**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2020

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Paul Chrisp Director – Centre for Guidelines

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Judith Richardson Acting Director – Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director – Evidence Resources

Catherine Wilkinson Acting Director – Business Planning and Resources

## In attendance

Sarah Acton Senior HR Business Partner (item 7.1)

Guy Butler Programme Director – Transformation (item 7.5)

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Science Advice and Research

Martin Davison Acting Associate Director – Finance (item 7.3)

Helen Knight Programme Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 7.2)

Alison Liddell Associate Director – Digital Services (items 7.4 and 7.5)

Grace Marguerie Associate Director – HR (item 7.1)

Kelly Parry Data Protection and Information Governance Manager (item 7.4)

Sheela Upadhyaya AACS Relationship & Delivery Lead – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 7.2)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. None.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

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

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 9 June 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.

## Coronavirus (item 5)

1. SMT confirmed the decisions at the gold group to:

* Permanently close the London Spring Gardens office.
* Broaden key worker status to all NICE staff.
* Approve the 8 Quality Standards topics for publication in 2020/21, with a request to the team to review the scope for adjusted timelines to enable more topics to publish.

## June Board strategy meeting (item 6)

1. SMT noted the agenda, papers, and arrangements for the Board strategy meeting on 17 June and the subsequent private Board meeting.
2. It was agreed that the revised corporate virtual backgrounds should be circulated to the SMT and Board.

ACTION: JG

## Annual workforce report (item 7.1)

1. Grace Marguerie presented the annual workforce report for the July public Board meeting, and summarised the key points of note. She explained that due to the COVID-19 disruption, the report largely follows the approach from last year.
2. SMT reviewed the report, with particular focus on the equalities data. SMT discussed the data on the differing success rates for job applicants across the protected characteristics, and welcomed that the new applicant tracking system and additional staff capacity in HR will enable greater analysis of this data on a more frequent basis. SMT noted the need to reflect on this data and consider whether any changes to the recruitment process are required, including for example, to the composition of interview panels.

ACTION: GM

1. SMT noted the proportion of NICE staff who have declared their religion to be Christianity is significantly lower than the national population in the Census. SMT speculated on potential reasons for this, and noted that it may in part be due to the non-disclosure rate among NICE staff. It was agreed that further information should be added to the report about this under-representation and in future, comparative data from the Census or other national sources should relate to the working age population to ensure an appropriate comparison. SMT agreed that it would also be helpful to remind staff of the positive reasons for collecting the equalities and reiterate that it is held securely.

ACTION: GM/SA

1. SMT agreed that the references to gender identity should be reviewed and updated, drawing on best practice in other organisations. Information should also be added to the report to note the current limitations within ESR on how data on gender identity is collected.

ACTION: GM/SA

1. SMT noted the importance of the work underway to refresh and update the NICE’s equality objectives following the Board’s discussion of proposed objectives in March 2020. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Board to hold a preliminary discussion on the revised proposals before they are presented to the public Board meeting for approval in September.

ACTION: CW/SCS

1. SMT agreed that the report’s summary should note that the report covers the period before the COVID-19 disruption significantly affected working arrangements. It was agreed that the future developments section should note the implications of the COVID-19 changes on future working and recruitment; refer to the collaborations with other ALBs on workforce issues; and the ambitions for developing the report for next year. Subject to these and other minor clarifications and amendments, the report was agreed for submission to the July public Board meeting.

ACTION: GM/CW

## Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (CHTE) topic selection re-consideration of idebenone for treating Duchenne muscular dystrophy (item 7.2)

1. Meindert Boysen presented the outcome of the re-consideration of the CHTE topic selection routing decision for idebenone for treating Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and sought SMT’s approval for the decision to route the topic to the technology appraisals (TA) programme.
2. Meindert, Helen Knight, and Sheela Upadhyaya, explained the rationale for the topic selection decision making panel’s conclusion that the technology did not meet all of the criteria for routing the topic to the highly specialised technologies (HST) programme. It was acknowledged that the criterion requiring the target patient group to be distinct for clinical reasons has been challenging to apply across the programme and may require a degree of judgement.
3. SMT discussed the panel’s conclusions and confirmed the decision to route the topic to the TA programme. It was agreed that the latest version of the checklist that showed the panel’s decision against each criterion should be circulated to SMT for information.

ACTION: HK

1. SMT noted and supported the ongoing work to review the topic selection criteria with a view to reducing the scope for judgement and subjectivity as far as possible.

## Finance report (item 7.3)

1. Catherine Wilkinson presented the update on the financial position at 31 May 2020, which will form the basis of the finance report to the July public Board meeting. Catherine stated that future reports will include more information on vacancies to enable a more strategic approach to discussions about recruitment.
2. SMT members noted a number of financial pressures and strategic financial challenges, including recruitment to new posts to support operations in the Centre for Health Technology Evaluation, the implications of the reduced TA income and how this could be addressed, and the funding for NICE’s COVID-19 work. It was noted that these issues are interconnected and need to be considered in the round alongside other financial pressures. It was agreed that Meindert Boysen should consider how to address the shortfall in TA income and the extent this could be addressed through amending processes and additional capacity. Alongside this, Paul Chrisp should consider the approach to utilising the capacity from the guideline slots that was originally intended to be released for investment in NICE Connect, and Alexia Tonnel should consider the implications for NICE Connect if these resources from Centre for Guidelines are instead reallocated to support the COVID-19 work. This consideration would then inform a discussion at the August Board Strategy meeting on the financial strategy.

ACTION: CW/MB/PC/AT

## Office 365: the risks with NICE’s current approach and options going forward (item 7.4)

1. Kelly Parry presented the paper that set out the complexity and risks around the roll-out of Office365 (O365). Kelly noted the challenges arising from the current position, which could increase NICE’s exposure to risks around compliance with data protection and access to information legislation, and lead to operational inefficiencies. She asked SMT to consider how O365 should be used in the interim period pending the approval and implementation of a business case for the wider use of O365, which would cover the comprehensive roll-out of SharePoint.
2. SMT discussed the next steps for taking forward the CapGemini report and the roll-out of SharePoint. It was noted that SMT had informally agreed in principle to implement SharePoint and the next stage is to develop a business case. SMT discussed the timescale for this work and noted that the intention is to bring a business case to the Board in September following prior review by SMT over the summer. Alexia Tonnel stated that it could take approximately 18 months to fully implement SharePoint, which Kelly Parry highlighted reflects the need to put in place the required underpinning arrangements, such as records and information management policies and procedures, to fully realise the benefits from O365.
3. SMT noted the risks that could arise from implementing O365 and SharePoint without adequate planning and underpinning governance and therefore agreed to reaffirm the existing holding position and not roll-out O365 more widely while the business case for the wider roll-out is developed. However, SMT were mindful of the need to support teams to work differently, and agreed there could be limited prototyping of new tools and uses in a risk assessed way. This would be with the caveat that such use may need to change once O365 is rolled out more fully, and the priorities for such prototyping would need to be prioritised based on available resources. SMT noted that this limited prototyping could therefore act as ‘pre-pilots’ and assist a quicker future roll-out of O365, while minimising the risks arising from using O365 in the interim period. It was agreed this decision should be communicated to staff.

ACTION: KP/AT

## Digital services and Information Technology delivery 2020/21 (item 7.5)

1. Alexia Tonnel presented the paper that outlined the proposed allocation of resources in the integrated Digital Services (DS) and IT team in 2020/21. Alexia highlighted the proposed trade-offs across the support for NICE Connect and existing live services, and noted the initiatives that would not be delivered. The paper also sought approval to convert non-recurrent funding for digital staff within the NICE Connect budget into recurrent funding for permanent Digital, Information & Technology Directorate (DIT) staff to recruit skills and capacity that are required to deliver high priority NICE Connect commitments.
2. Jane Gizbert asked about the availability of resources to improve the website, in particular to be able to update content more quickly. In response, it was noted that the proposed prioritisation in the paper will mean that any changes to the website in 2020/21 would be limited to incremental developments, with the exception of the NICE Connect priorities.
3. SMT agreed the delivery plan and prioritisation set out in the paper, including the decision to make only limited investment in live services. SMT approved the request to convert £0.2m of funding in the 2020/21 NICE Connect budget and £0.4m of non-recurrent budget earmarked for digital resource in the NICE Connect business plan in the next 2 financial years to recurrent funding to recruit to the permanent posts in DIT set out in the paper. SMT agreed to also provide additional investment of up to £0.1m to address any shortfall between these roles and the non-recurrent NICE Connect budget. It was noted that successful recruitment to these posts would enable delivery of the NICE Connect priorities set out in paragraph 15 of the paper.

ACTION: AT/AL

1. It was agreed that Guy Butler should review the implications of this budget transfer on the ability to backfill staff to support process, methods and analytics aspects of NICE Connect, and report back to the steering group on this issue.

ACTION: GB

## World evidence based healthcare day (item 7.6)

1. Paul Chrisp highlighted the proposal for NICE to be an official partner of World evidence based healthcare day. The suggestion is that NICE International lead this work for NICE, supported by colleagues elsewhere in NICE.
2. SMT supported the proposals. It was agreed that Nick Crabb would ask Jeanette Kusel to liaise with the organisers and colleagues across NICE to facilitate this input.

ACTION: NC

## EU exit (item 8)

1. Meindert Boysen highlighted that NICE’s discussions with the MHRA have intensified, and there should be further clarity on the nature of the UK’s future relationship with the EU at the end of June. At that point SMT agreed it would be timely to update the relevant entries in the corporate risk register.

ACTION: MB

## London office move (item 9)

1. SMT noted the update from the programme board.

## Any other business (item 10)

1. None.