**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2020

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Paul Chrisp Director – Centre for Guidelines

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

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Tracey Barr Strategy Support Consultant (items 6 and 7.1)

Ross Dent Associate Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 7.5)

Monica Desai Consultant Public Health Adviser – Centre for Guidelines (item 7.1)

Simon Ellis Associate Director – Centre for Guidelines (item 7.3)

Brad Groves Associate Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 7.2)

Danielle Mason Associate Director – Brand and Marketing Communications

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance and Risk Manager (item 9)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Jane Gizbert who was represented by Danielle Mason.

## 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 15 September 2020 were agreed.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 15 September 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Jennifer Howells confirmed that she would like to receive the minutes from the Guidance Executive for information on an ongoing basis. David Coombs stated that he would ask the Guidance Executive Admin team to arrange this.

ACTION: DC

## Coronavirus (item 5)

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

## Board meetings (item 6)

1. SMT noted the actions from the Board meetings on 16 September.
2. SMT discussed the Non-Executive Directors’ (NEDs) comments about the benefits of enabling as many staff as possible to return to the office to facilitate collaboration. SMT noted the Government’s revised position, due to be confirmed later today, that people should again work from home where possible, and agreed this supports the current plan to only reopen the offices for a small number of staff who find it very difficult to work from home. SMT agreed that this ongoing requirement for home working increases the importance of the work already underway to explore new software that would further enable staff to collaborate virtually. Gill stated that she would ask Rebecca Threlfall to prepare an update on both this work and the CRG sub-group that is looking at ways of working, which could be used to inform a staff briefing.

ACTION: GL/RT

1. SMT reviewed the latest arrangements for the Board strategy away-day on 21 October, which have been revised in line with the NEDs’ preference for more in-depth discussion at a face to face meeting with a smaller list of attendees. Due to the social distancing requirements of a physical meeting, it was agreed to invite 1 member of the field team and 2 committee chairs to the morning session only, with these representatives to be confirmed following further discussion by the relevant directors.

ACTION: GL/JR/PC/MB

1. It was agreed Tracey Barr would prepare a pre-reading pack that summarises the key themes from the opinion leader interviews and identifies issues for the Board to consider further at the away-day. It was agreed that this pack would be circulated to the committee chairs who were no longer able to join the meeting, with an invitation to feed any observations back to Tracey for wider sharing with the Board.

ACTION: TB

1. SMT discussed the implications of these new arrangements for the original intention to hold a short meeting at the start of the away-day to sign-off the CHTE methods review proposals for stakeholder engagement. It was agreed that Gill Leng and Meindert Boysen would meet with the Chairman and Vice-Chair to discuss the paper and agree the arrangements for the Board’s sign-off taking account of the likely level of Board discussion given the previous engagement on this issue.

ACTION: MB/GL

## Proposed evidence review process concerning the clinical eligibility criteria within the MAA for nusinersen for treating spinal muscular atrophy [TA588] (item 7.2)

1. Brad Groves presented the revised proposals for reviewing the evidence about the clinical eligibility criteria in the managed access agreement (MAA) for TA588, and noted the changes made in response to SMT’s feedback on the earlier proposals.
2. SMT reviewed and approved the evidence review process and next steps as set out in the paper. It was agreed that the amended MAA should also include the process that will be followed if the outcome of the evidence review is contested.

ACTION: BG

## Using topic specific guideline committees to work on multiple guidelines (item 7.3)

1. Simon Ellis presented the proposals for using topic-specific committees to update suites of guidelines and clusters of recommendations in a topic area. He noted these committees are central to the vision for the guidelines programme agreed by the Board, and will require some minor changes to the committee governance framework.
2. In response to questions from SMT, Simon explained that the committees will be classified as ‘topic specific’, as the ‘standing committee’ model which includes standing and additional topic specific members would not provide the required topic specific expertise. He confirmed that the chairs would be engaged in accordance with the non-staff reimbursement policy, which will ensure any employment and taxation implications are suitably considered. The proposals should not have material financial implications as there is unlikely to be a net increase in committees.
3. SMT supported the proposals for the topic-specific committees and confirmed they would be treated as ‘topic-specific guideline committees’ for the purposes of the policy on declaring and managing interests for advisory committees. SMT approved the minor amendments to the appointments to advisory bodies policy and guideline committee terms of reference/standing orders. It was agreed that the Board should be updated on the new arrangements and these amendments to the governance documents in the Centre for Guidelines’ progress report to the November Board meeting.

ACTION: PC/SE

1. SMT noted that while the new committees are not classified as standing committees, the chairs are envisaged to have a longer term involvement than currently is the case for the individual guideline committees. It was therefore agreed that the level of support provided for the chairs, including with medical revalidation, should be considered further, along with the option of an annual review meeting with the NICE Chairman as is available to the standing committee chairs.

ACTION: SE/DC

## Policy on declaring and managing interests for board members and employees: minor amendment (item 7.4)

1. David Coombs presented the proposed amendment to the policy to provide further guidance on financial interests for board members and staff. The amendment had been shared with the NICE Chairman and Union, who were both supportive.
2. SMT approved the amended policy. Given the change was minor, it was agreed that the revised policy should be sent to the Chairman with the proposal it is now issued and circulated to the Board for information.

ACTION: DC

## Application for a career break (item 7.5)

1. Ross Dent presented the request from a member of the technology appraisals (TA) team for an 8 month career break to pursue personal development opportunities.
2. SMT noted the arrangements for backfilling the role and approved the request which was supported by management in the TA team.
3. SMT noted the financial implications for NICE arising from an employee accruing annual leave during a career break. Jennifer Howells stated that the HR team are looking at how career break agreements can be framed in a way that comply with legal entitlements around the accrual of leave while minimising the cost to employer when taken for the employee’s benefit. Following which, updated arrangements will be brought to SMT for consideration.

ACTION: JH

1. It was agreed that the additional SMT session in November on delegations and empowering teams would consider whether it was necessary to continue to require SMT approval for career break and secondment requests.

ACTION: RT/DC

## EU exit (item 8)

1. Meindert Boysen and Alexia Tonnel noted they had drafted a blog for staff on EU exit. This would now be shared with Gill Leng prior to publication.

ACTION: MB/AT

## London office move (item 9)

1. Elaine Repton presented the latest risk register for the London office move and highlighted the current key issues, including the delayed practical completion date and knock-on impact on relocating the data centre; the installation of the WAN / LAN circuits; and the uncertainty about costs, including in the context of the future use of the external meeting suite.
2. SMT reviewed the risk register and agreed that:
	* Risk 2 on communications could be reduced to ‘green’ given the communication plan is focused and well-coordinated.
	* Risk 5 on finance should be increased to ‘amber’ given the uncertainty about the apportionment of costs and the cost pressure from the re-location of the server room. Risk 14, on IT, should also reference the need to relocate the server room to an off-site location.
	* Risk 10 on storage space could be closed, subject to confirmation there will be sufficient locker provision for NICE staff.
	* Risk 11 on staff should be revised to note the impact of the ongoing delay to the move on staff morale, with the availability of temporary space in Buckingham Palace Road listed as a mitigating action.
	* The delays to installing the AV equipment should be noted.

ACTION: ER

## Any other business (item 10)

1. SMT discussed the arrangements for reopening the Manchester office and noted there was some uncertainty about the number of staff who could use the office, and from when. It was agreed that the communications to staff should be reviewed and reissued in light of the changes to the Government guidance.

ACTION: JH/GL

1. SMT discussed the arrangements for SMT ‘retreat’ next week and agreed it would be beneficial to physically meet in London given the recent director appointments. It was therefore agreed to further explore the scope for a socially distanced face to face meeting. Gill Leng and Rebecca Threlfall would finalise the agenda and explore options for a meeting venue.

ACTION: RT/GL