GGC Medicines Update

Guide to writing a Medicines Update blog

Background

- Medicines Update blogs are written by healthcare professionals across NHSGGC. The blogs are edited, approved, published and disseminated by the Communications subcommittee of the NHSGGC Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee (ADTC).
- Blogs are reviewed and edited by the committee at our meetings held every four weeks.
- If you are planning to write a blog or have an idea for Medicines Update, please email ggc.medicines.update@nhs.scot and someone from the committee will get in touch. A member of the committee will liaise with you throughout the process.
- It is advisable to contact the committee at an early stage when you have an idea for a blog so this can be considered. Contacting us at an early stage allows us to plan our meeting agenda and to agree a suitable date for your blog to be reviewed. If it's a topic you're not sure will be suitable for Medicines Update, you are more than welcome to discuss this with us.
- Authors are welcome to attend the Communications meeting by prior arrangement with the Chair/Professional Secretary.

Things to consider when writing a blog

- Medicines Update blogs are written for healthcare professionals across NHSGGC and it is therefore the responsibility of the Communications subcommittee to ensure blogs are written in a style suitable for a wide and diverse audience and in keeping with NHSGGC policy and guidelines.
- Authors should be aware that the majority of blogs submitted are further edited by the committee prior to publishing. Various degrees of editing may be required from minor formatting changes to significant changes to the content that may then require further discussion by the committee following revision. Although edited by the committee, it is the responsibility of the blog author to ensure clinical accuracy of the content.
- If you would like to see an example of a blog before and after editing, please get in touch.
- When you are submitting a blog for review, please complete a **checklist** (sent from the committee on request). The aim of the checklist is to help support you through the process and provide the relevant background information required by the committee prior to review.
- Following publication on the GGC Medicines website and app, authors are responsible for letting the committee know if there are any changes to the blog content. If so, the blog may be updated or unpublished. Blogs will remain available on the GGC Medicines website and app for four years unless a change is required before then. After this time, blogs will either automatically be unpublished or, if content is still relevant, flagged for review with a view to republishing.

- If you have any questions about the checklist or the process to follow, please do not hesitate to email ggc.medicines.update@nhs.scot and someone will get back to you.

Top tips

- Keep it concise
    - Aim for a maximum of two A4 pages in length, where possible. Use bullet points to break up long sections of text and consider presenting information as a diagram, figure or table where appropriate, to help improve readability. Keep the text succinct and avoid repetition.
    - Refer to writing style below.
    - A series of blogs can be considered if the topic is large. Case studies can also be added to provide clinical context. See previous examples section below.

- Include key messages at the beginning
    - Think of the audience and tailor your messages appropriately. Are there different key messages/actions for different professional groups? To avoid repetition and keep concise, don't duplicate key messages in the body of the text unless there is a benefit to adding further detail.

- Readability
    - Consider using a readability checker such as Get your document's readability and level statistics - Microsoft Support.

- Public domain
    - As blogs are in the public domain (hosted on the GGC Medicines website and app), please ensure that the content and links are appropriate. We generally avoid making reference to GGC clinical incidents, however, if this is something you would like to consider, the wording may be reviewed by Corporate Communications or considered for inclusion in the Acute Safety bulletin available only to NHSGGC staff. The inclusion of other GGC sensitive information on prescribing data and spend, is considered on a case-by-case basis.

- References
    - Reference lists are not included in published blogs. Hyperlinks to sources or studies may be included within the blog text where considered necessary; otherwise, references can be submitted alongside the draft blog for retaining on file.

- Previous examples
    - Refer to the GGC Medicines website for examples of previously published blogs. Blog themes include patient safety, changes in clinical practice and cost efficiencies.
    - Examples of blog series include:
        - QTc Interval - Summary
        - NHSGGC Guideline: Polypharmacy Review in Adults living with Moderate to Severe Frailty. Part 1 - Medicines Linked to Falls
        - Parkinson's Disease (PD) in Acute Care
        - Clozapine supply and missed doses in acute
        - Vitamin D: Prevention & Treatment of Deficiency in Adults
    - Other blog examples:
        - The Guide to Guidelines: What Every User and Author Needs to Know about GGC Clinical Guidelines
        - Pain management in patients with dementia during hospital admission
        - GGC Guideline Update: Heparin dose adjustment in the presence of renal impairment

Example layout

- **Title** (keep concise, can have longer sub-title if required, make attention grabbing and ensure it's clear to readers)
- **Key messages** (as bullet points)
- **Brief background** if there is a benefit to adding further detail (including any links to further information)
- **Actions for different professional groups** (if appropriate)
- **Images/tables** (can be inserted where appropriate)
- **Case studies** (where appropriate)
- Please note, all blogs are presented in the form of Microsoft Sway. The committee may get in touch to discuss design and layout options prior to publication.

Writing style

Blogs should be consistent in their presentation and comply with the following convention.

Examples of frequently used naming, terms and phrases

Numbers

- Use numerals for numbers, except at the beginning of a sentence and for large numbers up to one billion.

Dose/dosage information

- Do not insert a space between numbers and dose units or symbols (e.g. 30mg, p=0.1, p<0.1).
- Spell microgram and nanogram in full.

Abbreviations

- When using abbreviations, write the full name, followed by the abbreviation in brackets.
- The abbreviation can be used thereafter within the same page/document.
- Only use if the abbreviation is more commonly used than the full text.
- Do not put capital letters into the words from which an abbreviation is derived simply to indicate the letters that have been used to construct the abbreviation: for example, write multiple sclerosis (MS), not Multiple Sclerosis (MS).
- When writing NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, express as NHSGGC (not NHS GGC or NHSGG&C)

Formatting

- Bold should be used sparingly for emphasis. If it is used too much the text becomes difficult to read and can lose its impact.
- Don't underline text as readers may think this is a hyperlink.
- Don't use all caps or italics as they are hard to read online.
- Avoid exclamation points as this looks unprofessional.

Hyperlinks and URLs

- Shorten long URLs. For example, https://ggcmedicines.org.uk/blog/medicines-update/new-nhsggc-guideline-polypharmacy-review-in-adults-living-with-moderate-to-severe-frailty/ can be changed to NHSGGC polypharmacy frailty by hyperlinking the text to the website URL.
- Embed hyperlinks into the blog text. Hyperlinks within the blog are underlined so there's no need to specify 'click here'. For example, 'refer to NHSGGC polypharmacy frailty blog' rather than 'click the link to access the Medicines Update blog, https://ggcmedicines.org.uk/blog/medicines-update/new-nhsggc-guideline-polypharmacy-review-in-adults-living-with-moderate-to-severe-frailty/'.

Images

- Should be of high resolution and only be used if required for functional purposes (not for decoration).
- Images must be in .jpg or .png format.
- Where possible, take your own photos or create your own images to avoid copyright infringement. Otherwise, written permission must be obtained from the copyright holder (please submit a copy of this permission with your draft blog).

Useful links for further information

- GGC Website Support - NHSGGC website style guide.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com) [NHSGGC network access required]
- NICE style guide

Dissemination

- All blogs are disseminated via email:
    - to all staff in Pharmacy Services
    - to anyone who subscribes to Medicines Update (via ggc.medicines.update@nhs.scot)
    - to GPs and practice nurses
    - to community pharmacy staff
- New blogs are also publicised to resident doctors via the Medical Education SharePoint page and to all NHSGGC staff via Core Brief and via StaffNet News.
- In addition to the standard methods above, authors are encouraged to think of additional ways to highlight their work and reach the target audience. Dissemination methods should be discussed with the committee at the point of blog approval.
- Publication of a Medicines Update blog should not automatically be assumed to be the main and only means of communicating medication related messages within NHSGGC and additional, more targeted, communication may be required.

Any questions?

Email: ggc.medicines.update@nhs.scot