



Healthcare  
Improvement  
Scotland

**SIGN**  
Evidence-based  
clinical guidelines

## Attending a Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) Council meeting

### Information for members of the public

This factsheet is for members of the public who wish to observe a SIGN Council meeting. SIGN welcomes your attendance at these meetings. We hope it will help you understand how SIGN works to improve the quality of health care for patients in Scotland by reducing variation in practice and outcome through the development and dissemination of national clinical guidelines.

### About SIGN Council

SIGN Council is the decision making body for SIGN with overall responsibility for strategy and policy.

Members of SIGN Council are nominated by Royal Colleges or other professional organisations or committees, but also represent their specialty or discipline in a wider sense and consult with other specialist societies in their field. Members are selected to ensure that diversity and inclusion are addressed across SIGN Council. The members of guideline development groups can also be nominated to become members of SIGN Council. Public partners are identified from an open call for interested individuals followed by a robust selection process..

Members of SIGN Council determine the overall direction of SIGN's development and play a key role in shaping the SIGN guideline programme.

All members of SIGN Council make yearly declarations of interest, according to our Policy on Declaration of Competing Interests, which can be found in the [Register of Interests](#). Updates are recorded after each SIGN Council meeting.

## Attending a SIGN Council meeting

SIGN Council meets six times a year and the papers are made available after each meeting. Meetings are both in person and virtual to ensure effective functioning and engagement. To support SIGN's commitment to openness and transparency SIGN Council meetings are open to stakeholders to observe. We hope that it will help people to understand the way in which we determine the overall direction of SIGN's development and in shaping the SIGN guideline programme.

If you are interested in observing a meeting please contact Kirsty Littleallan, Executive Secretary to SIGN Council at [kirsty.littleallan@nhs.scot](mailto:kirsty.littleallan@nhs.scot) or call [0131 623 4720](tel:01316234720)

## When and where are the meetings currently held?

Future SIGN meeting dates are available on the SIGN website <https://www.sign.ac.uk/about-us/sign-council/> Because of the COVID-19 pandemic all SIGN meetings are currently being held virtually but we hope to hold some face-to-face meetings in the near future. Under normal circumstances, they will be held in either the Glasgow offices of Healthcare Improvement Scotland at Delta House, 50 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2NP or Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent Edinburgh EH12 9EB.

If a meeting is cancelled, or the time or location of the meeting changes, we will let you know as quickly as possible.

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

Currently the meetings are being held virtually. If attending the meeting at Delta House or Gyle Square, please arrive promptly at the time highlighted on the invite, when a short public observer briefing will take place. If you are not present for the start of the meeting you must wait for an appropriate interval to enter the meeting room. You are expected to stay until the meeting concludes. However, if it is necessary to leave the meeting early please do so quietly.

## What will happen when I arrive at the meeting?

On arrival, you will be welcomed by the Executive Secretary, who will explain how the meeting will work. The Executive Secretary will be your point of contact throughout the meeting. They will deal with any queries you may have.

## Will papers be provided for public observers to follow the meeting?

You will be given an information pack containing an agenda and copies of the papers. Papers will be sent via email before the meeting. You can request printed copies if emailed papers are not suitable for you.

## Will refreshments be provided?

Tea, coffee and water will be provided within the meeting room.

## The following must be followed during the meeting

- mobile phones must be switched off for the duration of the meeting
- audio and video recording, photography and the use of social media during the meeting is discouraged
- members of the public cannot speak or ask questions during the meeting
- you should keep your belongings with you at all times in case of an emergency

## Who will be at the meeting?

In addition to SIGN Council members, members of staff involved in running and supporting the meeting will attend the meeting. Invited observers may also be present.

## What information is discussed at the meeting?

Development of new SIGN guidelines for health and social care professionals, cross-organisational working within Healthcare Improvement Scotland, strategic business and general Council business such as co-opting new members.

## How long will the meeting last?

The Chair will outline the agenda for the day at the start of the meeting. SIGN meetings are scheduled to run for 1.5 hours. Depending on the volume of agenda items and discussions, meetings may finish slightly earlier or later.

## Will I be able to listen to all the discussions?

SIGN is fully committed to holding its meetings in public and we would like as much of the meeting as possible to take place with the public present.

## Can I take notes at the meeting?

You may take notes. Minutes of the meeting will be published on the website once approved by the group. Until that time meeting discussions are confidential.

## Can I quote or report what is said at a 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 SIGN Council will debate issues thoroughly. We ask the public 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?

Live reporting of meeting proceedings is discouraged.

## Can I conduct a research study on the meeting or SIGN (or both)?

If you have registered to attend a meeting, and also wish to conduct a study on the meeting or SIGN processes (or both), please contact the Executive Secretary. You will need to provide details on the purpose and context of your study, the information you plan to gather during the meeting and this will then be passed to SIGN Council for consent. You will be informed of SIGN's decision by email. If it is not possible for you to conduct your research study you will still be able to observe the meeting, however you will not be allowed to conduct any research at the meeting. If you no longer wish to attend the meeting, please inform the Executive Secretary as soon as possible to allow your place to be offered to someone else.

## What facilities are there to accommodate people with disabilities?

Wheelchair users have direct access to the venue from the street. However, because of the venue's building regulations set by the fire service, there are limits on the number of people with mobility issues we can accommodate at meetings. If you are a wheelchair user or have walking difficulties, please contact the Executive Secretary 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.

## Are there regulations for members of the media registering to attend a meeting?

A member of the Healthcare Improvement Scotland communications team will attend meetings when members of the media are present and provide an appropriate briefing. For media enquiries, contact [sign@sign.ac.uk](mailto:sign@sign.ac.uk)

## Are there any other categories of observers?

Healthcare Improvement Scotland staff, external representatives (eg from NHS boards) or invited guests may attend meetings with the permission of the SIGN Chair.

## Do I need to let you know if I am no longer able to attend a meeting I have registered to observe?

Please inform the Executive Secretary as soon as possible if you are unable to attend the meeting.

There are a limited number of public places available to attend meetings and by sending your apologies with as much notice as possible your place can be given to someone else.

## Feedback and evaluation

You will receive a survey link following the meeting, asking for your opinions on the experience of observing the SIGN Council meeting. We encourage you to provide honest feedback to help us review and improve the experience for observers.

**If you have any other questions regarding attending the SIGN Council meeting please don't hesitate to get in touch via [sign@sign.ac.uk](mailto:sign@sign.ac.uk)**