SHTG Strategy 2021-2025

This strategy sets out how SHTG will help meet Healthcare Improvement Scotland's strategic priorities, including the provision of evidence and knowledge that enables people to get the best out of the services they use, and enabling people to make informed decisions about their own care and treatment.

> *Note: A new HIS strategy is being developed for 2022 onwards. The SHTG strategy remains subject to change pending completion of the HIS strategy.*

SHTG's work fulfils the statutory HIS duty to provide advice to the health service on the clinical and cost effectiveness of new and existing health technologies.

SHTG is part of the Evidence Directorate of HIS. SHTG will work closely with function leads across HIS to strengthen collaborative working, to ensure that our work meets the needs of our stakeholders, and to demonstrate the value and impact of our work in helping to improve the quality of health and care services across HIS's different functions. SHTG will continue to manage the quality of what we do via the HIS Quality Management System (QMS).

The SHTG team consists of researchers and economists who work across the Evidence Directorate. The Evidence Senior Management Team (SMT) will manage competing demands to coordinate staff resource towards the most impactful topics – particularly as part of the re-mobilisation, recovery, and re-design of health and care.

Drivers for change

This SHTG strategy is motivated by a number of contextual drivers:

1. **The rapid pace of health technology innovation, including the integration of digital technology and data into everyday life.**
   From devices, diagnostics and digital, to artificial intelligence and genomics, it is crucial that Scotland has a health technology assessment (HTA) process capable of informing the use of innovative technologies in a timely manner across Scotland. Our health and care system should seek to utilise valuable individual data to help inform decisions about people's care and treatment.

2. **A need to make efficient use of resources.**
   The economic challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to greater pressure on the health and social care budget in Scotland. HTA can help decide the maximal value of our resources, through the evaluation of the clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of health technologies.

3. **The value placed on Once for Scotland decision-making**
   In recognition of increasing variability in access to care – in-part stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic - advice on the use of health technologies needs to be applied consistently and fairly across Scotland, addressing (or minimising) the risk of variation in access and outcomes.

4. **A focus on health technology safety following the publication The Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.**
   Health technologies have the potential to transform many people's lives for the better, yet we need to ensure joined-up and robust and evidence-based advice is available to help guide the safe, effective and cost effective use of technologies for the people of Scotland.

5. **The development of new regulatory processes for health technologies in the UK.**
   EU exit has changed the regulatory landscape for medical devices. There is an opportunity to close a gap in evidence requirements between regulation and HTA, with a view to creating a more streamlined pathway from product development to use in Scottish practice.

6. **A focus on environmental and sustainability issues related to resource use.**
   There is increasing awareness of the potential environmental impact of health technologies, and these issues should be taken into account in the provision of advice surrounding their development, use and disposal.

SHTG's mission and vision statements

In order to encapsulate how we intend to address these issues, our SHTG mission and vision are defined as follows:

Our vision is for the use of health technologies in Scotland to be informed by evidence and SHTG advice, to provide maximal value for the people of Scotland.

Our mission is to provide advice on the use of health technologies that is robust and evidence-based, to inform the delivery of health and care for the people of Scotland.

SHTG's principles

We work in line with the values of Healthcare Improvement Scotland and will conduct our HTA programme according to the following principles: (based on HTAi Global Policy Forum principles for HTA):

Integrity: Core to our work is transparency and impartiality; acting as an 'honest broker'.

Inclusivity: We recognise the value of all types of evidence from research to people's lived experience, and we actively welcome participation from our stakeholders as collaborative partners.

Responsiveness: We are receptive to the needs of our stakeholders, aiming to ensure that our advice is timely and aligns with the needs of health and care services and users.

Excellence: We make the best use of the expertise within our team, following international best practice in HTA, and promoting a culture focused on learning and continuous improvement.

SHTG's goals

In order to focus our efforts towards the provision of advice on health technologies over the coming years, we have identified eight goals. We will:

1. Deliver robust and responsive advice to inform decision making across health and care in Scotland
   o Develop and publish advice on health technologies in a range of formats, utilising the many components of HTA – including patient input and economic evaluation.
   o Use the Evidence Directorate process to take on new work to ensure the prioritisation of high impact topics.
   o Routinely assess the value/impact of our work and use the findings to improve our approach.

2. **Explore the introduction of an 'early HTA advice' function**
   - Pilot the SHTG early HTA advice service - a standalone service offering advice to developers of health technologies on how to establish and evidence the value of their technology within health and care in Scotland.

3. **Lead the assessment of new and innovative health technologies (including digital)**
   - Support SG's innovation programmes with a view towards a coordinated innovation landscape in Scotland.
   - Develop and/or adopt a framework to assess the evidence for digital technologies, based on international best practice.

4. **Expand engagement with patient organisations, service users, the public, industry, government and academia**
   - Develop innovative and tailored approaches to listen to patient and public views, and ensure this evidence informs our advice.
   - Work with industry to ensure the best information is available to inform national advice.
   - Nurture our academic partnerships to build HTA and research capacity.

5. **Apply methods that are fit for purpose**
   - Ensure continuous improvement in SHTG methodology and alignment with HTA best practice. In doing so, support and encourage staff to develop their skills and awareness, and to collaborate with the national and international HTA community.
   - Apply 'real world data' within our HTAs, and explore 'living HTA' to best capture the developing nature of evidence surrounding health technologies.

6. **Raise awareness of the importance of health technologies, and their assessment, towards improving people's health and care in Scotland.**
   - Develop and formalise an engagement plan for our stakeholders.
   - Promote the contribution of health economics as part of health technology assessment.
   - Work with the HIS Communications Team to develop an SHTG communications strategy and utilise various media channels to promote the work of SHTG and SHTG advice

7. Create clear communication channels for the consideration of health technologies across NHSScotland boards
    o   Establish formal engagement routes within all NHSS Boards, for the consideration of our advice and to encourage participation in HTA.
    o   Work with SG to facilitate the introduction of policy around the consideration of advice on health technologies.
    o   Embed the role of evidence within NHSScotland special health boards, including National Planning with NHS National Services Scotland.

8. Embed the role of HTA in ensuring the safe, equitable and sustainable use of health technologies
    o   Alongside HIS colleagues, create partnerships with UK regulatory authorities; facilitating alignment between regulatory and HTA processes for health technologies, and access to regulatory data for our assessments.
    o   Ensure equality impact assessments (EQIAs) are undertaken and issues identified are addressed across all our work.
    o   Make sustainability a stronger factor in our work, including the consideration of environmental impact assessment within our HTA process.