**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Paul Chrisp Director – Centre for Guidelines

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

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Jenniffer Prescott Programme Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 6.1)

Grace Marguerie Associate Director – HR (item 6.2)

Michelle Rowlands Estates and Facilities Manager (item 7)

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

Rachel Urquhart HR and OD Change Manager (item 6.2)

## 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 24 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 24 November 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. It was agreed that the next gold group meeting should receive information on the work to ensure staff have the right to remain in the UK following the end of the EU exit transition period. It was noted that examining the future risks around recruitment was a longer-term piece of work that would be brought to SMT at a later date.

ACTION: JH/GM

1. SMT discussed the future role of the gold group and coronavirus response group (CRG). The former will be reconfigured to consider the concurrent risks around EU exit, COVID-19 and winter. But it was felt best to retain the EU exit oversight group and the CRG as separate entities, both reporting into the gold group. SMT noted that the sit-rep includes information on cancelled meetings and it was agreed that it would be helpful to capture the reason for any cancellations in order to identify the respective impacts of winter and COVID-19. Jennifer Howells and Meindert Boysen would discuss this, and the terms of reference of the gold group and CRG further.

ACTION: JH/MB

## Coronavirus (item 5)

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

## Reappointment to a technology appraisal committee (item 6.1)

1. Meindert Boysen presented the request to reappoint Stephen Sharp as the statistician on technology appraisal committee A for a maximum of a further 3 years. Stephen has served on the committee for 10 years, and reapplied for the position in an open and competitive recruitment round. He was the only applicant for this role and therefore SMT are asked to apply the discretion in the appointments to advisory bodies policy and procedure to reappoint for a further term.
2. SMT discussed paragraph 11 in the appointments to advisory bodies policy and procedure and agreed that 10 years should continue to be the maximum usual tenure on a committee in order to ensure refreshing of the membership, the input of fresh expertise, and an independent perspective. SMT noted the challenges in recruiting to some roles and highlighted the importance of succession planning and proactively seeking a pipeline of potential applicants by promoting upcoming vacancies with partner organisations and through existing members’ professional networks. While 10 years should remain the maximum, SMT agreed on balance there should continue to be some flexibility for someone to serve a longer term in exceptional circumstances. However, SMT agreed the existing provisions should be amended to clarify that someone who had served 10 years should not reapply for the position. A short extension of the final term would likely only be appropriate if recruitment of their successor had been unsuccessful.
3. SMT agreed that the next scheduled review of the policy should be brought forward to make the above change and also consider whether to amend the position that only time spent on another standing committee of the same type counts towards this 10 year limit. Alternative approaches could instead allow 10 years in total across all committees, or 10 years on one committee then a shorter maximum tenure on a committee of another type. It was agreed that time spent on an advisory committee should not count towards the maximum tenure on the technology appraisal/highly specialised technologies appeals panel given the different nature of these roles.

ACTION: DC/JH

1. In with the position statement noted above, SMT agreed that Stephen Sharp’s term on technology appraisal committee A could be extended by up to 18 months to give further time to appoint a successor.

ACTION: JP

## 360o feedback options appraisal (item 6.2)

1. Rachel Urquhart presented the paper setting out options for securing 360o feedback for the SMT.
2. SMT members discussed the options in the paper and agreed to use the NHS Leadership Academy 360o feedback tool and extend this to the directors’ direct reports. It was agreed that external facilitators should be arranged through the NHS Leadership Academy to provide the feedback, and the timescale for undertaking the process should be extended so it is completed prior to the next appraisal round. In addition, it was suggested SMT should receive support/guidance in having potentially difficult discussions with their staff following the externally facilitated feedback. It was agreed that senior staff subject to medical revalidation would not need to undertake two different sets of 360o feedback.

ACTION: RU/GM

1. Rebecca Threlfall highlighted the development resources available through the civil service, and SMT asked Grace Marguerie to explore whether NICE should subscribe to a civil service learning account.

ACTION: GM

## London office move (item 7)

1. SMT reviewed the updated risk register for the London office move and agreed to close risk 7 and 9 which relate to the office fit-out and meeting room availability respectively.
2. SMT reviewed the updated risk around IT (risk 14) and noted the additional mitigations around the shared local area network (LAN) and wi-fi. It was agreed these sufficiently mitigated the risk to enable NICE’s connection to the shared networks.
3. SMT noted the extent of the issues covered by risk 14 and agreed Jennifer Howells and Alexia Tonnel should consider whether it should be separated into more specific IT risks.

ACTION: JH/AT

1. Alexia Tonnel highlighted the need to take a decision on the AV requirements so that the equipment can be procured and installed. SMT noted this is an important decision and is inherently linked to a broader strategic issue of how the office will be used and the future working arrangements. Following discussion, it was confirmed that the following principles should guide decisions around the procurement of the AV equipment:
   * Staff will not be expected to work 5 days a week in the office
   * The experience of joining a meeting from home should be the same as for those in the office
   * Committee meetings will usually be held virtually, with the exception of a very small number of meetings a year
   * The purchased technology should offer a high degree of functionality and flexibility to be able to respond to future changes in working arrangements.

ACTION: AT

1. Michelle Rowlands joined the meeting and SMT discussed the arrangements for enabling staff to use the new London office and the reopening of the Manchester office at the end of the current ‘lockdown’. SMT endorsed the decision at the CRG to revert to opening the Manchester office for 3 days a week from 7 December until 17 December. It would then reopen for 3 days a week in January, at which point the scope to extend the opening to 5 days would be considered depending on whether Manchester moves to tier 2. It was agreed that Michelle Rowlands would liaise with internal communications to explain this position to staff.

ACTION: MR/JG

1. SMT discussed the timescale for staff being able to use the London office, and how extensively it should be used in the context of the Government’s winter plan and the ongoing advice to work from home. It was agreed that Jennifer Howells should come back to SMT with a proposal on how the London office could be used between January and March, once Alexia Tonnel has confirmed the timescale for the IT being ready for use.

ACTION: AT/JH

## Review of the meeting agenda (item 8)

1. SMT agreed that the gold group should usually be the forum for discussing the reopening of the offices, but did not meet this week. The agenda was otherwise appropriate.

## Any other business (item 9)

1. Jennifer Howells advised SMT that due to ongoing issues with the Hirelab recruitment system, an alternative is urgently being sought. It was agreed that an update should be provided to staff to let them know that issues were being addressed, with a contact name for any queries.

ACTION: JH

1. Gill Leng noted that PowerPoint presentations to the Board meetings are now circulated prior to the meeting, to help Board members prepare for the meeting. Gill noted the need for directors to consider the implications of this prior circulation when preparing the slides.
2. Jennifer Howells stated that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has now been informed of its allocation in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), and this is lower than sought. The allocation for NICE is not yet known, however it is likely to be broadly similar to the current allocation. There is a meeting between NICE and DHSC next week to outline’s NICE’s bids for additional funding.