**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Executive Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2021

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director, Centre for Health Technology Evaluation and Deputy Chief Executive (from item 5.1)

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 & Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director, Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

Carla Deakin Programme Director – Commercial and Managed Access (up to item 5.1)

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance and Risk Manager (minutes)

Grace Marguerie Associate Director – HR (items 5.2 and 7.1)

Martin Davison Associate Director – Finance (item 7.1)

Michelle Rowlands Estates and Facilities Manager (item 5.2)

Victoria Thomas Head of Public Involvement Programme (item 6.1)

Lizzie Thomas Senior Public Involvement Advisor (item 6.1)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies for absence were received from Meindert Boysen for part of the meeting until 11.00am, during which he was represented by Carla Deakin.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

1. The previously declared interests were noted.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3.1)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record, subject to removing ‘Jackie Fielding’ from minute 14 and replacing with ‘explore whether some of the non-executives could be involved in the skills mapping work’.

## Matters arising (item 3.2)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 8 June 2021 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. The list of nominees to lead strategic goals 2 – 7 has been sent by SCW to Gill Leng and Jennifer Howells. SCW have produced a cut down list of the prioritised strategic goals which Jennifer Howells agreed to share with ET when finalised.

ACTION: JH

1. Felix Greaves noted that he had further revised text for the transformation and change update report which he would send to Jennifer before the full report is shared with ET and all staff thereafter. A summary slide set has been included in the June board strategy agenda.

ACTION: FG

1. ET agreed to keep the position with Stonewall under active review following recent press articles and in light of the planned NICE guideline – gender dysphoria, which was likely to attract attention. Judith Richardson also noted that the BMA had requested a conversation with NICE about gender dysphoria.
2. Rebecca Threlfall confirmed that Horwood House near Milton Keynes had been booked for the ET retreat on 28/29 June. The revised agenda will come back to ET next week. There was a note of caution regarding rising COVID infections which might impact ET attendance.

**ACTION: RT**

**June board strategy meeting (item 4)**

1. The agenda and papers for the June board strategy meeting were reviewed. ET discussed the steer required from the board regarding investment in additional senior capacity to deliver the strategic priorities.

## Hot topics (item 5)

1. **Innovation bid** – Felix Greaves reminded ET that there had been a previous discussion about making an Innovation bid. It was noted that the deadline for bids was the Autumn. Felix Greaves and Meindert Boysen agreed to bring a paper back to ET with more detail.

**ACTION: FG/MB**

1. **COVID Road map: government announcement on 14 June** – Michelle Rowland and Grace Marguerie joined the meeting seeking confirmation to defer the planned opening of the offices from 1 July to 1 August following the government’s announcement that the lifting of all restrictions had been put back by 4 weeks. ET agreed that this was sensible given the prevalence of the virus and the requirement for a 10 day turnaround to amend all the office signage. Michelle confirmed that she would update the information hub on NICE Space and remove the allocated directorate days planned during July.

**ACTION: MR**

1. Grace gave feedback from the DHSC & ALB HR leads meeting at which the department had shared its draft comms plan for September 2021 to September 2022, proposing a phased return to the office based on 4 days per month, gradually increasing to 8 days per month, driven by its estates strategy. Other ALBs advised that they were proposing staff spend either one or two days per week in the office. Gill Leng confirmed that the message from the board was that NICE should follow suit by being a bit more directive about staff returning to the office from September 2021 onwards, with the option to opt out for those with a medical condition or specific concerns. Grace agreed to bring the full details of the DHSC’s plan to the Gold group, with the caveat that this will be at stage 4 when the government has lifted all restrictions.

**ACTION: GM**

1. Some ET members felt that there would be a challenge to mandating staff to return if they just find themselves in the office on Zoom calls to colleagues who are at home, and also from those teams where virtual collaboration is working very well. It was stated that 4 days per month still provided significant flexibility, and that this could be the message to staff during the period July to December which will be used as a ‘discovery phase’ to understand what works well and what does not. There will be a progress report to the board in October based on a review planned for September.
2. Gill Leng referred to a meeting she had attended which discussed the issue of a ‘work charter’ and requested that Grace look into whether this would be appropriate for NICE.

**ACTION: GM**

1. ET discussed a positive COVID case involving a staff member who had been into the Manchester office, but was outside of the timeframe for contacts having to self- isolate. It was agreed to follow the NHS T&T advice, as had been previously agreed by the Gold group and therefore other staff did not need to be notified.

## Voluntary and community sector forum (item 6.1)

1. ET considered a proposal for a new engagement forum between NICE and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations to act as a critical friend to NICE and the Public Involvement Programme and provide a robust, defensible route for VCS engagement in overarching strategic and operational developments, including the NICE Strategy, elements of the NICE Connect programme, and input into the process and methods development. It was proposed to have an advisory executive function and a wider membership forum, with the first meeting planned for late Autumn.
2. ET were supportive of establishing the new engagement forum, subject to:
* the terms of reference stating how the forum will support delivery of NICE’s strategic objectives
* the advisory executive function be called the forum steering group
* reviewing membership of the forum steering group to align it with the guideline portfolio and future strategic priorities including health technologies
* the PIP team being asked to link in with the new Associate Director – Strategy when he starts in post
* taking a steer from the membership about how it wants to meet, whilst being mindful to reflect the advisory committees, with minimal face to face meetings

**ACTION: VT/LT**

1. Rebecca Threlfall was asked to include a slide on the forum in the CEO’s update to the July board.

ACTION: RT

## Finance update (item 7.1)

1. Martin Davison gave an update on the current financial position at 31 May 2021 which was reporting a year to date underspend of £475k mainly driven by vacancies. ET recognised the enormous effort taking place to recruit to vacant roles, but this had been off-set during May by an equal number of leavers. It was agreed that innovative and creative solutions were required, including working with external stakeholders (industry and academics) who are in a position to provide the extra capacity needed. Grace Marguerie added that the jobs market is highly competitive at present for some roles, and it would help if NICE could engage specialist recruitment agencies, who are not currently on the procurement provider framework. It was noted that contract waivers and direct awards can be used, if necessary, subject to these being reported to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). Boryana Stambolova agreed to identify agencies on a direct award framework and circulate a list to ET, and to explore alternative recruitment options which offer candidates flexibility.

**ACTION: BS**

1. Martin Davison advised that the delegated spending limits on consultancy and professional services will be changing from October 2021 with any contract over £100k (or £900 per day) requiring ministerial approval. A paper will be produced for ET and the September ARC meeting.

**ACTION: MD**

## Risk registers (item 7.2)

1. ET reviewed the strategic risk register, taking account of feedback from the May ARC meeting regarding culture change and the current risk score matrix. It was agreed that there was risk associated with failing to achieve a culture change to deliver the strategic transformation ambitions, but this was difficult to measure and mitigate. It was agreed to re-frame strategic risk 2.1 to include culture change, rather than adding a new separate risk, and to add more actions to risk 2.2 to include the recruitment drive and work taking place with SCW.

**ACTION: JH/ER**

1. Felix Greaves agreed to update risk 5.1 to reflect the implications of the wider external health care system potentially failing to secure public trust around data as an asset. He felt it was moving towards an amber risk score not green. He agreed to liaise with Elaine Repton on updated wording.

**ACTION: FG/ER**

1. Meindert Boysen suggested the operational risk 08 relating to the impact of the UK’s exit from the UK, be re-visited with Eric Power.

**ACTION: EP/ER**

1. The ARC had suggested ET consider moving to a 5x5 risk score matrix as 3x3 was too one dimensional for the strategic risks. It was agreed to await the outcome of the internal audit review of risk management and if recommended, consider making the change from April 2022.

## Future collaboration agreements (item 7.3)

1. ET considered which organisations NICE would want to prioritise for a collaboration agreement, now or in the future when there is the capacity for more strategic engagement. It was agreed to remove SCIE from the list and add the ABHI, NIHR and SIGN (Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network). It was agreed to discuss this further at the upcoming ET retreat, if time allows.

**ACTION: RT**

## Review of the meeting (item 8)

1. ET reviewed the meeting and agreed that the voluntary and community sector forum paper was too long. Slides were sometimes more appropriate than a formal paper, using the section headings from the report template to give a brief introduction, as Rebecca Threlfall had done in item 7.3.

## Other business (item 9)

1. **IT policy amendments** - Alexia Tonnel reported that amendments were being made to the IT policy, mostly minor updates, but also to propose a change to request that staff no longer access their personal email accounts on their NICE issued laptop to mitigate IT security risks. There was a discussion that some staff prefer the convenience of using one device but accepted that there is less security on personal accounts, and that the threat of ransomware attacks was increasing. Alexia agreed to ask other ALBs what their policy is and report back to ET next week.

**ACTION: AT**

1. **Extension to career break request** – ET agreed a request to extend a current career break from 12 to 14 months for a staff member within the health and social care directorate.
2. **Programme Director vacancy** – Judith Richardson advised that no appointment had been made following the recent PD recruitment exercise.