**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2019

**Present**

Andrew Dillon Chief Executive

Ben Bennett Director – Business Planning and Resources

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Gill Leng Director – Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director – Evidence Resources

**In attendance**

Nicola Bent Programme Director – Health and Social Care

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Science Advice and Research

Tanya Slinn Digital Portfolio Manager – Digital Services (item 7.3)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Paul Chrisp who was represented by Simon Ellis.

## Freedom of Information and publication scheme (item 2)

1. The final minutes will be made available on the NICE website subject to the redaction of any exempt material.

## Declarations of interest (item 3)

1. The previously declared interests were noted. There were no conflicts of interest relevant to the meeting.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 4)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019 were approved.

## Matters arising (item 5)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 16 April 2019 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Andrew Dillon asked that he is sent the latest draft annual report to review once it has been updated to reflect the amendments requested by SMT and the Board.

ACTION: JG

## Board meetings (item 6)

1. SMT noted the actions from the April Board Strategy meeting, which are in hand, and agreed the agenda items for the May Board meetings. It was agreed that the paper on the pilot evaluation of four digital health technologies should be discussed at the public Board meeting. This could be a summary of the paper recently presented to SMT, with additional context to the pilot. Mirella Marlow was asked to inform NHS England of this proposal to take a paper to the public session.

ACTION: MB/MM

## Finance and resource report (item 7.1)

1. Ben Bennett presented the report that set out the financial position for 2018/19, which is an underspend of £3m. This is £1m greater than the forecast underspend reported to the Board in March due to non-cash accounting adjustments relating to provisions for potential liabilities, depreciation charges and an accrual relating to unused annual leave carried forward.
2. SMT discussed the deficit in the Science Advice and Research programme. Nick Crabb briefed SMT on the actions taken to address this for 2019/20, including leaving posts vacant to reduce the cost base. Income targets have been set to deliver a break-even position, which require only a small increase in current income levels given the reduced staffing. Nick noted the increase in income in the latter part of 2018/19, but highlighted that the uncertainty about the UK’s exit from the EU presents an ongoing risk. Evolutions in NICE’s methodology, with greater scope for commercial agreements to manage uncertainties in evidence, could also be a factor affecting the level of demand for NICE Scientific Advice (SA).
3. Nick stated that SA continues to receive positive feedback, and he believes there will be ongoing demand for an appropriately sized function. He noted the importance of managing the cost base to reflect demand, and suggested the overheads charged to SA are reviewed to reflect the team’s recent reduced staffing. Ben Bennett confirmed this remains an area of ongoing discussion and the overheads will be kept under review. It was agreed that SMT should formally review SA’s financial position at the end of Q1 to consider whether the upturn in income has been sustained and to review the projections for the rest of the year.

ACTION: NC/BB

1. In addition to the above, SMT discussed the underspend in the Centre for Health Technology Evaluation, noting this is largely due to vacant posts and the External Assessment Centre contracts. SMT also noted the information in the report on the purchase of additional annual leave by staff.

## Developing people improving care (DPIC) strategy refresh (item 7.2)

1. Gill Leng and Nicola Bent presented the refreshed DPIC framework, which sets out a strategic intent around changes to quality improvement and leadership capability in the health and care system. The document will be published in June with a more detailed action plan expected later in the year that aligns to the NHS workforce implementation plan.
2. SMT discussed the refreshed strategy and supported this for publication. It was agreed that Nicola Bent, in conjunction with Grace Marguerie, should undertake an initial screening to extract the relevant parts of the strategy for NICE, and then consider how these could be implemented, in particular through the NICE Connect transformation programme.

ACTION: NB/GM

## Web conferencing (item 7.3)

1. Tanya Slinn presented the proposal to adopt zoom web conferencing software for webinars and external meetings, through a controlled roll-out initially focused on those teams with the most pressing needs and who have been involved in the work to identify the best solution. Alexia Tonnel highlighted that there is not currently a centralised resource to support the roll-out of software as a service (SaaS) tools such as zoom, hence there will be a joint model in which multiple teams will support different aspects of this roll-out.
2. SMT welcomed the roll-out of the web conferencing software. It was agreed there should be a communication to staff to explain the controlled roll-out, and confirm that in the meantime, staff could continue to participate in web conferences arranged by other organisations that are using other SaaS tools.

ACTION: JG/TS

## May 2019 elections: guidance on conduct (item 7.4)

1. Andrew Dillon presented the guidance and highlighted that consultations with a particular emphasis on local issues, or impact on areas where local elections are being held, should not generally be launched during the period 11 April and 2 May.
2. SMT noted that previously NICE has exercised caution around public health guidance in the period prior to local elections. However, the next consultation on public health guidance is not due to commence until 24 May so no action is required on this issue. It was agreed there were no other implications of the elections for current or planned activities.

## Digital knowledge concordat (item 7.5)

1. Alexia Tonnel presented the draft concordat prepared by Health Education England that expresses arms length bodies’ (ALBs) commitment to working together to ensure that healthcare and public health are underpinned by evidence from research, and that the ALBs’ investment in digital knowledge resources on behalf of the NHS is coordinated to maximise the benefits for the workforce, patients and taxpayers.
2. SMT supported the concordat and accompanying public statement. It was agreed that it would be helpful to clarify that the section on best value for money refers to purchasing of evidence, rather than the delivery of care. Also, for the document to refer to NICE’s role in producing evidence based high quality knowledge resources, and confirm that the signatories would share resources for internal use free of charge.

ACTION: AT

## EU exit (item 8)

1. There was no further update.

## NICE Connect project (item 9)

1. Gill Leng provided a brief update on the project’s current activities.

## Weekly staff SMT updates (item 10)

1. SMT agreed the staff updates.

ACTION: DC

## Any other business (item 11)

### Board meetings outside of England

1. David Coombs reminded SMT that in light of feedback from the Department of Health and Social Care, NICE has not recently held Board meetings outside of England. However, the proposed list of venues for 2020 includes a visit to Wales following the appointment of a dedicated implementation facilitator for the country. SMT discussed the proposal and agreed that Wales is an important audience for NICE’s work, both in terms of people living in Wales who access the NHS in England and the Welsh Government’s funding for NICE’s work. It was therefore appropriate to hold a meeting in Wales. SMT considered whether a Board meeting should be held in Northern Ireland given the field team’s established presence there. SMT noted and welcomed the ongoing work in Northern Ireland and the funding provided. It was agreed that due to the smaller audience, current position with the devolved administration, and the logistics of travelling, a more cost effective method of engagement would be for representatives of the Board to meet with the Northern Irish government. Andrew Dillon asked David Coombs to feed this back to the field team, who could coordinate such a meeting.

ACTION: DC/AC/LE

### NICE conference

1. Jane Gizbert confirmed that planning remains on track for the NICE conference on 9 May. It was agreed that Danielle Mason should provide an update to next week’s SMT meeting, and escalate any issues to individual SMT members in the meantime, as necessary.

ACTION: JG/DM

### London office move

1. Ben Bennett advised SMT that he is meeting with the architect to discuss the layout for the new London office later today. He updated SMT on the initial planning, and highlighted the limits on NICE’s discretion to determine the layout. It was agreed that SMT should receive a short paper providing an update on the planning to date and the current plans for utilising the space. The paper should set out NICE’s ideal requirements and the extent these are achievable.

ACTION: BB