and Health Service is reviewing a clinical incident. The Coroner may refer to the guideline during an inquest. The Minister for Health may also refer to the guideline when replying to a concern from a member of the public or the media.

Who decides which guidelines QCG should write?

Clinicians determine which guidelines should be developed. This is based on common areas where there is a need for up-to-date evidence to assist with clinical decision making. Sometimes a request for a specific guideline comes from the executive within Queensland Health.

Who is involved in developing the guidelines?

A clinical lead is appointed (a role that may be shared by more than one person) who provides expertise, direction and guidance to the QCG program officer and the working party during the development of the guideline. The members of the guideline working party include doctors, midwives, nurses and allied health professionals from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland. There is both public and private sector representation. Their role is to provide clinical expertise during the feedback process. Additionally, and importantly, there is consumer involvement in each guideline being developed or reviewed. Consumer engagement helps protect the interests of consumers and users of maternity and neonatal services.

How are the guidelines developed?

QCG has established methods for guideline development, writing style and publishing format. These are based on processes used by other guideline development groups, referencing styles and Queensland Health style guides. The guidelines are based on contemporary medical, health and scientific research. During development, new guidelines have two to three rounds of consultation and those under review have one to two rounds of consultation.

What do consumers comment on?

Consumers may provide feedback on a variety of aspects including:

- How they think and feel about certain aspects of care or services provided within the scope of the guideline
- Whether the tone of the guideline is appropriately sensitive to women and families including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and those from varying cultures and ethnic backgrounds
- Whether there is a logical flow of information
- Any aspects that could be explained more clearly or written more briefly
- If language use is respectful and accurate
- If the content is appropriate or there are any areas not covered in the guideline

Do I need to have experience in reading and understanding information containing medical terminology?

This is not mandatory as assistance can be provided by the program officer.

Do I need any special skills or qualifications?

No formal skills or qualifications are needed. However, although not mandatory it is useful to have some of the following:

- Understand the guideline topic
- Be a carer or relation of someone who has or has had the condition
- An understanding of the experiences and needs of a wider network of patients (e.g. as a member of a patient support group or organisation)
- Time to commit to the work of the group (e.g. background reading, commenting on drafts and attending meetings as required)
- Some familiarity with medical and research language (although resources and support to help with this can be provided)
- Willingness to feed in the views of patient/consumers/carers not represented on the guideline working party
- Ability to be objective
- Good communication and team working skills
- An ability to use a computer, the internet and email

Is there any special training available?

Once you have been successful with your application you will be provided information about your role and how the guidelines are developed.

Will I be paid when I am on a working party?

Yes. You will be paid a fee for being part of the working party which includes reviewing the draft documents, consulting with others, providing feedback by email and attending any teleconferences (if they are scheduled).

Why do I have to sign a confidentiality agreement?

In line with policy and legislation all employees, volunteers, students, consultants and independent contractors are required to comply with the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service.

Why do I have to declare conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest is a situation that occurs when your personal interests conflict with your role on a QCG working party. The conflict may be potential, actual or perceived. Taking responsibility for declaring conflicts of interest shows honesty, openness and transparency. Failure to declare an interest, even if it wasn't deliberate may be perceived differently by others and may damage your reputation and reflect badly on Queensland Health.

Why do I have to undergo a police check?

In line with policy and legislation all employees, volunteers, students, consultants and independent contractors are required under the Public Service Act to undergo this check.

Where can I get more information?

Further information is available:

- On the QCG website www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg *or*
- By emailing your question(s) to guidelines@health.qld.gov.au

How do I apply?

Application is made online to join the mailing list and receive notifications about opportunities for consumer participation with QCG activities:

- Register on-line at www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg
- Complete and return all documentation sent to you
- Submit your expression of interest (EOI) when notified of opportunities–usually two consumers are selected from the applications.