

SMT Meeting Session Summary

Date: 9 September 2026

Time: 2.00pm-4.00pm

Aims

- Receive an update on the Evidence Directorate Review and consider the future role of SIGN within a revised evidence and evaluation function.
- Receive updates on Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines, patient and public involvement activities, guideline development and methodology work.

Attendees

Present	
Professor Angela Timoney	Chair
Babar Akbar (BA)	NHS FIFE
Anthony Byrne (AB)	NHS Forth Valley
Dr Jane Barraclough (JB)	Royal College of General Practitioners
Professor Lesley Colvin (LC)	Royal College of Anaesthetists
Sara Davies (SD)	Scottish Government
Charlie Duncan (CD)	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
Shridevi Gopi-Firth (SGF)	NHS Forth Valley
Jay Gray (JG)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Dr Roberta James (RJ)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Dr Ingolfur Johannessen (IJ)	Royal College of Pathologists
Georgios Kontorinis (GK)	Circle Health Group
Iain Macleod (IM)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Chipo Makiyi (CM)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Dr Wendy Maltinsky (WM)	British Psychological Society
Dr Kevin McConville (KM)	Royal College of General Practitioners
Gerry McKay (GM)	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
James Morton (JMo)	Royal College of General Practitioners
Ro Pengelly (RP)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Mercedes Perez-Botella (MPB)	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
Debbie Provan (DP)	Scottish Federation of AHPs
Safia Qureshi (SQ)	Director of Evidence, HIS
Caroline Rapu (CR)	Royal College of Nursing

Martin Robertson (MR)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Duncan Service (DS)	Evidence Manager, SIGN
Sreebala Sripada (SS)	NHS Grampian
Ruth Stark (RS)	SASW
Dr Anna Sutherland (AS)	NHS Forth Valley
Apologies	
Arlene Coulson (AS)	NHS Tayside
Matthias Rohe (MR)	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Antonia Torgersen (AT)	NHS Lothian
Susan Chapman (SC)	NHS Tayside
Dr Simon Watson (SW)	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland

2.00pm Welcome and declarations of interest

- Chair welcomed new Council members Anna Podlasek, Jane Barraclough and Mercedes Perez-Botella and thanked departing members Brian Whittingham, Jill Fowlie and Amanda Gotch for their contribution to SIGN Council.
- Members were reminded to review and update declarations of interest and return any outstanding forms.

2.10pm SIGN Council business and update from SMT

- Chair provided a summary of key discussions from the August SMT meeting.
- Updates were provided on ongoing work concerning the Right Decision Service (RDS), including accessibility of SIGN content and differentiation between national and local guidance.
- Members were advised that the Trusted Voice Health Equity subgroup has now been established and will meet in October.
- An update was also provided on ongoing discussions regarding closer alignment between Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines and SIGN processes and governance.

2.20pm Update from Evidence Directorate

- SQ presented a detailed update on the Evidence Directorate Review and outlined progress moving from the discovery phase into the design and development phase.
- Members heard that the review aims to create a more integrated evidence and evaluation function that provides evidence to support clinical, service and policy decision-making across Scotland.
- Key themes included:
 - improving access to evidence through a single-entry point;
 - strengthening horizon scanning and prioritisation;
 - increasing focus on implementation, impact and evaluation;

- improving sustainability and resilience across evidence functions; and
 - simplifying governance arrangements.
- Two possible future operating models were presented for discussion.
- Council members raised concerns regarding:
 - the future role of SIGN and SIGN Council;
 - preservation of SIGN's methodology, reputation and clinician leadership;
 - maintaining public and patient involvement;
 - measuring the impact of guidelines; and
 - Ensuring evidence continues to support frontline clinical practice.
- Council agreed to have an Extraordinary meeting late October with this as the single item of business.

2.50pm Update on Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines

- AS provided an overview of the Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines programme, including its development, governance arrangements and increasing national and international usage.
- Members heard how the programme uses a combination of new guideline development, adoption of external guidance and retirement of outdated content to maintain a sustainable portfolio.
- Examples were provided of system-wide impact, including national work on oral care products and safer prescribing of fentanyl products.
- Discussion highlighted challenges relating to funding, workforce capacity, rural engagement and keeping guidance up to date within a rapidly evolving evidence base.
- Members welcomed the presentation and discussed opportunities to strengthen engagement with general practice, allied health professionals and remote and rural services.

3.15pm Patient and Public Involvement

- RP provided a brief update from the Public Involvement Advisory Group.
- Members heard that work is continuing on a blog exploring the challenges of recruiting and retaining public partners.
- The importance of maintaining strong public involvement and capturing lived experience across all areas of SIGN's work was emphasised.
- RJ highlighted Karen Graham's recent publication in the Guidelines International Network journal and congratulated her on this achievement.

3.25pm SIGN Executive business

- RJ provided an update on the guideline development programme and progress towards the "35 in 5" programme.
- Members noted publication of the updated Shiga toxin-producing E. coli guidance and the

forthcoming publication of the Chronic Pain guideline, including plain language and Easy Read versions.

- Updates were also provided on obesity-related work, guideline scoping activities and revalidation of the Care of Deteriorating Patients guideline pending wider work relating to Martha's Law.
- Members discussed future topic development and prioritisation.

3.35pm Methodology

- Members noted the written methodology update.

3.50pm Minutes and actions from previous meeting

- The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2026 were approved as an accurate record.
- Members agreed a three-point summary focusing on:
 - the Evidence Directorate Review and need for further discussion;
 - the Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines update; and
 - Karen Graham's recent publication.

4.00pm Close

Dates of future meetings

- Extraordinary SIGN Council meeting (October 2026, date to be confirmed)
- Next scheduled SIGN Council meeting: Wednesday 9 December 2026 (hybrid).

Action log

Action narrative	Owner	Timescale
Circulate the Evidence Directorate Review presentation and 2 Fishes report to all Council members.	JG	September 2026
Arrange an extraordinary SIGN Council meeting to consider and provide feedback on the Evidence Directorate Review proposals.	Chair / JG	October 2026
Seek feedback from colleges and representative organisations on the proposed future operating models.	All	Before October meeting
Identify a SIGN Council representative to participate in the HIS Annual Review process.	Chair / SIGN Council	Before 2 November 2026