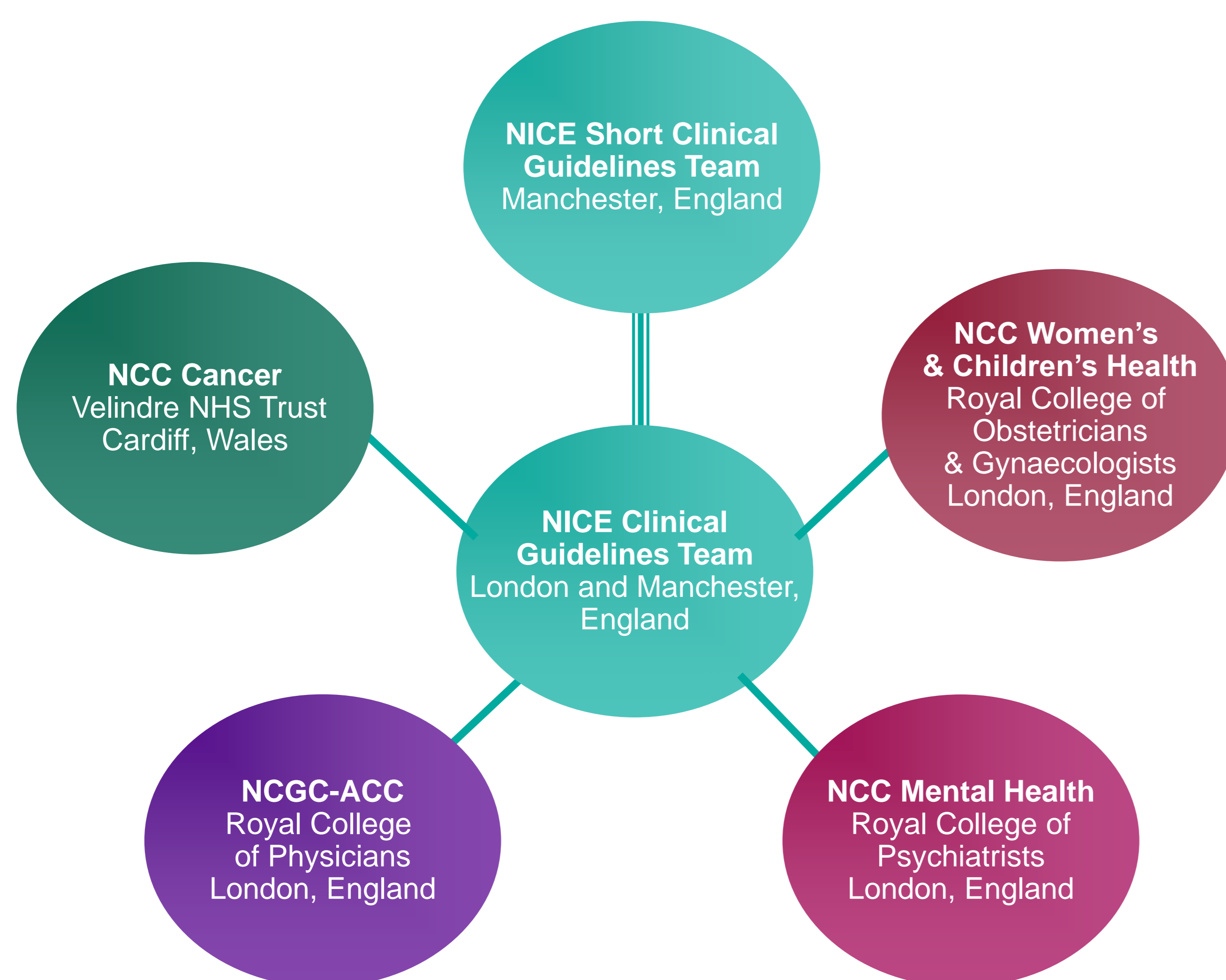


Collaborative working between information specialists: NICE clinical guidelines programme

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NICE clinical guidelines

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) develops 'standard clinical guidelines' and 'short clinical guidelines'.

Standard clinical guidelines

Standard clinical guidelines are developed by four independent centres (3 NCCs and the NCGC), which are commissioned by NICE on an annual rolling programme basis. There are eleven information specialists based across the four centres who support the scoping, development and validation of standard clinical guidelines.

Short clinical guidelines

Short clinical guidelines are developed by a technical team at NICE. There are four information specialists at NICE who support the scoping, development and validation of short clinical guidelines. Occasionally, an NCC/the NCGC is commissioned by NICE to develop a short clinical guideline.

The role of the information specialists at NICE and the Centres

Information specialists at NICE support the decision-making of the topic selection team. This involves searching for information on treatments and conditions including other related evidence-based guidance and finding statistical information on the incidence and prevalence of conditions. Information specialists at the Centres (including the NICE short guidelines team) identify the evidence base for the guidelines. Following methods set out in the NICE 'Guidelines manual'¹ this involves: contributing to question formulation; identifying sources; developing search strategies; creating reference management databases and documenting the search process.

Collaborative working

NICE and the Centres

Best practice is shared and further developed by the information specialists at NICE and the Centres by various means, in particular:

- holding biannual meetings to discuss topics of shared interest including invited speakers (for example, search platforms, documenting search strategies, archiving inter-library loans)
- a dedicated discussion list to share new information and to seek answers to problems and share useful material: for example, NICE shares a monthly summary of new papers in information science
- setting up and maintaining a wiki to provide access to shared materials (for example, agendas and minutes from biannual meetings, conference presentations, training materials)
- establishing joint working groups to take forward methodological issues: for example, a short-life working group was set up for a period of one year, with representatives from NICE and the Centres, to review and update the 'Identifying the evidence' chapter of the NICE 'Guidelines manual'¹
- organising joint training sessions for information specialists from NICE and the Centres (for example search clinics and CINAHL via EBSCOhost)
- working together on abstracts and presentations for conferences (for example, G-I-N, HLG, EAHIL).



Wider networks

- within the NICE family (for example, with NHS Evidence and the Technology Assessment Groups) information specialists meet regularly, share meeting minutes and participate in joint information days
- more widely through participation in other professional interest groups, both nationally and internationally (for example, SEARCH, a working group of G-I-N).

References

1. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2009) The guidelines manual. London: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Available from: www.nice.org.uk
2. Bakhshi L (2008) From clinical question to search strategy: the role of the information scientist. Poster presented at the 5th Guidelines International Network (G-I-N) Conference, 1-3 October 2008, Helsinki, Finland

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