

Describing Guideline Development Process: Responding to New Challenges and Ensuring Transparency

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Background

The Finnish Medical Society Duodecim has nearly 20 years of experience in developing clinical practice guidelines (CPG's). The Current Care (CC) guidelines are produced by international methodological standards described in a methodological handbook (1st publication in 1998). As the international methodologies evolve, it's important to keep the methodological tools up-to-date. In a year-long project CC editorial team with other national EBM organisations updated the guideline development handbook and produced detailed process description flow diagrams.

The work was divided between small working groups and was later commented and approved by the CC editorial team. The handbook describes composition of the guideline development group, methods for developing a guideline, consensus methods and decision-making process, patient involvement strategies, peer review methods, and the updating procedure.

The key process description flow diagrams are presented in Figures 1–3.

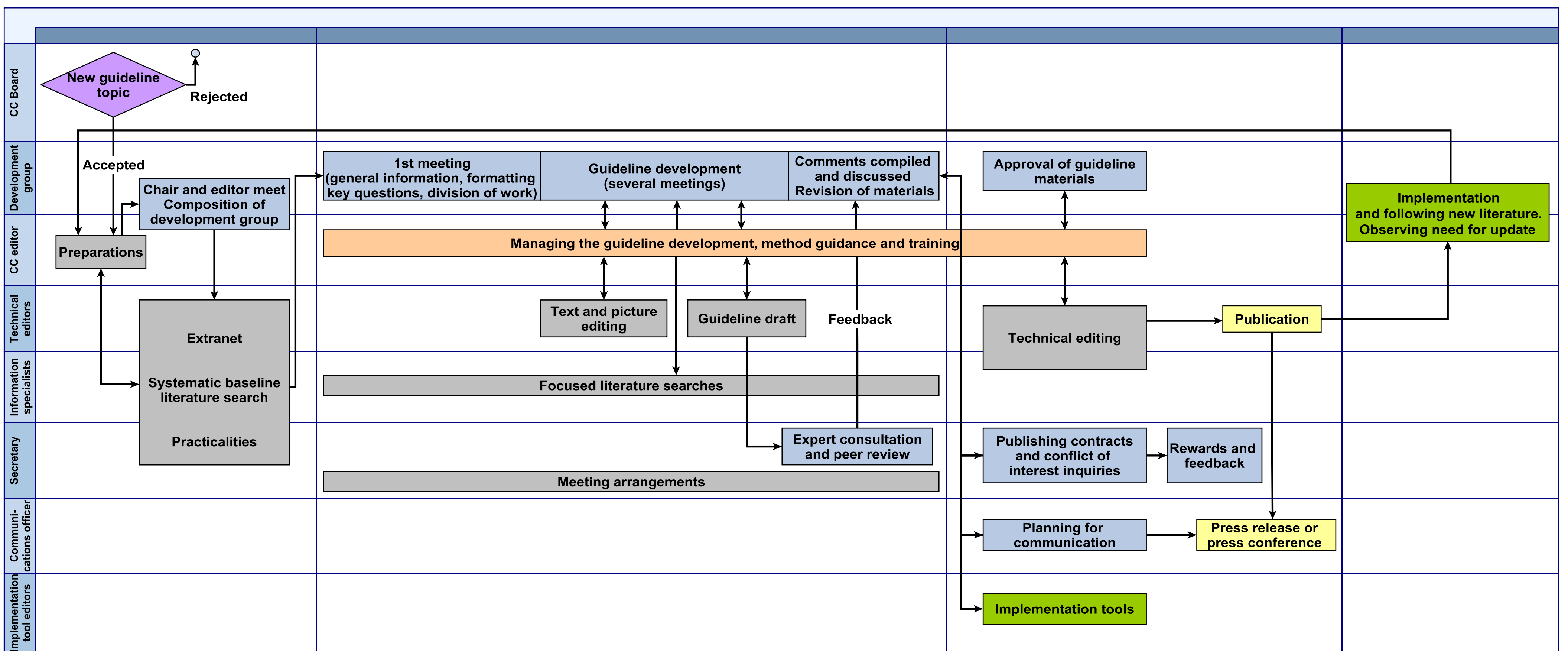


Figure 1. Current Care Guidelines development process.

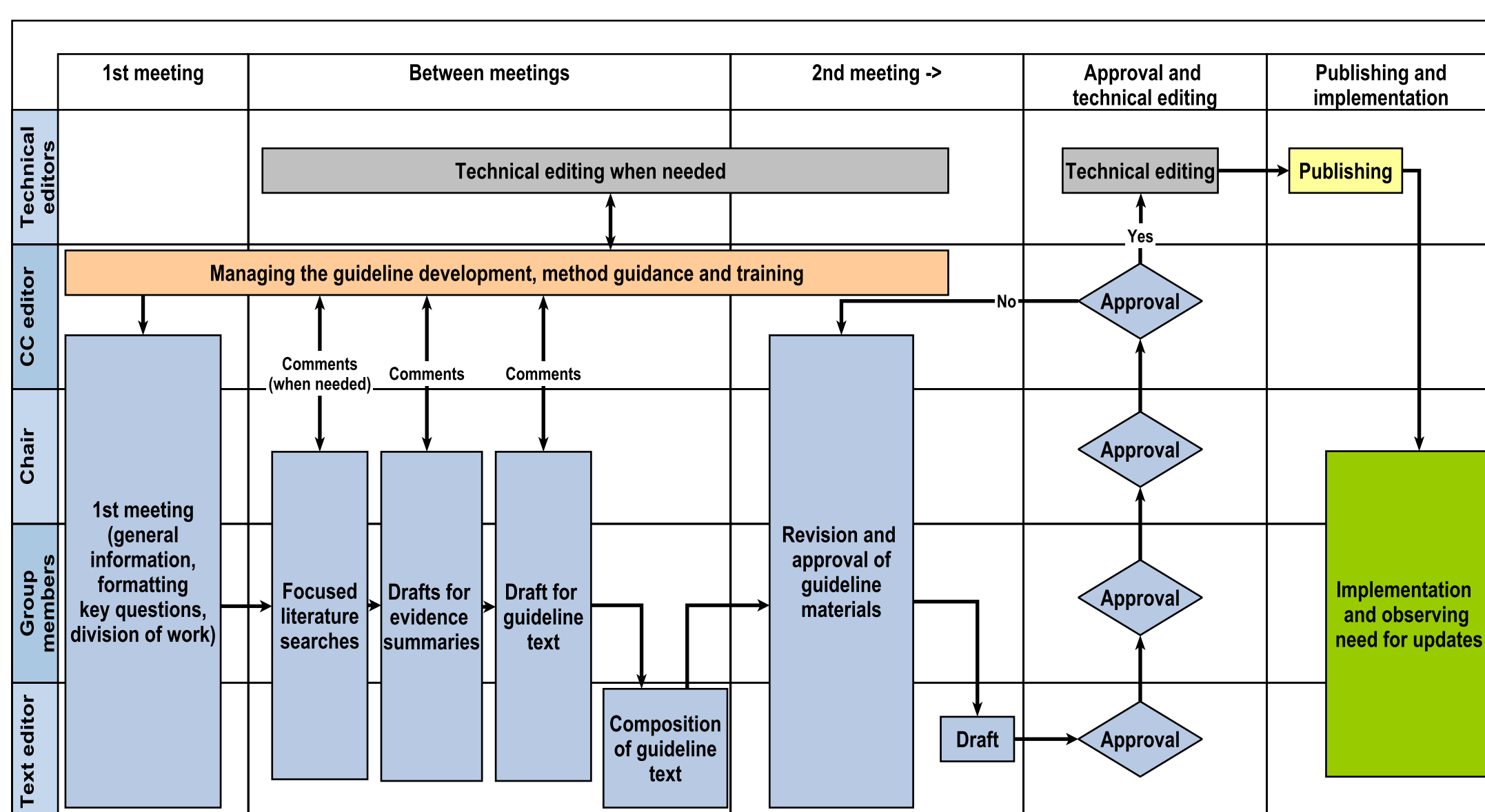


Figure 2. Current Care Guidelines process for the development group.

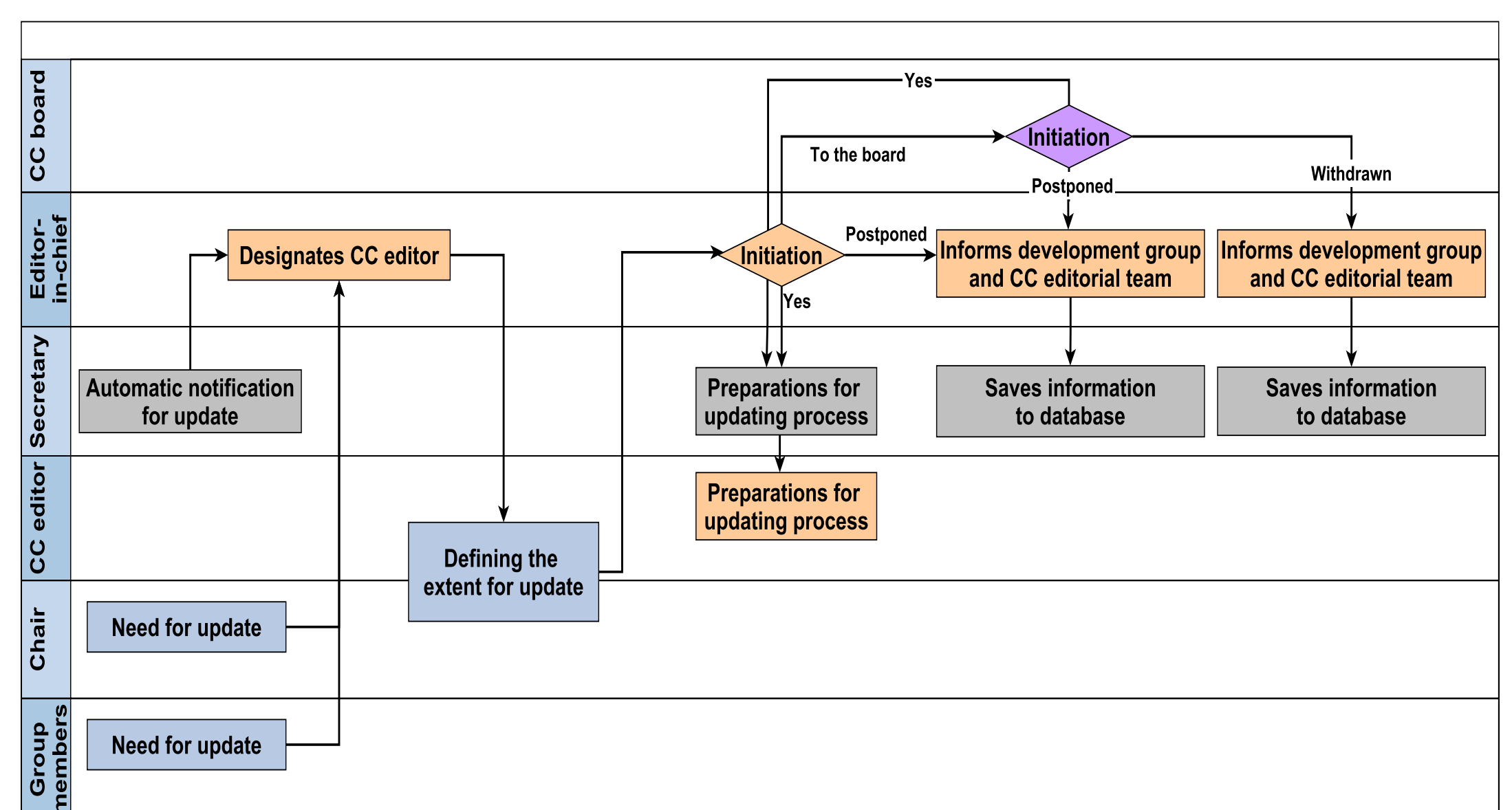


Figure 3. Current Care Guidelines initiation of updating process.

Lessons learnt

The CPG development process consists of several phases by different performers. To ensure the quality and maintain the rigorous guideline standards for all published CPG's, the developers need to have access to up-to-date guideline handbooks and process descriptions.

Visualising the processes and linking different process descriptions accordingly enables understanding of the responsibilities and different functions of all stakeholders involved in the development. Published process description flow diagrams increase transparency and can facilitate future process development.

For full process description flow diagrams of Current Care Guidelines, please visit www.kaypahoito.fi/web/english