

Documenting your Evidence

This resource is intended to support Development Groups with searching for evidence when developing National Policies, Protocols, Procedures and Guidelines.

For support, it is recommended to contact a HSE librarian in your area, available at <https://hselibrary.ie/category/your-local-library/>

# Methodology Steps

1. Formulate and list the key question(s)
2. Search for evidence
3. Document the search strategy
4. Evaluate the evidence / develop recommendations

# Formulate and list the key question(s)

Start by asking staff and/or patient and service user centred focused questions relevant to the topic. The Development Group need to agree the list of questions the National 3PG should answer. Your questions will help guide your search plan and search of the best available evidence.

For any research questions synonyms (equivalent terms) are imperative, as if searching online databases many have their own unique subject headers (synonyms) e.g., Cinahl, PsycInfo databases use unique headers and Proquest which includes the Healthcare Administration Database.

HSE Employees Click here <https://books.hli.ie/cgi-bin/koha/opac-memberentry.pl> to register for employee access to HSE Library databases and e-resources.

In the Blended Working PICO example below, other synonyms such as “Remote Working” could be included into the search, for example, “home working” OR “remote working” OR “blended working”

Click [here](https://hli.ie/searchingsystematically/pico) to access HSE Health Library Ireland LibGuide on ‘Search Systematically: ASK’.

## Example of a focused question

**What is the impact of home working on productivity within healthcare workers?**

**What could the PICO be for this question?**

✓ **P**atient/Population/Problem

✓ **I**ntervention

✓ **C**omparison

✓ **O**utcome

**SAMPLE PICO**

**P I C O**

Productivity

Productivity

Home Working

Healthcare workers

**AND AND AND**

**What synonyms (equivalent terms) could be included in the search?**

**Patient / Staff / Population / Problem**: What are the population’s demographics? For example the patient/staff age, gender, ethnicity or employment status? What type of problem is it? For example a disease, a medical condition, occupational hazard?

**Intervention/Exposure**: What type of intervention is being considered, such as work environment / work place? Or is it an exposure, such domestic violence, disease or disorder?

**Comparison**(this part can be left out if no comparisons are being made): are you comparing the intervention/exposure to another treatment/exposure? Can it be treatment as normal or placebo or another specific intervention?

**Outcomes**: What is the desired effect you would like to see? What effects are not wanted? What difference has the intervention made?

## Subject Headings/Synonyms

**Example:**

* Healthcare workers / Health workers / Health Service Personnel
* Home Working / Working from Home / Blended Working / Off-site Working
* Productivity / Output

## Simple searching – using subject headings

1. Search your chosen database by **“Subject Headings”** before creating a list of keywords.
2. If there is a subject heading for the concept you are searching for, you may be able to use some information from the subject heading search you have completed in Step 1 in your keyword search (detailed below).

**Example: Search for “Home Working”:**

**CINAHL Database Heading = “Telecommuting”**

**Using Keywords**

Keywords are similar to the name of the subject heading, but they are **not** subject headings. They are not automatically searched when you use the “Subject Headings” term. These are alternate terms, synonyms and variations that you should consider utilizing as keywords.

For the ‘home working’ example, you might want to search for:

* “Home Working”
* “Work from Home”
* “Remote Working”

You might not use all these terms in your final search, but entry terms are a good starting point for building a list of keywords.

## Boolean Logic

The Boolean operator **OR**is used to search for all the potential keywords for one topic or element of the PICO.

The Boolean operator **AND**is used to combine different topics or elements of the PICO.

**AND** remote working **AND** productivity

**OR** Remote Work

Virtual Work

Telecommuting

**OR** Employee Productivity/ Workplace Productivity

# SEARCH FOR EVIDENCE

Evidence acquired can include the best available literature, information, data, legislation, regulations, accreditation standards, professional body standards, codes of practice relevant to your question/topic and evidence from learning from serious incidents, complaints, and reviews.

Information is published in a variety of sources including:

Journals, Books, Grey literature (Conference proceedings, Government publications, Reports, Theses and dissertations), Internet (Google Scholar, etc.), Databases (Medline, Cinhal, PscyInfo, ProQuest, etc.)

Click [here](https://hli.ie/searchingsystematically/pico) to access HSE Health Library Ireland LibGuide on ‘Searching Systematically: Acquire – Selecting your sources’.

# document the search strategy

In the National Template, Development groups are asked to provide a general outline of the search strategy. The search strategy should include databases searched, selection of resources searched, date of searches, limits applied for each question (see template on pg. 6).

The search strategy and findings are recorded for each question and kept in the master file held by the Document Owner. This does not need to be published with the National 3PG, but readers should be directed to the relevant location of where the full search strategy documentation is accessible.

Documenting your search strategy will allow you:

* keep track of what you've done so that you don't repeat unproductive searches.
* re-use successful search strategies to find newly published papers on the subject.
* justify and provide transparency of the search process used, which can be replicated when the National 3PG is reviewed again.

Click [here](https://hli.ie/c.php?g=682299&p=4869090) to access HSE Health Library Ireland LibGuide on ‘Search Systematically: Document your search’.

# EVALUATE the evidence / DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS

There must be an explicit link between the guidance / recommendations in the National 3PG and the supporting evidence you have acquired.

In the National Template, the Development Group are asked to describe the method they have used for evaluating the evidence and information which was acquired as part of their search, for its validity (closeness to the truth), impact (size of the effect), and applicability (usefulness in practice), relevant to the setting.

There are three main points to consider when screening and evaluating all research evidence:

1. Are the results valid?

2. What are the results?

3. Are the results generally applicable to the population of the National 3PG?

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme ([CASP Checklists](https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/)) are available to help you read and check health research for trustworthiness, results and relevancy. These are free to download and can be used by anyone under the Creative Commons License. Click [here](https://hli.ie/searchingsystematically/ca) to access HSE Health Library Ireland LibGuide on ‘Search Systematically: Critical Appraisal’.

**Develop guidance / recommendations** – provide information on how your guidance / recommendations were developed and level of evidence that was used.

# sample template to DOCUMENT YOUR literature search strategy

**Search Strategy:** This is the documented record of resources used (e.g. online databases) for each question.

**Note:** The search strategy and findings recorded for each question is kept in the master file by the Document Owner.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key question 1** | **Q: Full question:** <<*insert text>>* |
| P (Population) | <<*insert P>>* |
| I (Intervention) | <<*insert I>>* |
| C (Comparison/control) | <<*insert C>>* |
| O (Outcome) | <<*insert O>>* |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Researched Literature** | **Publication date:** | | **Age range:** | | **Gender:** |
|  |  | | *As applicable* | | *As applicable* |
|  |  | |  | |  |
| *Add more lines as required* |  | |  | |  |
| **Search terms used:** | *Type in the answer here* | | | | |
| **Other limits:** | *Type in the answer here* | | | | |
|  | | | | | |
| **Databases:** | | **Date searched** | | **Number of results** | |
|  | |  | |  | |
|  | |  | |  | |
| *Add more lines as required* | |  | |  | |
|  | | | | | |
| **Grey literature/databases:** | | **Date searched** | | **Number of results** | |
|  | |  | |  | |
|  | |  | |  | |
| *Add more lines as required* | |  | |  | |
|  | | | | | |
| **Hand searching:**  **Name/reference of resource** | | **Date searched** | | **Number of results** | |
|  | |  | |  | |
|  | |  | |  | |
| *Add more lines as required* | |  | |  | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Guidance / Recommendations to be included in the National 3PG** | | |
| **No.** | **Recommendations** | **Evidence comments if applicable** |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 | *Add more lines as required* |  |