**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE**

Public Board Meeting – meeting as the Board Committee
held on 24 March 2021 via Zoom

Unconfirmed

These notes are a summary record of the main points discussed at the meeting and the decisions made. They are not intended to provide a verbatim record of the Board’s discussion. The agenda and the full documents considered are available in accordance with the NICE Publication Scheme.

# Board members present

Sharmila Nebhrajani Chairman

Dame Elaine Inglesby-Burke Non-Executive Director

Professor Tim Irish Non-Executive Director

Tom Wright Non-Executive Director

Professor Gillian Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Centre for Health Technology Evaluation Director

Dr Paul Chrisp Centre for Guidelines Director

Jennifer Howells Finance, Strategy and Transformation Director

Alexia Tonnel Digital, Information and Technology Director

# Directors in attendance

Jane Gizbert Communications Director

Dr Felix Greaves Science, Evidence and Analytics Director

Dr Judith Richardson Acting Health and Social Care Director

# In attendance

Dr Hugh McIntyre Medical Adviser to the Board

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

# 21/019 Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Dr Rima Makarem.

# 21/020 Declarations of interest

1. Tim Irish highlighted that the register of interests had been updated to include his recent appointment as Chairman of KHP MedTech Innovations Ltd. This, and the directors’ previously declared interests recorded on the register were noted and it was confirmed there were no conflicts of interest relevant to the meeting.

# 21/021 Minutes of the last meeting

1. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

# 21/022 Action log

1. The Board noted the progress with the actions arising from the Board meeting on 27 January 2021 and those open from preceding meetings. Those marked closed on the log were confirmed as complete.
2. In relation to action 21/02, there was support for reviewing the success of the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP) at the board to board meeting with the MHRA in October. In addition, Felix Greaves confirmed that he would alert the Board to any issues of note arising from the MHRA’s upcoming review of the pathway.

# 21/023 Chief Executive’s report

1. Gill Leng presented the Chief Executive’s report which provided an update on progress with NICE’s major programmes and business plan objectives to the end of February 2021 and other matters of interest, including the signing of a refreshed partnership agreement with the MHRA. Gill noted the year-end forecast of a £3.5m underspend and that a revised approach to financial planning will seek to avoid a similar level of underspend next year.
2. The Board noted that performance against the revised targets set at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic remains positive, in what has been an unprecedented year. Where there have been some delays to guidance publication, these have been communicated to stakeholders, with limited concerns raised in response. It was agreed that when the Board reviews the planned targets for 2021/22 it would be helpful to see how these compare to both the original plan for 2020/21 and the revised plan for the year agreed in May 2020.

Action: Gill Leng

1. The Board briefly discussed NICE International and NICE’s international activity more generally. It was agreed to bring an update on the work to develop business and marketing strategies for NICE International to the Board, along with a progress update on NICE International’s work more generally. Jane Gizbert agreed to find out if it is possible to gauge the level of international interest in NICE’s COVID-19 guidelines.

Action: Meindert Boysen and Jane Gizbert

1. The Board received the report.

# 21/024 Centre for Guidelines progress report

1. Paul Chrisp presented the update on key issues and developments in the Centre for Guidelines. Points of note included the publication of the COVID-19 rapid guideline on managing COVID-19 that brought together NICE’s previously published rapid guidelines and the NHS England and Improvement specialty guides, and the ongoing work on the content strategy. The new cross agency topic prioritisation group met in January to give a steer for initial prioritisation of the guidelines portfolio, which is central to the future vision of the guidelines programme and will help ensure NICE focuses on where it can add most value to the health and care system.
2. The Board received the report.

# 21/025 Centre for Health Technology Evaluation progress report

1. Meindert Boysen presented the update on key issues and developments in the Centre for Health Technology Evaluation. He highlighted that the Centre has largely delivered its planned work for the year, and paid tribute to the commitment from staff given the challenging circumstances and impact of the school closures on capacity. Meindert noted the work with Genomics England and partners to identify opportunities and challenges for the assessment of genomic technologies, and to understand how the partner organisations can work together to maximise value for the NHS.
2. The Board noted the revised timescale for the consultation on the unified methods and process manual for health technology evaluation, which is due to launch after the July public Board meeting. Meindert acknowledged that the consultation period may therefore coincide with the holiday period and agreed to consider whether any further actions may be required to ensure stakeholders have sufficient opportunity to comment. He noted the timelines will need to balance providing opportunity to commentwith implementing the changes that will benefit patients in a timely manner.

Action: Meindert Boysen

1. The Board received the report.

# 21/026 Digital, Information and Technology Directorate progress report

1. Alexia Tonnel presented the update from the Digital, Information and Technology Directorate and summarised the various teams’ key activities, including completing the changes to UK PharmaScan to bring it in line with post EU Exit information requirements and to the Clinical Knowledge Service in response to user feedback.
2. The Board was pleased to note the upcoming launch of a refreshed homepage for the NICE website on 19 April alongside the new strategy, with the updates informed by user feedback and to reflect the priorities in the strategy.
3. The Board received the report.

# 21/027 Science, Evidence and Analytics progress report

1. Felix Greaves presented the update from the Science, Evidence and Analytics Directorate and highlighted the Information Resources team’s ongoing work to pull together the evidence for guidance development teams. The directorate is involved in a number of collaborations and partnerships, including the successful application for NIHR/UKRI research funds on Long COVID, as part of a research consortium led by UCL, to use real world evidence to inform NICE’s guidance generation and to trial new ways to drive uptake of the guidance by embedding it in the electronic health record. Requests for funding from NHSX for two projects on digital and data driven technologies have been approved; preparatory work is underway to enable these to commence in April.
2. The Board noted the proposal to select health inequalities as the first topic for NICE Listens – the new deliberative public engagement workstream. It was agreed that while health inequalities is an important topic, it is also subject to review by several other organisations. It was agreed that the next Board meeting should discuss further this proposal to select health inequalities as the first NICE Listens topic and consider whether another topic is more appropriate.

Action: Felix Greaves

1. The upcoming launch of the Office for Digital Health was noted and welcomed. The Board noted that a marketing and communications plan has been developed to support this launch but highlighted the importance of first ensuring clarity on what the Office will do. Felix Greaves stated that the detailed work plan for the Office is in development and he would bring further information back to the Board. Gillian Leng stated the initial importance of the Office as a focus for communication with interested partners.

Action: Felix Greaves

1. The Board received the report.

# 21/028 Health and Social Care Directorate progress report

1. Judith Richardson presented the update on key issues and developments in the Health and Social Care Directorate. Highlights included engagement with Care Quality Commission and other partners; the work on health inequalities; and the inclusion of indicators developed by NICE in the 2021/22 Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF).
2. The Board noted the engagement with social care partners, which highlighted the support for NICE’s proposed refocused role in social care around integrated care set out in the new strategy. The Board confirmed the importance of engaging with the Integrated Care Systems as they continue to develop in the coming months, and highlighted that these, along with the NHS England and Improvement regional offices, should be a priority area for the field team. Judith Richardson confirmed that the refreshed implementation strategy will be brought to the Board by the end of the year, with progress updates provided in the directorate’s report before then.
3. The Board noted the review of the current local use and perceptions of Quality Standards across the health and care system and asked for the findings to be circulated to the Board for information.

Action: Judith Richardson

1. The Board received the report.

# 21/029 Resources report

1. Jennifer Howells presented the report which outlined the financial position at 28 February 2021 and provided an update on the NICE Connect transformation programme, Human Resources, and organisational development. In relation to finances, the year-end forecast is a £3.5m underspend as noted earlier in the meeting. Workforce highlights included the approval of a workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion action plan for the next 12 months; development of proposals for a cross-Institute approach to workforce planning and recruitment; and the current consideration of how working practices may need to adapt when the offices reopen. Jennifer noted that the revised transformation deliverables are on track for 2020/21.
2. The Board highlighted the importance of avoiding a similar level of underspend in 2021/22, and as part of this, ensuring recurring savings from ongoing virtual working are factored into next year’s budget. The Board was therefore pleased to note the intention for a revised approach to budget-setting and monitoring for the upcoming year, that will seek to avoid a significant underspend. Further information on this, and the savings arising from virtual working, will be provided to the Board when it is asked to approve the 2021/22 budget at the next public Board meeting.

Action: Jennifer Howells

1. The Board received the report.

# 21/030 Communications Directorate progress report

1. Jane Gizbert presented the update on key issues and developments in the Communications Directorate, including the work to publicise the launch of the new strategy and then promote it with audiences thereafter. It was noted that the upcoming biennial reputation research study will provide a baseline to measure the strategy’s impact.
2. The Board received the report.

**21/031 Strategic plan**

1. Gill Leng and Jennifer Howells presented the final version of the NICE strategy 2021 to 2026 for the Board’s approval. Jennifer thanked Tracey Barr, the independent strategy consultant who had led this work, and the other staff involved, including the communications team who led on the final design work. The strategy will be officially launched at a virtual event on 19 April and will be built into the 2021/22 business plan that will come to the Board in May for approval.
2. The Board approved the strategy for formal launch and publication on the NICE website on 19 April 2021 and congratulated all involved for the excellent piece of work.

# 21/032 NICE Charter – updates for 2021

1. Jane Gizbert presented the proposed amendments to the NICE Charter, which had been updated to reflect the language in the new strategy. Subject to any amendments requested by the Board, the revised Charter will be published on the website in April after the launch of the 5-year strategy.
2. The Board approved the updated Charter, subject to strengthening the references to NICE’s work to support the integration of health and social care. It was agreed that the Charter should in future be reviewed every 3 years, in line with the legal requirement, rather than annually.

Action: Jane Gizbert

# 21/033 Policy on declaring and managing interests for Board members and employees

1. Gill Leng presented the updated policy on declaring and managing interests for board members and employees. The policy has been reviewed, taking account of those in other organisations, and a number of amendments are proposed, including in relation to the links board members may have with the ‘commercial sector’.
2. The Board considered the proposed minor change around the exceptional circumstances in which an individual may request their interests are not published. It was agreed that the text provided the right balance between transparency and allowing for the exceptional circumstances when it may be appropriate to withhold publication of interests. It was agreed that this provision could however be reviewed if it leads to an increase in requests for withholding publication.
3. The Board approved the updated policy on declaring and managing interests for board members and employees for implementation with immediate effect.
4. It was agreed that the Executive Team would consider further the implications of applying the proposed accompanying changes to the policy for advisory committees and agree whether to update this policy as proposed in the Board paper.

Action: Gill Leng

# 21/034 Audit and Risk Committee minutes

1. The Board received the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021.

# 21/035 Any other business

1. It was agreed that responses to the questions from the audience should be provided in the papers for the next Board meeting.

Action: David Coombs

1. The Board then passed the following resolution to move to a part 2 meeting to discuss confidential matters:

*"That representatives of the press and other members of the public be excluded from the remainder of this meeting having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, publicity on which would be prejudicial to the public interest".*

# Next meeting

1. The next public meeting of the Board will be held on 19 May 2021 at 1:30pm, location TBC.