**National Institute for Health and CARE excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019

**Present**

Andrew Dillon Chief Executive

Ben Bennett Director – Business Planning and Resources

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Paul Chrisp Director – Centre for Guidelines

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Gill Leng Director – Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director – Evidence Resources

**In attendance**

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Alison Liddell Associate Director – Service Delivery and Programme Management – Evidence Resources (item 6.1)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. None.

## 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 28 May 2019 were approved.

## Matters arising (item 5)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 28 May 2019 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. It was noted that following the discussion at last week’s meeting, 13 additional senior staff had been invited to the parliamentary reception.
3. David Coombs clarified that the Board meeting to approve the annual report and accounts on 19 June would need to be held in private session as the document cannot be published until it has been laid before Parliament.

## Prioritisation of digital services activity 2019/2020 (item 6.1)

1. Alexia Tonnel and Alison Liddell presented the paper that set out the proposed activities within the digital services (DS) team in 2019/20, and changes to the governance and oversight arrangements for this work. Alison outlined the proposed allocation of resources, with 67% of ‘chargeable capacity’ allocated to NICE Connect and transformation projects, 25% to maintaining existing live services, with the remaining 8% allocated to ongoing improvements to nice.org.
2. SMT supported this split between the three areas of work and discussed the specific activities in the ‘road map’ for 2019/20. SMT members noted previous discussions about the benefit of establishing a portal for stakeholders, which would separate transactional activity such as responding to consultations, from the rest of the website. In response, Alexia and Alison noted the importance of understanding the issues to be addressed, and highlighted that current planned activities in the roadmap, notably the comment collection and identity management projects, would deliver improvements in this area. SMT agreed that it would however be beneficial to include on the roadmap a piece of work scoping the potential for improving the experience of stakeholders who use the website for a transactional relationship with NICE. In addition, it was agreed to refine the roadmap to clarify the relationship between each activity and the NICE Connect project.

ACTION: AT/AL

1. In response to questions from SMT, it was confirmed that the activities in the roadmap will address the prioritised recommendations from the recent consultancy reports on data and content management. It was noted that a paper is being developed to enable SMT to consider the potential investment required in the NICE Pathways to address future cyber security risks and improve accessibility. SMT will need to consider whether to make such investment given the proposal to replace Pathways with NICE Connect.
2. In response to a query from Meindert Boysen, Alexia agreed that the preference is to continue with outsourced support for HealthTech Connect, subject to ongoing funding. However, Alexia confirmed the digital services team could make the arrangements to provide this support if required.
3. SMT discussed the funding for NICE Connect and the need to develop a business case that includes the wider supporting activities already planned in the roadmap. It was agreed that before the Board is asked to consider the next steps in September and October it will be important to clarify whether to seek a strategic partner, and if so, the nature of any such partnership. Gill Leng suggested this is discussed at the planned SMT discussion in July.

ACTION: GL

1. SMT supported the proposed changes to the governance arrangements for the digital services activity. It was agreed SMT should receive quarterly updates on the roadmap, which would ensure that the emerging strategic priorities of NICE Connect can be addressed and prioritised within the digital services workload. The proposal for regular briefings to senior teams in centres and directorates was supported, and it was agreed updates should also be given to the NICE Connect steering group to ensure alignment between the project and the roadmap.

ACTION: GL/AT/AL

## The cancer drugs fund: managing the potential impact of technology appraisals charging (item 6.2)

1. Meindert Boysen presented the paper that set out the processes to manage the impact of technology appraisals charging on entry and exit to the cancer drugs fund (CDF). He stated that while he felt the risks of a company declining to pay for the appraisal were minimal, it is important to document the process for handling such scenario should it arise.
2. SMT supported the proposed arrangements as a mechanism of last resort, and agreed that every effort should first be made to resolve any non-payment.
3. It was agreed that it would be helpful for SMT to receive an update on the CDF.

ACTION: MB

## Annual complaints report (item 6.3)

1. David Coombs presented the annual complaints report for 2018/19. While the number of general complaints considered under the policy was similar to previous years, it was notable no internal reviews were requested of NICE’s response to freedom of information requests.
2. SMT discussed the complaint about stakeholder registration and NICE’s criteria for accepting a stakeholder. It was noted that in response to the complaint, the Centre for Guidelines have developed additional text for the website that explains the criteria in further detail. It was agreed this text should come to SMT for review prior to publication given the implications across NICE’s guidance programmes.

ACTION: PC

1. Andrew Dillon noted there is no formal resolution process in the guidelines programme, unlike the guidance produced by the Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (CHTE). He stated that at some point it may be worth considering whether a formal resolution process would have helped address concerns about recent contested guidelines more quickly. In response, Paul Chrisp noted that under the NICE Connect vision, content would be reviewed and updated more frequently which may provide a timely opportunity to address concerns about guideline recommendations.

## NICE Foundation (item 6.4)

1. Andrew Dillon presented the proposed report to the June Board Strategy meeting on the outcome of the project group’s review of the proposal to establish a charitable company, the NICE Foundation, to promote the use of evidence to improve outcomes and the efficient use of resources, in health, public health and social care in the UK and internationally. While the project group felt there was a case for establishing the Foundation, it was agreed to recommend that the Board does not proceed with the proposal given the project group’s mixed views on the financial viability, and the concerns from the affected staff and senior management.
2. SMT discussed the project group’s conclusions and agreed minor amendments to the paper before it is submitted to the Board, including to more clearly state the project group’s recommendations at the start of the paper.

ACTION: AD/DC

1. SMT briefly discussed the implications for the NICE Scientific Advice function should the Board agree not to proceed with the Foundation. Andrew Dillon stated that the priority will be to deliver the financial plan to ensure a viable and stable function. He would also need to consider the Science Advice and Research function’s long term location within NICE.

## EU exit (item 7)

1. There was no further update.

## NICE Connect project (item 8)

1. SMT noted the upcoming lunch and learn sessions and discussed the planned video to promote NICE Connect. It was suggested that in addition to SMT members talking about the nature of the challenges and the opportunities to be addressed by NICE Connect, together with a visual realisation of what users might see when NICE guidance is presented through Connect, the video should include interviews from guidance users and developers.

## Weekly staff SMT updates (item 9)

1. SMT agreed the staff updates.

ACTION: DC

## Any other business (item 10)

1. SMT noted and welcomed that this year’s response rate to the staff survey, 85%, was the highest ever.