**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Felix Greaves Director – Science, Evidence and Analytics

Jennifer Howells Director – Finance, Strategy and Transformation

Judith Richardson Acting Director – Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director – Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

Chris Carson Programme Director – Centre for Guidelines

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Carla Deakin Programme Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 6.1)

Danielle Mason Associate Director – Brand and Marketing Communications (item 6.2)

Sebastian Maycock Programme Manager – London office move (item 8)

Nichole Taske Associate Director – Centre for Guidelines (item 6.3)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Paul Chrisp who was represented by Chris Carson.

## 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 1 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record subject to minor amendments to paragraphs 21 and 23.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 1 September 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. It was noted that following further discussions after last week’s meeting, it was agreed to produce a single version of the Microsoft 365 outline business case for the September Board meetings, which contained less detail than the initial draft.

## Coronavirus (item 5)

1. There were no decisions from the gold group to confirm.

## NHS Commercial Framework for New Medicines (item 6.1)

1. Meindert Boysen and Carla Deakin presented the briefing on the upcoming NHS Commercial Framework for New Medicines. NICE was closely involved in the development of the framework by NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I), which is due to publish in late September or early October.
2. SMT discussed the principles in the framework and the implications for NICE’s work. The increasing impact of commercial negotiations on the technology appraisals (TA) programme was noted, with over 80% of positive TA recommendations containing a commercial deal in 2019. SMT noted that the framework is a NHSE&I document and therefore does not outline NICE’s role in the commercial environment relating to patient access for new medicines. SMT therefore supported the intention to develop an interim statement outlining NICE’s role in the commercial aspects of appraisals and the key principles supporting these activities. It was agreed the draft statement should come to SMT for review, timescales permitting.

ACTION: MB

1. It was agreed that NHSE&I should be asked to consider clarifying the wording around the fourth principle in the framework and to also add a statement to the document to note that in some circumstances the arrangements would also apply to the guidelines programme.

ACTION: CD/CC

## Relaunching NICE question time (item 6.2)

1. Danielle Mason presented the proposals for the relaunch of NICE question time in a virtual format, which would no longer be aligned to the public Board meetings which are currently taking place virtually.
2. SMT reflected on the previous question time events which provided the opportunity for the public to ask questions to the Board and senior management on any issue prior to the public Board meetings. In addition, the events gave the opportunity to showcase NICE’s work in the local area. SMT discussed the implications of holding a virtual session and agreed that it could be challenging to sustain a geographical or thematic focus to the meeting. Given the ease of attending a virtual event it was noted that the attendance would likely be higher than the previous meetings that took place around the country and this could increase the number of potential questions.
3. SMT therefore agreed to trial a virtual question time session before the end of 2020, in which the public could raise questions on any topic. It was agreed that questions should be submitted in advance, which would maximise the value of the event by enabling questions to be selected that covered a range of topics. Ideally, people selected to raise a question would be given the opportunity to ask this on the day, and in addition to live streaming, the event would be recorded and available on the NICE website for subsequent viewing. SMT agreed that the feedback from this initial event could then be used to inform proposals for a future programme of question time events.

ACTION: DM/JG

## NICE involvement in international collaborative efforts to coordinate the development and maintenance of COVID-19 evidence reviews, guidelines, and health technology assessments (item 6.3)

1. Nicole Taske presented the update on NICE’s involvement in international collaborative efforts to develop, maintain and update high quality evidence-based guidelines, evidence reviews and health technology assessments on the diagnosis and management of COVID-19.
2. SMT asked about the resources committed to this work and the benefits from this. In response, it was noted the investment has been limited to date and there are tangible benefits in terms of shaping the quality of evidence that can be used to update NICE’s COVID-19 guidance, which will reduce the level of resources required to sift evidence. In addition, there are longer term benefits of influencing the wider evidence ecosystem that has relevance beyond COVID-19. Felix Greaves highlighted the need to link in with colleagues at the National Institute for Health Protection to ensure the UK’s input to these international initiatives is coordinated, and agreed to provide the relevant contact details to Nicole. In response to questions from SMT, Felix also agreed to provide further information on NICE’s work with the FDA diagnostics and therapeutics evidence accelerator, including whether there are similar plans for engagement with other international regulators.

ACTION: FG/NT

1. SMT supported NICE’s ongoing work in this area. It was agreed that future progress updates on this work should more clearly outline the resources committed by NICE and the tangible benefits of this involvement.

ACTION: NT/JK

1. Gill Leng noted that Rebecca Threlfall is currently reviewing NICE’s partnership agreements and the rationale for these, and asked Rebecca as part of this work to consider whether it would be beneficial to develop partnership agreements with any of the international organisations referenced in the paper.

ACTION: RT

## EU exit (item 7)

1. Meindert Boysen noted that the MHRA have now published a suite of documents on the future model of medicines regulation following the end of the transition agreement. Meindert noted that these arrangements do not appear to adversely impact NICE’s work.
2. Gill Leng noted the previously agreed action to develop a statement on the implications of the end of the transition agreement for NICE’s work and asked this is published on the website by the start of October.

ACTION: MB/RS

## London office move (item 8)

1. Sebastian Maycock presented the programme update and highlighted the delays to the practical completion date, which is when the building is available to the British Council and then Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). Until this handover, it is not possible to equip the server room or relocate other materials to Stratford. The revised practical completion date is unclear, but the recommendation is that NICE and the other ALBs work on the basis of not being able to use the office until some point in January. Sebastian updated SMT on the work to review the floor plan in light of social distancing requirements. It is likely that NICE will have 48 workstations, which represents an increase from earlier modelling, but there will be limited capacity in the meeting rooms.
2. Alexia Tonnel stated that the latest delay means it is likely NICE will need to move the servers to a temporary location, and she has asked the Associate Director for IT infrastructure and operations to explore the scope to move these to an off-site location for a longer period until NICE moves to cloud based storage at a later date. Alexia also highlighted that the DHSC have confirmed they will not cover the additional costs arising from the dual running of the previous and new London offices. However, the delay to the practical completion date has reduced this cost pressure to approximately £120k, which has been incorporated into the financial planning for 2020/21. Alexia noted that the ALBs do not yet have a complete view of the costs for the building or the services required to support the site, and this remains under discussion.
3. SMT agreed to hold a further discussion at the gold group on 11 September that would consider:
* The message to give to staff about the delay to the London office
* Potential temporary alternative office accommodation in London
* Whether to revise the current restrictions and allow London staff to travel to the Manchester office when it reopens
* Office etiquette for the reopened office(s)

ACTION: GL/ER/RT

1. To support this discussion at the gold group, Sebastian was asked to clarify the availability of alternative office accommodation in London for any staff who felt they were unable to work from home.

ACTION: SM

1. Sebastian Maycock left the meeting. Jennifer Howells highlighted that Sebastian’s contract runs to the end of October and asked SMT to extend this given the delays to the office move. SMT supported the proposal to extend Sebastian’s contract to the end of January 2021, with provision to end it sooner if the move concludes before then.

ACTION: JH

## Any other business (item 10)

1. Jennifer Howells briefly updated SMT on the initial feedback on NICE’s funding bids as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The response to the queries is currently being prepared.