



**Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG256) 8/26**

**Subject: NICE Clinical Guideline NG256 - Kidney cancer: diagnosis and management**

**For action by:**

Chief Executive of Public Health Agency – **for distribution to:**  
Director of Public Health and Medical Director – for cascade to relevant staff  
Director of Nursing and AHPs – for cascade to relevant staff

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**  
Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff  
Heads of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Acute Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads  
Directors of Social Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Finance – for cascade to relevant staff  
AHP Leads – for cascade to relevant staff

Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority – **for cascade to:** relevant independent healthcare establishments

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

**For Information to:**

Chair of Public Health Agency  
Chairs of HSC Trusts  
Chair of RQIA  
NICE Implementation Facilitator NI  
Members of NI NICE Managers' Forum

**Summary of Contents:**

This guideline covers diagnosing and managing renal cell carcinoma in people aged 18 and over. It aims to improve care by helping healthcare professionals offer people the right treatments and support, taking into account the person's individual preferences.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:  
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**Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG256) 8/26**

**Date of Issue: 13 May 2026**

**Related documents:**

HSC (SQSD) 13/22  
HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG12) 29/15

**Superseded documents**

None

**Status of Contents:**

Action

**Implementation:**

As per circular. Generally, Clinical Guidelines should be implemented within 12 months of endorsement.

**Additional copies:**

Available to download from  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/safety-and-quality-standards/national-institute-health-and-care-excellence-nice>

**Dear Colleagues**

**NICE Clinical Guideline NG256 - Kidney cancer: diagnosis and management -**  
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng256>

The Department has recently reviewed the above NICE guidance and has formally endorsed it as applicable in Northern Ireland.

**It is important to draw your attention to *Recommendation 1.17 - Genetic assessment to diagnose heritable renal cell carcinoma predisposition syndromes* - due to current differences in testing methodologies across the UK, health care practitioners should seek advice from the Regional Genetics Service in Belfast City Hospital.**

In accordance with the process outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 13/22, (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-hsc-sqsd-13-22.pdf>) the following actions should be taken:

1. PHA
  - a. In conjunction with the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) Department of Health, identify Commissioning and Professional Leads who will consider the commissioning implications of the Clinical Guideline and co-ordinate with any other relevant commissioning teams. The Lead / Leads will identify any areas where regional planning / investment / commissioning are required, or where there is material risk to safety or quality. These will then be actioned immediately through normal commissioning arrangements or through bespoke arrangements reflecting the nature of the issue / risk.
2. HSC Trusts
  - a. Proceed with targeted dissemination, agree a Clinical / Management Lead to coordinate implementation and consider what has to be done to achieve implementation using a risk based assessment and baseline review as appropriate to support planning. These initial actions should be undertaken within a 3 month period.
  - b. Implement the Guideline within a further 9 months (apart from any elements where significant issues have been raised with the SPPG).
  - c. Provide positive assurances to the SPPG that the required initial actions have been taken within the 3 month planning period and that the Guideline has been implemented within a further 9 months, where appropriate.
  - d. Where significant investment / commissioning needs cannot be met within the usual timeframe, notify the SPPG at the earliest opportunity through the routine Director-level service issues and performance meetings and agree appropriate arrangements with them to achieve implementation.
  - e. It is also recognised that it may not be appropriate for a HSC Trust to implement every single recommendation. A risk based assessment can be used to ensure that all significant safety and quality improvements are achieved.
  - f. Where NICE indicate that a recommendation is critical, in terms of service users' safety and / or outcomes, the Department expects HSC Trusts to implement the guidance. However, this does not override the responsibility of

clinicians to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of an individual service user. These decisions should be taken in consultation with the individual (or their family/ carer/ guardian).

3. RQIA
  - a. Disseminate the Guideline to the independent sector as appropriate.
4. HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs
  - a. Take account of this Guideline in training and other developments as appropriate.

To inform the planning process, please find attached details from the Departmental review. You should consider and take account of other relevant Departmental policies and strategies in your planning and implementation of this guideline, as well as any legislative / policy caveats identified in the course of the Departmental review.

A full current list of NICE guidance endorsed for application in Northern Ireland can be found on the Department's website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/safety-and-quality-standards/national-institute-health-and-care-excellence-nice>

With thanks for your work in implementing this NICE Clinical Guideline – NG256.



**Professor Cathy Harrison**  
**Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

## Appendix 1

### Endorsed NICE guidance - Details from Departmental review

Reference Number	NICE Clinical Guideline – NG256 <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng256">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng256</a>
Title	<b>Kidney cancer: diagnosis and management</b>
Summary of guidance	<p>This guideline covers diagnosing and managing renal cell carcinoma in people aged 18 and over. It aims to improve care by helping healthcare professionals offer people the right treatments and support, taking into account the person's individual preferences.</p> <p><b>The guideline includes recommendations on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ general information for people with suspected or confirmed renal cell carcinoma</li> <li>➤ diagnosing renal cell carcinoma</li> <li>➤ managing oncocytomas and Bosniak 2F cysts</li> <li>➤ managing localised and locally advanced renal cell carcinoma</li> <li>➤ managing advanced renal cell carcinoma</li> <li>➤ managing renal cell carcinoma in people with a heritable renal cell carcinoma predisposition syndrome.</li> </ul> <p><b>For recommendations on identifying renal cell carcinoma in primary care, or when to refer people to a specialist, see NICE Clinical Guideline:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NG12 - Suspected cancer: recognition and referral (endorsed by DoH in August 2015) - <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng12">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng12</a></li> </ul>
Related strategically relevant DoH/ HSC policies	A Cancer Strategy for Northern Ireland 2022-2032 - <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/cancer-strategy-northern-ireland-2022-2032">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/cancer-strategy-northern-ireland-2022-2032</a>
Inter-Departmental interest	None
Legislative / policy caveats	This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case.

	<p>A booklet <b><i>Your life and your choices: plan ahead (Northern Ireland)</i></b> has been developed by the Public Health Agency and Macmillan Cancer Support to help provide the public with information on Advance Care Planning and can be accessed at: <a href="#"><u>Your life and your choices: plan ahead Northern Ireland   Macmillan Cancer Support</u></a></p> <p>This guidance makes reference to NICE Social Care guidance which has not been endorsed by the DoH.</p> <p>This guidance makes reference to NICE HealthTech guidance (formerly Diagnostic guidance) which has not been endorsed by the DoH.</p>
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