Attending a Scottish Health Technology Group meeting

Information for participating patient organisations

SHTG Committee meetings

The Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG) is an advisory group set up to provide assistance to NHSScotland boards when considering selected health technologies. A health technology is any type of intervention that tries to improve people’s health. This might be a device like a thermometer, or a clinical procedure like a hip replacement. Health technologies also include any given approach to healthcare, for example having a treatment at home instead of an outpatient department. We do not include medicines in our work, as these are reviewed by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC).

SHTG is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Our role is to provide advice to the NHS in Scotland about the clinical and cost effectiveness of existing and new technologies that are likely to have a significant impact on patient care in Scotland.

The SHTG Committee meeting is the final stage of the advice process. The SHTG Committee has around 25 members. Membership consists of health service experts from NHS boards across Scotland, and includes representation from other NHS groups such as national procurement, industry colleagues, and universities across Scotland. Public partners from Healthcare Improvement Scotland also sit on the committee to ensure the views of the public are taken into account during decision-making. This wide mixture of backgrounds helps ensure decisions are made from a broad perspective.

What information is assessed at the meeting?

When we look at health technologies, we consider:

- How well the technology works compared to currently used treatments.
- What difference the health technology makes to the lives of patients and carers.
• The number and patients likely to benefit from the technology.
• How safe the technology is.
• How much the technology costs compared to other treatment options.

The committee takes decisions by consensus following discussion of the evidence. Our advice statements are published on our website approximately four weeks after each meeting and present the view of the SHTG on the clinical effectiveness, safety and cost effectiveness evidence for the technology being considered in the context of NHS Scotland. The status of SHTG advice is “required to consider”. This means that when NHS planners and decision makers are considering a technology for use in their area, they should take into account the advice we published.

**What is my role as a participating patient group representative?**

Your role is to present your patient group submission to the committee and answer any questions which committee members may have about it. PowerPoint templates are available for presentations.

**Who from my patient organisation can participate?**

Two representatives per submitting patient organisation are able to participate at the SHTG committee meeting, during discussions for the agenda item for the technology they provided a submission for. It is the choice of the patient organisation who represents them at the meeting.

For joint patient organisation submissions, one representative per named patient organisation is able to participate.

**What is expected of me during the meeting?**

The Public Involvement Advisor will discuss with you in the days leading up to the meeting, how you plan to present your patient group submission, give you advice on the best way to do this and provide any assistance that you need with your presentation.

At the start of the meeting you will be seated in the public gallery. At the beginning of discussions about the technology for which you provided a submission for, the Chair will invite you to join the committee table for the entire discussion about the technology and ask you to introduce yourself.

When it is your turn to present, you will have up to 10 minutes to give an overview of your patient organisation submission. If a committee member has a question regarding your submission, they will ask permission from the Chair for the question to be asked. If the question is appropriate, the Chair will invite you to answer.
What if I am unable to attend the meeting?

We understand that it is not always possible for patient organisations to send a representative to attend the SHTG committee. If you are unable to attend in person, your submission will still be included in the members’ meeting papers and form part of the presentation about the technology to ensure it is still a key part of the decision making process.

What time should I arrive and do I need to stay for the entire meeting?

Please arrive promptly at 12noon. You are welcome to stay for the entire meeting but can leave after the technology you have made a submission for has been discussed.

What will happen when I arrive at the meeting?

On arrival, you will be welcomed by a member of the SHTG secretariat, who will explain how the meeting will work. This person will be your point of contact throughout the afternoon and will deal with any queries you may have. A public attendees’ space within the meeting venue is provided for you to use before the SHTG meeting and during the break.

The Public Involvement Advisor will also introduce themselves at this time and be on hand to provide any assistance that is needed as well.

Will committee papers be provided for the committee meeting?

SHTG considers up to four technologies at each meeting. You will be supplied with an information pack on the day of the meeting containing an agenda and copies of the draft advice for each technology. This pack should not be taken from the meeting room and must be returned to the SHTG meeting co-ordinator at the end of the meeting. This is because there may be confidential information contained in the paperwork and the detail within them may be subject to revision following the SHTG meeting.

Will refreshments be provided?

Tea, coffee and water will be provided in the designated area for public observers within the meeting room. Please do not bring food into the meeting room.

Who will be at the meeting?

In addition to the SHTG members, members of staff involved in running and supporting the meeting will be in attendance. Invited observers may also be present, along with members of the public who have registered for a place in the public gallery.
How long will the meeting last?

The Chair will outline the agenda for the day at the start of the meeting. The presentations and discussions usually take around 60 minutes for each technology. Depending on the volume of business and discussions, meetings may finish slightly earlier or later than billed on the agenda.

Will the final advice be announced at the meeting?

SHTG aims to finalise its advice during the meeting but the advice will not be considered final until it is published on our website, as changes to it can be made after the meeting.

When will the final SHTG advice be published?

SHTG advice is published on the website, approximately 4 weeks after the meeting it was discussed at.

Submitting patient organisations can in most circumstances be provided with the SHTG decision under embargo, approximately one week before the information is made public. This is in strict confidence and is to enable you to prepare any advisory services you may provide for patients and carers.

Can I talk to members of the committee?

The role of SHTG members is to make an independent assessment of the evidence. It is very important that no one tries to influence an individual member during breaks or outside the meeting on any topics that are under discussion.

Can I take notes at the committee meeting?

You may take notes. Committee meeting minutes will be published on the SHTG website around four weeks after the meeting.

Can I quote or report what is said at a committee meeting?

This is a public meeting and what members say can be quoted after the meeting. We rely on a full and frank exchange of views to carry out our work and members of the group will debate the evidence thoroughly. We ask patient organisations to respect that it is important that members are able to speak freely without concern that they may be misquoted or that what they have said is taken and reported out of context.

Can I use social media during the meeting?

The use of mobile phones, and recording or live reporting of committee meeting proceedings is not permitted during the committee meeting.
What facilities are there to accommodate people with disabilities?

Wheelchair users have direct access to the venue from the street. However, due to the venue’s building regulations set by the fire service, there are limits on the number of people with mobility problems we can accommodate at meetings. If you are a wheelchair user or have walking difficulties, please contact the Public Involvement Advisor so we can ensure appropriate support is in place.

The committee meeting room is fitted with an induction loop for people with hearing impairment. Please let us know in advance if you need to use it.

Will I be able to claim expenses to attend the meeting?

You are able to claim reasonable standard class travel to attend the meeting. If you are planning to claim for any travel, this must be agreed with SHTG in advance of the meeting. For further details about claiming expenses please speak to the Public Involvement Advisor.

Feedback & evaluation

The Public Involvement Advisor will send you an online survey link following the meeting, asking for your opinions on the experience of participating in the SHTG meeting. We encourage you to provide honest feedback to help us review and develop our processes.

If you have any questions, please contact our Public Involvement Advisor:

Email: james.stewart4@nhs.net
Telephone: 0141 227 3257