

# Natural England Standard

## Developing and managing internal guidance



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### 1:0 About this standard

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This standard supports Natural England's commitment to the reduction and rationalisation of guidance. It will improve the accessibility, quality and consistency of our guidance to meet staff needs. This standard applies to all staff.

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### 2:0 The Standard

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You must refer to this standard before you write new or amend internal guidance. If the guidance is for an external audience it needs to take into account the guidance principles for external guidance. You will need to contact the NE web team to proceed.

This standard covers:

2.1	<b>Ownership and responsibility</b>	All guidance belongs to Natural England, not any specific work area or individual.  The responsible team will manage and maintain guidance through its lifetime.
2.2	<b>Identifying the need</b>	There must be a clear requirement to write new guidance.
2.3	<b>Writing guidance</b>	All guidance will be in plain English and make it clear to staff what they need to do.
2.4	<b>Implementation of guidance</b>	The responsible team must plan for the introduction and implementation of guidance.
2.5	<b>Compliance</b>	You will follow guidance marked mandatory.
2.6	<b>Accessibility</b>	All staff will be able to easily access the guidance they need to do their work easily
2.7	<b>Quality assurance</b>	All guidance will have clear governance.
2.8	<b>Evaluation</b>	Review all guidance periodically to check that it is still current and meets staff needs.

## Guidance: mandatory requirements

### 2.1 Ownership and responsibility

2.1.1	All guidance belongs to Natural England and must be accessible to all staff regardless of their role or work area.
2.1.2	The team that is accountable for the legislation or work area will be responsible for amendments to existing guidance or development of new guidance.
2.1.3	Different teams must not produce their own guidance for the same topic as it will lead to inconsistencies and confusion. The accountable team will lead and co-ordinate the work across all teams. A separate section or an annex can cover any content that is unique to a specific group.  See <a href="#">pt 2.2</a> on the need to develop guidance.
2.1.4	We need to manage the development of guidance to give assurance to users. All guidance will identify a Director and team whose responsibility is to check that content continues to meet user needs and is current.
2.1.5	All guidance content will align with relevant <a href="#">Natural England Standards</a> and will be consistent with other guidance, legislation and statutory duties.

### 2.2 Identifying the need

2.2.1	Even the best guidance will be ineffective if no one reads it. To ensure the guidance meets the needs of those who will use it, lead authors will research their intended audience and identify their needs.
2.2.2	Production of new guidance will only happen in these circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is no existing guidance. Authors will check externally and internally if there is a piece of guidance that can be reused or updated.</li><li>• One cross-organisational piece will replace several pieces of similar guidance.</li><li>• When there is a change in government policy, legislation, or organisational priorities.</li></ul> See flow chart in <a href="#">annex 1</a> for decision-making process.

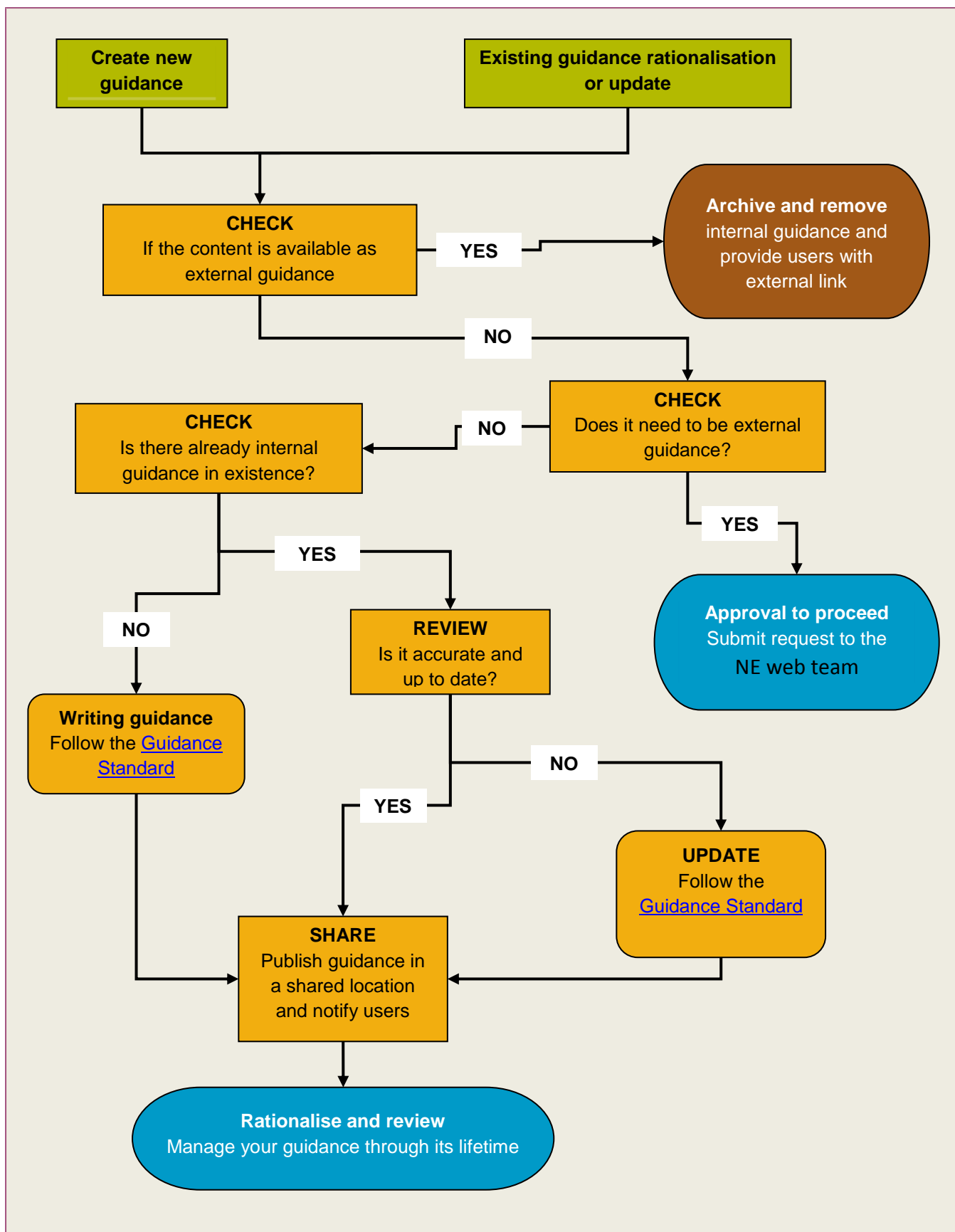
### 2.3 Writing guidance

2.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All guidance must follow Natural England's house style and use plain English.</li><li>• Avoid jargon and include a glossary for technical terms or definitions of words that need explanation.</li></ul>
2.3.2	The overall quantity and length of guidance must be manageable to users.
2.3.3	Authors must use any agreed forms and templates for their work area.
2.3.4	Archive old versions once new guidance is available.

<b>2.4</b>	<b>Implementation of guidance</b>
<b>2.4.1</b>	<p>Authors/work leads will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all who will be using the guidance are aware that it is available.</li> <li>• Give users sufficient time to read, digest and ask questions before they have to start using it.</li> <li>• Provide training or briefing notes to ensure users and their managers have a clear understanding of what is required of them.</li> </ul>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>The level of compliance for guidance</b>
<b>2.5.1</b>	<p>We expect staff to follow all our guidance but they must follow mandatory guidance as written. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a statutory requirement</li> <li>• a legal obligation</li> <li>• an internal organisational requirement; standards, rules, procedures, instructions, codes of practice</li> </ul> <p>Consult your line manager or the responsible work area if you are unsure whether a piece of guidance is mandatory.</p>
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>
<b>2.6.1</b>	All guidance must be easily available to enable effective working. Follow the <a href="#">Record Management Standard</a> on how we manage, share and store our information.
<b>2.6.2</b>	<p>To enable staff to access what they need guidance authors/owners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the accessibility of their guidance is consistent with what has been agreed for that work area e.g. through a toolkit.</li> <li>• Provide links to additional information to enable readers to find what they need easily.</li> <li>• Make it clear to users where they can locate the guidance they need to do their work.</li> <li>• Make guidance available in other formats on request. See Natural England's diversity and equality web pages.</li> </ul>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Quality assurance</b>
<b>2.7.1</b>	Authors must follow our <a href="#">Quality Management Standard</a> to ensure that the guidance meets Natural England's quality requirements.
<b>2.7.2</b>	Directors and managers must ensure that the guidance they own reflects changes in legislation, government policy or organisational change.

<b>2.7.3</b>	<p>All finalised guidance will have restricted editor rights so that users cannot make changes or additions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See guidance for using TRIM for electronic documents.</li> <li>• All guidance published or linked from Natural England internal web pages will have restricted editor rights and clear owners identified e.g. mailbox, content owner.</li> </ul>
<b>2.7.4</b>	<p>To give confidence to users that they are looking at the latest version all authors are responsible for ensuring that new or revised guidance clearly shows a version history.</p> <p>a. Footer must appear on each page within the document with a date, version number, title, page number, creator and content owner. Any printout will show this information clearly on each page. An example:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Content creator: John Smith Content owner: Claire Smith Guidance Standard 19/09/11 Final V1</p> <p>See item 2.2.8 within the <a href="#">Record Management Standard</a> on 'saving records'.</p> <p>b. For internal guidance published on a web page you need to include the date published and details of the lead author. Linked documents will follow the format outlined in 2.7.4a.</p>
<b>2.8 Evaluation</b>	
<b>2.8.1</b>	<p>All guidance will include a review date. The guidance owner is responsible for reviewing content at the designated time to ensure there is still a need and it is accurate. This will give confidence to users.</p>
<b>2.8.2</b>	<p>Guidance owners will enable users to provide feedback, specifically to identify inaccurate or inconsistent content.</p>

## Annex 1: Decision making process for writing guidance



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**Quick reference**

<b>Type of Standard</b>	Operational standard.
<b>Purpose:</b>	To set out Natural England's approach to developing and managing internal guidance.
<b>Owner(s):</b>	Performance and Standard Function
<b>Sign-off:</b>	Ken Roy, Director of Performance and Standards
<b>Publication:</b>	Standards library – internal version
<b>Review date:</b>	31/03/2017
<b>Issue Number</b>	Final 1.3

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**Document Amendment Record**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Amendment detail</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
V0.1	Principles drafted	Kate Heveron	27/11/2012
V0.2	Updated to reflect feedback from Helen MacVicker	Kate Heveron	03/12/2012
V0.3	Updated to reflect feedback from Amanda Craig's	Kate Heveron	06/12/2012
V0.4	Content added	Kate Heveron	10/12/2012
V0.5	Updated to reflect feedback from Standards Team	Kate Heveron	19/02/2013
V0.6	A few principles removed whilst still being developed under SERR project so draft standard can be used by functions currently rationalising their guidance or developing new guidance	Kate Heveron	15/03/2013
V0.7	Updated to reflect feedback from SERR guidance project team	Kate Heveron	23/04/2013
V0.8	Updated to reflect Ken Roy's feedback	Kate Heveron	22/05/2013
V1	Final version	Kate Heveron	30/05/2013
V0.9	Amending roles and responsibilities to reflect changes in organisation	Kate Heveron	27/01/2014
V0.10	Updated to reflect feedback from Brad Tooze and Ken Roy	Kate Heveron	17/02/2014
V1.1 Final	Refreshed version published	Kate Heveron	17/02/2014
V1.2	Standard updated to reflect SERR guidance project. Style and format changed only. Principles not changed	Kate Heveron	15/07/ 2015
V1.3	Standard updated to cover external guidance (link to principles) and the removal of advice on the format of guidance (formally annex 2)	Kate Heveron	31/03/2016