



Health Technology Wales

Appraisal Process Summary

Who are Health Technology Wales?

We are an organisation that works to improve the quality of care in Wales.

We do this by appraising technologies or models of care and support in health and social care that are not medicines.

For health, this could include things like:

- medical devices,
- diagnostics,
- procedures,
- interventions by allied health professionals.

For social care, this could include things like:

- equipment,
- different ways of supporting families, children, adults, and the social care workforce.

What is an appraisal?

Appraisal (also called health technology assessment) is a way of reviewing the published evidence around technologies or models of care and support in health and social care. We use this evidence to assess whether they work better, equally well, or worse than other available options. Appraisal also looks at the evidence for things like:

- Unwanted effects or bad reactions
- Effect on quality of life
- Costs
- Ease of use

This information can help us to decide how the technology or model of care and support should be used.

At Health Technology Wales, we look for technologies or models of care and support in health and social care that are likely to have an impact on people in Wales. We then appraise them and give guidance on how they should be used in Wales. This document explains how our appraisal process works.

The process usually starts with a topic suggestion.

Who can suggest a topic for appraisal?

Anyone can suggest a topic for us to appraise, including members of the public. One way to do this is to fill in a Suggest a Topic form on our [website](#). Another way is to [get in touch](#) with us to discuss a potential topic. We also look for topics ourselves that may be of value to health and social care in Wales.

What happens when a topic has been suggested?

Our staff look at a new topic suggestion and decide whether it may be suitable for appraisal.

A topic might be suitable to appraise if it is a technology or model of care and support in health and social care that is not a medicine. There needs to be published evidence so that we can show that it is likely to have an impact on patients, their carers, or people accessing care and support. Things like devices and software should also meet any relevant legal regulations to show they are safe to use and work as intended.

If a topic is not suitable for us to appraise, our Scientific Advice Service can give useful information or help with next steps. So, if a topic is not suitable for appraisal there may be other ways of having it considered for use in Wales.

If the topic is suitable for appraisal at this stage, the next step is for us to write a Topic Exploration Report.

What is a Topic Exploration Report?

A Topic Exploration Report is a summary of a topic and the evidence available on it. When we write the report, we aim to:

- Find out how much evidence there is on the topic,
- Look for any gaps in the evidence or things we are unsure about,
- Show whether the topic would be right for us to appraise further and potentially produce guidance.

The Topic Exploration Report might also help us decide which topics are the highest priority. To do this we think about the ways the technology or model of care and support might:

- Help patients and reduce harms;
- Affect how much money is spent or saved;
- Impact how the condition affects people, and how many people could be helped;
- Fulfil a need for patients and health and social care workers;
- Make health or social care fairer.

We send a draft of the Topic Exploration Report to the person who suggested the topic to comment on.

When we have decided on the next steps for a topic, we will email the person who suggested it to let them know the decision. It will also be posted on our [website](#).

If we decide that a technology or model of care and support is suitable for appraisal at this stage, the next step is to write an Evidence Appraisal Report.

What is an Evidence Appraisal Report?

An Evidence Appraisal Report is a summary of:

- What care is like for people with the condition in Wales and the UK, and how it could be made better;
- How the technology or model of care and support aims to improve the health of people with the condition, or improve the care they receive;
- What evidence there is that the appraised technology or model of care and support works;
- What the costs or savings would be if the technology or model of care and support was used instead of standard care and whether it is likely to offer value for money;
- What information the public, patients, carers, and people who access care and support have given us about the topic;
- Anything else that would need to be looked at if the technology or model of care and support were to be used in Wales.

We ask patients, people who access care and support, and the public to be involved when we write the Evidence Appraisal Report. The Patient and Public Involvement Standing Group decides how patients, people who access care and support, and the public should be involved for each topic, and this could include:

- submissions from patients, people who access care and support, and unpaid carers (via a representative organisation)
- questionnaires or surveys (via an organisation representing patients, carers, or people who access care and support)
- focus groups (via an organisation representing patients, carers, or people who access care and support)
- literature searches that look specifically for Patient and Public Involvement evidence.

When we have written the Evidence Appraisal Report, our Assessment Group will read it and decide whether they think guidance should be produced. If so, the Appraisal Panel will use the Evidence Appraisal Report to produce guidance.

Evidence Appraisal Reports are published on our [website](#).

How does the Appraisal Panel produce guidance?

At a meeting, our Appraisal Panel looks at the Evidence Appraisal Report, and hears comments from topic experts, patients, carers, people who access care and support, and the public. The Appraisal Panel then writes guidance that all members agree on.

The guidance gives the view of Health Technology Wales on the technology or model of care and support being appraised, looking at:

- How well it works,
- How safe it is,
- Whether it is good value for money.

The Appraisal Panel will also think about how reliable the evidence is:

- Are there lots of studies with lots of participants, and do they all show the same thing?
- Do the studies mean that we can compare the technology or model of care and support to what is being used in Wales at the moment?

- Can we trust that any improvements in outcomes are because of the technology or model of care and support, and not caused by something else?
- Are the studies looking at people in Wales, or in populations that are similar to Wales and our health and social care system?

Health Technology Wales guidance is published on our [website](#) alongside the Evidence Appraisal Report, and is sent out to key people and organisations across Wales.

How is our guidance used?

The status of Health Technology Wales guidance is that NHS Wales, local authorities, and social care providers should adopt this guidance. However, there may sometimes be cases where health and social care professionals look at their patient or the person accessing care and support and decide that our guidance is not right for them.

We keep track of the way health and social care professionals in Wales are using our guidance with the Annual Adoption Audit. We may also update our guidance if people who are affected by it ask us to.

Who's involved and how?

The appraisal process needs the input of lots of different people to give a full picture and make sure guidance is based on information that is as correct as it can be.

Members of Health Technology Wales, including staff, the Assessment Group, the Patient and Public Involvement Standing Group, and the Appraisal Panel all help to write and check the appraisal.

People outside Health Technology Wales, including the person who suggested the topic, the company who make the technology or model of care and support, people who are experts in the topic, the public, patients and their representatives, people who access care and support, and others also help throughout the process to give a full picture of the topic and condition.

For more information about who these groups are and what they do, as well as a detailed look at all stages of the appraisal process, please see the full Appraisal Process Guide.