**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

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

Jeanette Kusel Acting Deputy Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Science Advice and Research

Eric Power Programme Director – Medicines and Quality (items 1 - 7.3)

Adrian Jonas Associate Director – Data and Analytics (item 7.2)

Nick Baillie Acting Programme Director – Health and Social Care (item 7.4)

Helen Jamison Associate Director – External Communications (item 7.4)

Rachel Ryle Senior Manager – Health and Social Care (item 7.4)

Kevin Harris Programme Director and Clinical Advisor (item 7.5)

Elaine Repton Corporate governance and risk manager (notes)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Meindert Boysen.

## 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 7 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 7 July 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Gill Leng confirmed that she was still in dialogue with Liz Woodeson regarding additional funding to support NICE maintaining a single, integrated suite of guidance on the clinical management of COVID-19. It was agreed to request a three way meeting with Liz and the DHSC finance team (via Andrea Barry) to progress the matter.

**ACTION: GL/CW**

## Coronavirus (item 5)

1. SMT confirmed two decisions taken at the gold group. International travel for NICE business remains on hold, and the policy on career breaks is to be amended to reduce the time allowable for a break from six to three months.

## July Public Board meeting (item 6)

1. SMT reviewed the July Public board agenda. SMT were asked to input their views to the chairman’s paper on options for the future format of board meetings. A brief discussion took place regarding the advantages and disadvantages of peripatetic board meetings, compared to virtual meetings, plus the proposal for more seminars and ‘deep dive’ discussions.

## Proposed changes to arrangements within the Digital Services and IT teams (item 7.1)

1. Alexia Tonnel presented a proposal to change the structure and operating model of the Digital Services (DS) and IT Teams to support their future integration, and sought SMT’s approval to start of a period of management of change consultation for postholders who will be affected by the restructure.
2. SMT challenged the report author proposing their own role is upgraded. Alexia explained the case for the re-grade which had been fully discussed and agreed with HR but accepted there was a potential risk of perception of undue influence over the proposals. It was agreed that this point should be noted and mitigated in the risks and issues section of the report and that the final version which will be used for the consultation exercise with staff, should reflect that SMT had explored this point.

**ACTION: AT**

1. Catherine Wilkinson added that the risk of a report author having undue influence over future re-structure proposals should be reflected in the next review of standing orders and standing financial instructions.

**ACTION: CW/ER**

1. SMT discussed the rationale for the three fixed term roles and risk of one redundancy which will be explored further with the individual and HR. Catherine Wilkinson raised the overlap between the information management functional area and the information governance team within the Corporate office. Alexia advised that the information management function was the technical element of information management which was much wider than IG. It was agreed that a name change to ‘information architecture and engineering’, would help staff to understand the distinction. It was agreed that Catherine and Alexia should review the interface and formulate a future operating model to clarify the boundaries of the two teams, particularly around the shared responsibility for the Sharepoint implementation work.

**ACTION: AT/CW**

1. The report also proposed that the existing digital and IT governance arrangements be replaced with two new governance groups – a technology governance board which will review and agree the strategic digital and technology roadmap, and an operations board which will provide an operational forum and assurance for the day to day management of changes to the technical infrastructure. It was noted that external partners from Government Digital Service and NHSX will be invited to the technology governance board on a quarterly basis.
2. Reference was made to the proposal being considered by the Board to establish a Digital & IT committee and the potential for duplication of discussions if remits are not clear. SMT welcomed a short paper from Alexia outlining the governance arrangements for the three strands. This will be incorporated into a paper coming to SMT in September as part of the next steps with Moorhouse consulting to develop a strategy for engagement across NICE on the future roadmap for the new Digital, Information and Technology directorate.

**ACTION: AT**

## AI Lab: update on proposals to establish a radical regulatory incubator (item 7.2)

1. Jeanette Kusel provided an update on the Government's proposals for an AI Lab (supported by £24m of capital funding), and confirmed the outcome of the two bids from NICE to the AI Board – one to establish a multi-agency regulatory advice service on AI to be led by NICE, which was approved, and one to develop methods for the evaluation of AI, which was declined. SMT was asked to agree that work could begin on developing the multi-centre advice service in partnership with CQC, MHRA and HRA. The work will sit within the Scientific Advice team and recruitment to the two additional dedicated posts (band 8c and band 7) to form the secretariat for the project will begin at the end of July. SMT approved proposals to begin the recruitment.
2. Catherine Wilkinson requested that funding for the additional posts be accessed directly via the DHSC finance team rather than invoicing NHSX. It was agreed that the funding would be reported in the finance and resources paper to SMT and the Board, and Jeanette Kusel was asked to liaise with HR and Martin Davison.

**ACTION: JK/AJ**

1. Whilst the £1.2M bid to explore the deployment of AI technologies within NICE was disappointing not to have been successful, it was noted that there was an opportunity to submit revised bids next year as the work of the AI Lab progresses. SMT was keen to progress this and agreed a response be sent from Gill Leng to NHSX to reinforce the importance of reconsidering the methods proposal as soon as possible, in light of the amount of work already undertaken within NICE, and to avoid there being a bias towards the life sciences industry. It was agreed that a meeting with NHSX would also be beneficial to demonstrate NICE’s credibility and desire to be involved in the evaluation of AI solutions in health and social care.

**ACTION: GL/JK**

## Corporate policies updated in response to COVID-19 (item 7.3)

1. SMT considered amendments to four policies which been revised to reflect new ways of working as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the policies will need to be ‘live’ and continually updated as the organsiation moves through the different operating levels. It was suggested changing ‘during pandemic’ to ‘during exceptional circumstances to cover remote working’.
2. Catherine Wilkinson agreed that the CRG Task & Finish Group workstreams will oversee this work, and confirmed that most of these polices, the temporary and substantive versions, are to be replaced in the coming months with a new version to reflect the ‘new normal’ working arrangements. SMT also noted references to the home working allowance which may change and those currently working reduced hours with ‘no impact on pay’, will change in October when staff will be expected to return to their contractual hours.
3. Subject to the amendments raised, it was agreed that the policies be published and kept under review, and that any minor changes in line with Gold Group decisions should be made without the need for discussion at SMT.

**ACTION: CW/GM**

1. Alexia Tonnel outlined minor changes to the IT and the email and internet usage policies. It was agreed that a reminder for staff should be included in one of the CE’s daily messages that internet browsing and streaming when using a NICE laptop, is monitored by the IT team, and should comply with corporate policies.

**ACTION: GL/MA**

## Engagement: a shared understanding (item 7.4)

1. SMT discussed a proposed scope of work to define NICE’s approach to engagement to enable a more centralised approach in future with everyone aware of the same high level objectives and priorities. Being mindful of the broad spectrum of activity across NICE, it was agreed to begin with a phase 1 of compiling a list of strategic partners who NICE needs to engage with to support its role in the health and care system. This would assess why they are a priority partner, who in NICE is currently engaging with them, about what and when. Phase 2 could then begin to look at the wider group of stakeholders.
2. Jeanette Kusel advised that she has been tasked with compiling an international strategic engagement plan for the whole Institute.
3. SMT approved the H&SC and Communications directorates leading a task and finish group to start phase 1 of compiling a list of strategic partners and to bring a further paper back to SMT in August, or to a Strategy Development meeting, for agreement before presenting it to the Board for discussion.

**ACTION: JR/JG**

## Independent Medicines and Medical Devices (IMMD) Safety Review (item 7.5)

1. Prof Kevin Harris presented a summary of the recommendations from the IMMD safety review and asked SMT to consider how NICE should respond to the specific recommendations relevant to NICE. The matter will be raised with the Board on 15 July in the CEO’s report. Kevin agreed to draft a short response, on behalf of Gill Leng, to the review panel to acknowledge its report and recommendations and confirm that NICE is considering the action it should take.

**ACTION: KH**

1. Subject to a direction from the Board, SMT agreed to commit to undertaking an exceptional review by topic experts of NG123: urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse in women: management, and that the review should consider the relative risks and benefits of full and partial mesh removal.

**ACTION: PC**

1. In response to a Panel recommendation, it was agreed that NICE should consider taking a lead in collaborating with the health system on the production of patient decision making aids for each surgical procedure or medical intervention. The exact form this activity would take and how it would be resourced, was still to be considered.
2. In relation to strengthening collaborative working with system partners to reinforce NICE guidance, it was agreed that Gill Leng would write to her peers at the CQC, the GMC, and medical defence bodies.

**ACTION: GL**

## EU exit (item 8)

1. It was noted that the EU Exit oversight group had been re-instated and a report of issues to be considered post the transition period was being prepared for SMT.

## London office move (item 9)

1. Catherine Wilkinson confirmed that the delay caused by the lack of power supply to the IT server room has impacted progress and means there will be no wi-fi into the building until it is resolved at end of September. SMT considered whether a touch down space in London should be identified for any staff who are finding home working really difficult. It was agreed to await the HR audit to see if any staff identify themselves as needing an office base.

## Other business (item 10)

1. **Research collaboration with Flatiron Health** – SMT noted the new partnering arrangement with the oncology research and technology company to explore how real-world data can inform the clinical and cost effectiveness of health technologies.
2. **Medical Technologies Advisory Committee Chair** – Jeanette Kusel sought SMT approval to make a temporary appointment of Gary McVeigh (currently TAC D chair), to chair the Med Tech advisory committee as the current chair has a conflict of interest and the vice chair is unavailable on the committee dates. SMT approved the temporary appointment of Gary McVeigh to chair the committee.
3. **Recruitment for the Director of Finance, Strategy and Transformation** – Gill Leng advised that Grace Marguerie would be contacting SMT members to make arrangements for an informal interview with the candidates.
4. **SMT meeting on 4 August 2020** – Gill Leng suggested cancelling the meeting scheduled for 4 August in light of SMT members being on holiday. It was agreed to review whether the planned agenda items could be deferred to the following week.

**ACTION: ER/DC**