**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Executive Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021

## Present

Meindert Boysen Director, Centre for Health Technology Evaluation and Deputy Chief Executive (chair)

Paul Chrisp Director, Centre for Guidelines

Felix Greaves Director, Science, Analytics and Evidence (items 8 -14)

Jane Gizbert Director, Communications

Jennifer Howells Director, Finance, Strategy and Transformation

Judith Richardson Acting Director, Health & Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director, Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Scientific Affairs

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance Manager (minutes)

Grace Marguerie Associate Director, HR (items 6 and 9)

Eileen Platt Employee Relations Manager, HR (item 6)

Mark Minchin Associate Director – Quality (item 6)

Javier Alonso Programme Manager, Digital, Information and Technology (item 7)

Shaun Rowark Senior Analyst, Data and Analytics (item 8)

Michael Toolan National Medical Director’s Clinical Fellow (item 10)

Hannah Maiden Public Health Registrar (item 10)

**External guest**

Catherine Thomas Consultant, SCW (item 11)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Gill Leng and Felix Greaves for part of the meeting. Felix was represented by Nick Crabb.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

1. The previously declared interests were noted.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 13 April 2021 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Rebecca Threlfall confirmed that Gill Leng has suggestions for the priority list of strategic partners in the collaboration agreement template, which will be discussed with ET on her return. Rebecca also added that arrangements for a further joint meeting with NHSX, are in hand.

## April Board Strategy meeting (item 5)

1. ET noted the arrangements for the board strategy meeting and the development sessions on 21 April. Lynne Copp will be joining the ET session via VC.

## Hot topics (item 6)

1. **Employee relations update** - Following last week’s discussion of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role and their increasing caseload, ET discussed the current level of employee relations cases, some of which have been referred to the HR team from the Guardians. Grace Marguerie and Eileen Platt joined the meeting to provide an update on current numbers and to outline the work which is underway to address some of the issues being raised, notably relating to recruitment.
2. ET discussed the impact that grievances have in terms of the time commitment for the HR team and the investigating managers and the stress for staff. Directors sought assurances that there was sufficient support available to all those involved in cases. Grace confirmed the actions being taken including a ‘deep dive’ into recruitment, investing in additional HR operations roles, line management development training and training for additional investigating managers so there is a wider pool of trained staff.
3. ET were mindful that the period of change ahead to implement the organisational design review and the Connect transformation programme could potentially destabilise some teams and lead to a further increase in cases, and therefore communications are critical to fully engage staff on the journey, to maximise openness and minimise any mis-information. It was agreed to include an item on the agenda for the Senior Leaders Forum to share the current position.

**ACTION: RT**

1. It was also agreed to review the workforce risk in the strategic risk register to ensure it reflected the current position and detailed the mitigating action being taken.

**ACTION: ER**

1. **Attendance at conferences** - ET was asked to consider staff attendance at upcoming conferences; the HTAi (June), GIN (October) and ISPOR (December), given the cost, time commitment and the requirement for staff to attend other management development and senior leader training.
2. On balance, considering the development opportunity conferences provide, the fact that NICE was leading the HTAi event, and the ability for staff to join for specific sessions, ET agreed that it would be acceptable for all those who have registered for the HTAi (38 staff) to be allowed to attend.
3. Rebecca Threlfall reminded ET of a discussion in January about attendance at conferences and there needing to be a clear business purpose linked to roles. She advised that a paper and a draft policy will be coming to ET shortly which sets out criteria for attendance.
4. **Nusinersen** - Meindert Boysen confirmed that the exceptional evidence review process included in the Managed Access Agreement (MAA) for nusinersen has been completed. The ET provided support for this process in September 2020. The review followed a three-stage process, including an adjudication step with the original Appraisal Committee. The clinical eligibility criteria for nusinersen will be amended to include type III non-ambulant Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) patients. Next steps are to confirm changes with NHSE/Is clinical panel and wider stakeholder engagement.
5. **Indicators Advisory Committee chair** – ET was asked to support recruitment of an IAC chair to proceed despite restrictions regarding GP partners in the DOI policy for advisory committee members.  Judith Richardson explained that there is a time pressure on the recruitment process as the advert is due to go out next week and dates have been set aside in the chairman’s and CEO’s diary for the interview panel.
6. Judith Richardson explained that the policy currently excluded GP partners from chairing the indicator committee because of their conflict with income from the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) which is viewed as a direct financial interest because a GP’s income could be affected by the decisions of the committee.  Mark Minchin noted that the indicator committee has a diverse programme of work, that is far from limited to the QOF.
7. It was noted that David Coombs had advised that an amendment to the DOI policy could be considered but it would require a view from Gill Leng as the ET lead on interests.
8. ET supported the recruitment proceeding on the basis that Gill Leng be advised of the discussion and asked for her view, wording be included the advert to state that applications from GPs would be welcomed and to ask questions at the interview about potential conflicts and how they would be handled.  It was noted that there was the option for the vice chair to step if no appointment could be made.

**ACTION: JR/MM**

## NICE consultancy approval: DIT digital workplace preparation (item 7)

1. Alexia Tonnel sought approval to engage consultancy to provide capacity and skills to support DIT infrastructure and digital workplace preparation activity. ET queried the benefits for NICE of carrying out this work ahead of appointing a longer term implementation partner. Javier Alonso advised that this work will help maintain momentum on critical activities that must take place before embarking on the digital workplace programme and will ensure NICE is better prepared to onboard the future partner, thereby delivering value earlier and minimising the risk of additional costs due to knowledge gaps and implementation delays.
2. ET supported the request, urging a review of the scope for the Statement of Works (SoW) to clearly define the objectives and deliverables. Javier confirmed that he was meeting this week with the information governance team and DIT’s infrastructure team to finalise the SoW.

**ACTION: AT/JA**

## NHS Digital collaboration agreement (item 8)

1. ET reviewed a draft collaboration agreement between NICE and NHS Digital. The importance of future collaboration work with NHSD was recognised as being central to NICE’s strategic growth plans for data and analytics.
2. ET welcomed the new agreement particularly the inclusion of appendix 2 setting out joint priorities and areas for collaboration. Shaun Rowark was asked to make some minor amendments to the appendix for agreement with NHSD, prior to the document being signed by the respective CEOs.

**ACTION: FG**

## Creating a flexible and sustainable resourcing model (item 9)

1. Grace Marguerie outlined proposals to begin a piece of work to create a flexible and sustainable resourcing model that ensures head count can increase and flex responsively and create a pipeline of staff to ensure NICE has a reliable source of future talent. The proposals have been developed following analysis of the last 12 months recruitment campaigns which showed the same roles being advertised multiple times in different directorates, with 49% of roles being filled internally, thereby causing continual backfill vacancies.
2. The proposal was to develop a talent pipeline by recruiting 10 band 6 trainee technical analysts on generic job descriptions, to be supported by a graduate training and development manager and to continue the current graduate placement programme for 4 graduates with Sheffield University and the apprenticeship programme. ET also welcomed other initiatives the HR recruitment team are investing in to have a more strategic approach to workforce planning and to promote NICE as an employer of choice.
3. ET welcomed the proposals which Directors agreed should be shared with the Senior Leader’s Forum to gain buy-in to the principles. ET also discussed that generic job descriptions will help to remove barriers between teams, support the cultural change shift required to deliver the organisational development work and could make the process of internal ‘secondments’ run more smoothly.

**ACTION: GM**

1. ET suggested that consideration be given to extending the graduate scheme to other universities and to making it a 2 year placement to ensure a rolling cohort each year as graduates transition into full time roles. Grace was asked to consider either a cross-NICE group to work on the next steps or use the Senior Leaders Forum for this.

ACTION: GM/EP

**Approach to environmental sustainability (item 10)**

1. Michael Toolan presented a proposal for NICE’s future approach to environmental sustainability which suggested drawing a distinction between NICE's own operational sustainability targets and its potential to support sustainability in the wider health and care system (system sustainability) through its products and other system-facing activities.
2. The paper discussed a range of approaches that NICE might take to system sustainability and proposed that NICE focuses on developing methods for considering environmental impacts in parallel with established health economic assessment using a "parallel evaluation" model.
3. ET welcomed the proposals, acknowledging the complexity of addressing system sustainability. Questions were raised about the potential for the separation of operational and system wide activities to reinforce silo working. ET agreed there should be one ET lead for both areas of work, which should feed into a re-constituted Sustainability Steering Group.
4. It was agreed that there an appetite to progress this work but also a need to manage expectations of what NICE was able to achieve and how the work should be resourced. It was also queried whether NICE’s partners in the devolved administrations might be interested in collaborating on sustainability. Rebecca Threlfall agreed to include it on the list of issues for discussion at the meetings with these organisations.

**ACTION: RT**

1. In terms of next steps, it was agreed to support the proposal to explore "quick wins" in support of the NHS Net Zero targets, to explore the incorporation of environmental considerations into NICE's methods and reconstitution of the Sustainability Steering Group and to develop a practical framework for quantifying and presenting environmental impacts as a separate element within NICE products.

ACTION: JR/FG

## Organisational design update (item 11)

1. Catherine Thomas outlined the agenda for the ET session on 21 April, to follow the board strategy meeting. Catherine agreed to circulate her slides to enable Directors to prepare ahead of the meeting.

**ACTION: CT**

## Gold group (item 12)

1. There was no Gold group meeting this week.

## Strategy and business planning (item 13)

1. Nothing to discuss.

## Review of the meeting (item 14)

1. ET reviewed the meeting and considered whether the hot topics section of the agenda was working effectively. Directors agreed that it was a good way to raise a topic without the need for writing a paper, but that contributions need to be targeted and to the point, considering the nature of the discussion.
2. Jennifer queried whether the DIT consultancy paper needed to come to ET or could it have been signed off by herself and Alexia. ET agreed that it was helpful to know about the paper in case of any impact on their teams, but it could have been noted under hot topics rather than a full discussion. It was agreed to think about how ET can keep each other updated without bringing formal papers to ET meetings.

## Other business

1. Alexia Tonnel reminded ET that any software tools used by their teams must first be authorised by the SaaS Panel.