**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Executive Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2021

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

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

Paul Chrisp Director, Centre for Guidelines

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 and Risk Manager (minutes)

David Coombs Associate Director, Corporate Office (item 6)

Zoe Garrett Senior Scientific Adviser, Science, Policy and Research (item 8)

Victoria Thomas Head of Public Involvement (item 8)

Katharine Cresswell Senior Public Engagement Analyst (item 8)

Mark Salmon Programme Director, Science, Evidence and Analytics (item 9)

Grace Marguerie Associate Director, HR (item 10)

Eileen Platt Employee Relations Manager, HR (item 10)

Martin Davison Acting Associate Director, Finance (item 11)

John Pegington Senior Management Accountant, Finance (item 11)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Felix Greaves who 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 11 May 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 11 May 2021 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. It was confirmed that Grace Marguerie, Alison Liddell and Hilary Baker were meeting on a weekly basis to discuss a holistic approach to change, ensuring the OD work is linked to Connect transformation and the strategic objectives. Directors commented on recent feedback from their senior teams that there is confusion over the connectivity between the three key work programmes, and an element of ‘initiative fatigue’.
3. ET agreed that more work was required to provide clarity for staff, including explaining that the Connect transformation work will be subsumed into the overall strategy work. A simple diagram was needed to illustrate this. It was agreed to include slides at the May all staff meeting to explain how the work will be sequenced in the current year and into next year. It was agreed to discuss this further at the informal ET meeting on 20 May.

**ACTION: ET**

1. ET noted that HR were preparing appropriately worded objectives relating to cross-organisation work to be included in the current round of appraisals for PDs and ADs.
2. Rebecca Threlfall confirmed that expressions of interest to lead on the seven goals in the OD work have been received from PDs/ADs and shared with SCW to consider.
3. In relation to the new board reporting approach from July, it was agreed to provide updates to the board on notable issues on guidance, in development or recently published, via the Chief Executive’s slides to the private board. Gill Leng added that the Chairman had confirmed Directors should focus on the narrative in the performance report, in the interim, until the software solution is in place to present the data.
4. Directors were reminded to advise Rebecca Threlfall of any indicators currently reported in the sit-rep, that can be excluded from the board performance report.

**ACTION: ET/RT**

1. Jennifer Howells advised that the DHSC had brought forward the deadline for submission of proposed savings from the administrative and programme budgets by 2024/25 to Friday, 21 May. Jennifer and Martin are meeting with David Wright on Friday to discuss NICE’s proposals. ET was requested to email their suggestions to Jennifer as soon as possible.

**ACTION: ET/JH/MD**

## May public board meeting (item 5)

1. ET confirmed arrangements for the May board meeting. Rebecca Threlfall agreed to send a calendar invite for Shar, Tim, Gill and Carole Longson to have a pre-meeting at 8:30am.

**ACTION: RT**

1. David Coombs agreed to confirm to ET the list of public attendees and share via email.

**ACTION: DC**

1. ET agreed the approach to presentation of the main papers at the public meeting. The business plan was being presented for final sign off so only key issues to be highlighted. Alexia was asked to provide clarity on the costs within the Digital Workplace paper, and to caveat the selection of option B, on the basis of receiving further funding in 2022/23, otherwise option A was the back up.

## Hot topics (item 6)

1. Gill Leng reported that she had received feedback from the ABPI regarding the re-scheduling of technology appraisals. Meindert Boysen advised that some appraisals were being re-scheduled due to capacity issues and vacancies, but the teams were liaising with companies and stakeholders as they always had done, and looking to bring topics together where possible. It was queried whether there were substantially more appraisals re-scheduled at present which had prompted the ABPI to get in touch, and whether there needed to be a formal communication to the wider system, in addition to a response to the ABPI. It was agreed that Gill and Meindert would agree the response to the APBI outside of the meeting.

ACTION: GL/MB

## NICE Listens: health inequalities (item 7)

1. Zoe Garrett summarised the proposal for NICE to undertake deliberative public engagement in the area of health inequalities and sought approval of a NICE Listens project, including the appointment of an external contractor support, to gather informed public opinion on NICE’s role in addressing health inequalities.
2. ET was fully supportive of the project subject to the following caveats:
* The work must support the two current business plan objectives relating to health inequalities
* It should link into work already underway on health inequalities within HSC and the CHTE methods review modifiers T&F group
* Contact the What Works Network to request a discussion at their next Council meeting to assess their interest in the work
* Inform the NICE advisory committee chairs forum about the project
* Include reference in the report’s introduction to the Government’s aim of addressing health inequalities by delivering the highest level of improvement to all areas (Levelling Up)
* In view of the complexities of health inequalities, keep the questions as simple as possible
* Discuss question 3 with CHTE to ensure there is no crossover into the methods review work
* The project should help to refine the prioritisation of NICE's guideline portfolio, but it should not to hold up the prioritisation work – the sequencing of work to be an important consideration in the phasing of the project.

ACTION: ZG/NC

## NICE Office for Digital Health (item 8)

1. Mark Salmon described the purpose of the Office for Digital Health which is a Q1 deliverable of the 2021/22 strategic plan. ET noted the scope of its work, the launch plan, staffing and governance arrangements.
2. ET questioned the size of the two groups supporting the team and asked that their membership be reduced, but to include the new role of Associate Director – Strategy, and potentially a non-executive member; Jackie Fielding was proposed.

**ACTION: MS**

1. It was agreed that the paper was too detailed for the board, but ET should think about when it could be included in a business plan progress report.

**ACTION: MS/DC**

1. ET asked that consideration be given to digital health interventions in social care as well as health care and agreed that Mark and Judith Richardson should further discuss interactions with integrated care systems.

**ACTION: MS/JR**

1. Mark was asked whether the team’s scope included methodology developments for the future. It was noted that a new role of PD was currently being recruited to, but it was anticipated that additional capacity within CHTE will be required to support the methods review across all NICE’s work. Meindert was asked to speak with Jennifer Howells to discuss resourcing.

ACTION: MB/JH

## Strategic HR issues (item 9)

1. Grace Marguerie presented a number of strategic HR issues and taxation challenges that required consideration and prioritisation.
2. Grace explained the issue of grade drift and the factors which have contributed to this over a number of years. ET agreed this was a significant piece of work which could not be resourced at present, but an issue that Directors should be alert to in future recruitment and job evaluation requests. Gill Leng requested that when the work is progressed, that a review of job titles is carried out to link titles to the empowerment of roles.
3. An issue which ET agreed should be reviewed now was the inconsistencies across centres/directorates in relation to overtime, TOIL and timesheets. This work will be progressed and include the approach taken in DIT to reward & recognition payments, and also to consider recognition for staff on contracted hours who regularly work additional hours.
4. ET discussed the complex tax rules relating to home based contracts, and the potential cost implications of travel and subsistence claims if more staff request a home based contract. It was noted that legal advice on the matter was inconsistent and there could potentially be consequences for some staff who are required to move from a home based to a hybrid contract. ET noted that this could have implications for NICE’s recruitment policy and attractiveness as an employer of choice in an already competitive market. Whilst Directors were keen to retain flexibility of roles where possible, it was agreed that fairness and parity was needed.
5. It was agreed to raise the issues at the June all staff meeting to begin the conversation around hybrid contracts and the need to address current inconsistencies. The issues will also affect the Non-Executive Directors and advisory committee chairs.

**ACTION: JH/GM**

## Cost improvement programme (item 10)

1. ET received a presentation from John Pegington on NICE’s requirement to deliver cost improvement savings to meet the DHSC’s request that its ALBs set out how they can generate savings of between 5% and 10% against programme and baseline budgets by 2024/25.
2. The 2% savings this year to be delivered in 2022/23 were shown by centre and directorate. ET challenged this on the basis of silo working. Jennifer Howells stated that this was due to the current budget split, but it did not preclude cross-directorate and cross-project collaboration to achieve savings.
3. There was a discussion of the recurrent cost saving examples, including the efficiency savings that will be driven out of the digital workplace and the transformation programme. It was agreed that communication of the required savings for this year needed to be carefully worded to avoid giving conflicting messages. Jennifer and Martin Davison will be taking the budget setting paper to the Senior Leaders Forum on 24 May at which they will explain the additional £3m available this year is non-recurrent, so there is a need to invest to save this year, as the funds may not be available next year.
4. It was requested that reference be made to “continuous quality improvement” throughout the slides.

ACTION: JP

## Review of the meeting (item 11)

1. No comments.

## Other business (item 12)

1. **Endorsement programme** – Judith Richardson sought ET’s view on the future of the endorsement programme as there was no longer capacity to support the quality assurance process. It was agreed to pause the programme, advise the team that the Board is going to look at it in June, and seek HR advice regarding the impact on staff.

**ACTION: JR**