**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 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

## In attendance

Alison Liddell Programme Director and Deputy Digital, Information and Technology Director

Martin Davison Acting Associate Director – Finance (item 7.1)

Pilar Pinilla- Principal Scientific Advisor – Scientific Advice (item 7.2)

Dominguez

Deborah Lee Senior Project Manager - Scientific Advice (item 7.2)

Mark Salmon Programme Director – Science, Evidence and Analytics (item 7.4)

Grace Marguerie Associate Director – HR (item 7.4)

Jonathan Underhill Medicines Consultant Clinical Advisor (item 7.5)

Laura Norburn Senior Operations Manager – Public Involvement Programme (item 7.5)

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance and Risk Manager (minutes)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Alexia Tonnel who was represented by Alison Liddell.

## 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 13 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 13 October 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Further to the slide shared at the all staff meeting on progress and next steps with the strategic plan, it was agreed that SMT should discuss with their senior teams how to engage them in the next stage of the strategy development work as they will be critical to how the plan is taken forward and implemented within the directorates.

**ACTION: SMT**

1. SMT discussed where responsibility for approving staff attendance at conferences should ultimately sit given the cross-directorate considerations of finance, HR and the scientific support that NICE offers to external events. It was agreed that Rebecca Threlfall would liaise with Meindert Boysen and Jennifer Howells with a view to bringing a proposal back to SMT.

**ACTION: RT/MB/JH**

## Coronavirus (item 5)

1. The following decisions from the Gold group were confirmed:
* To proceed with the re-design of the back reception area of City Tower to provide a bike store, showers and lockers, and to install auto-opening entry and exit doors throughout the office.
* To close the Manchester office for the 3 days in between Christmas and New Year.

## October Board strategy meeting (item 6.1)

1. Arrangements for the Board strategy meeting were discussed. David Coombs was asked to confirm what time the room would be available from.

**ACTION: DC**

## Finance report (item 7.1)

1. Jennifer Howells introduced the paper which advised SMT of the financial position as at 30 September 2020 and gave an updated forecast outturn for the year. Martin Davison explained the revised assumptions which had changed the forecast year end deficit of £0.1m reported to the Board in September, to a projected £1.3m underspend. The underspend was comprised of savings on pay due to vacancies and turnover and other non-pay items including travel and subsistence, the flexible element of the External Assessment Centre contracts, and strong performance in the NICE Scientific Advice team. It was noted that the underspend was partly off-set by the loss of income from TA & HTAs at the start of the financial year due to programmes being paused.
2. Martin advised that there were a number of uncertainties which have not yet materialised which may impact the second half of the year. The position has been adjusted to reflect some known cost pressures relating to recruitment, including the COVID Unit, NICE Connect pay and non-pay items, and consultancy costs related to SharePoint implementation.
3. SMT discussed the number of vacancies causing capacity challenges in teams and considered whether short term, non-recurrent support could be brought in to help alleviate pressure in Q3 & Q4. Martin noted that there is a high level of internal movement but backfilling those roles does not appear to be happening. SMT were encouraged to look at options to utilise some of the underspend on pay to appoint externally where possible, to alleviate the current pressure on teams.
4. The finance report was noted and agreed for submission to the Board.

## NICE International – Progress update and annual review (item 7.2)

1. Pilar Pinilla-Dominguez presented an update on the progress of NICE International since it was relaunched in November 2019 and the pipeline and future aspirations of the team for the rest of 2020/21. The report also included the first annual review for NICE International and its strategic engagement plan for presentation to the November board meeting.
2. SMT welcomed the report and supported the aspirations. Felix Greaves requested that the team links in with the Science Policy & Research to ensure collaboration and avoid duplication of effort. Judith Richardson commented that the Public Involvement Team has struggled to support the many NICE International engagements and stated that it would be helpful to understand what the priorities were. Pilar confirmed she had a meeting planned with PIP Team to discuss resourcing.
3. In terms of the annual report, SMT requested some suggested amendments:
* Reduce the length of the report to the board
* Include a section to show the split of NICE International’s work between guidelines, health technology assessments and social care
* Move the graph of sustainable development goals further down the report and use the ‘background’ section to explain NICE’s role and objectives
* Amend paragraphs 7 – 9 to be bullet points
* Update the governance structure in figure 3
* Para 61 take out ‘only’ and para 67 amend to ‘increasing’
* Include reference to relationships with Canada and Australia
* In the future plans section, add reference to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health and contributing to the G7.

ACTION: PPD

1. SMT agreed to discuss whether any changes were needed in the various governance groups related to NICE International, at the SMT away day in November.

ACTION: RT

## Counter fraud return Q2 (item 7.3)

1. SMT noted the Q2 counter fraud return to be made to the DHSC by 26 October 2020, in compliance with the government functional standard.
2. Gill Leng agreed that future returns could be signed off by Jennifer Howells and only presented to SMT on an exception basis.
3. SMT agreed to raise with their teams the requirement for all staff to complete the mandatory fraud awareness e-learning module. Elaine Repton agreed to provide wording for inclusion in a daily CEO message to remind staff to complete the training.

**ACTION: ER/JG**

## Update from the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians (item 7.4)

1. Mark Salmon presented a report on the work and activities of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians since they were appointed in 2019 and summarised eight cases that have been raised either by an individual or a group of staff.
2. SMT agreed that roles were providing an important and impartial outlet for staff who may not wish to raise a concern with HR or the union. Grace Marguerie added that the guardians were playing a really important role and potentially avoiding issues escalating to a grievance. They are also a support to the HR team in identifying where policies might need to be adjusted as a result of feedback from concerns raised.
3. SMT discussed the type of issues that have been raised and agreed it would be appropriate to share the report with Programme Directors so they have sight of topic areas. The report was also agreed for presentation to a morning session of the Board as the Board was keen to support establishing the roles within NICE. As October is ‘Speak Up’ month, Gill Leng agreed to include the key themes coming out of the report at the November all staff meeting.

ACTION: MS/GL

1. On the issue of workload pressures and some staff feeling unable to take annual leave, SMT discussed whether it would be appropriate this year to offer a ‘buy back’ option. In light of the Working Time Directive and other considerations such as carrying forward days into next year and staff being encouraged to take leave over the Christmas period, it was felt that it was too soon to offer a buy back. It was agreed that Grace Marguerie should bring back data on annual leave taken to date, to enable SMT to have a further informed discussion.

**ACTION: GM**

## Development and evaluation of a novel learning package for SDM (item 7.5)

1. Jonathan Underhill and Laura Norburn sought SMT approval to use the residual funds from the joint working Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NICE and Keele University School of Pharmacy (£65,310) to develop a novel e-learning package to support the objectives of the Shared Decision Making (SDM) Collaborative and support the implementation of the SDM NICE guideline when it is published.
2. SMT supported the proposal and welcomed confirmation that the training modules include references and links to NICE guidelines, specifically a section on professionals keeping their knowledge up to date in line with NICE advice.

## EU exit (item 8)

1. Meindert Boysen gave feedback from Eric Power’s recent meeting with the MHRA and updated SMT briefly the significant level of activity underway within MHRA in preparation for end of December. It was agreed to add an EU Exit update report to the agenda for the morning session of the November board meeting.

**ACTION: DC**

1. Gill Leng advised that she has an ALBs EU Exit meeting with the Secretary of State on 4 November and requested a briefing note be prepared.

**ACTION: RT/MB**

## London office move (item 9)

1. Jennifer Howells advised that she would now be attending the Programme Board meetings in place of Catherine. There were some new emerging costs but nothing of significance. It was noted that the ALB reps had begun a discussion about shared values when the teams move into Redman Place. Jane Gizbert was asked to check whether there was a NICE rep attending the Communications Working Group.

**ACTION: JG**

## Other business (item 10)

November public board meeting

1. Jennifer Howells advised that the review of the Standing Orders, SFIs and scheme of delegations was being deferred from the November Board meeting to enable a re-write of some sections and inclusion of a new section on management of income from commissions, TA/HSTs and other third parties.

Comprehensive Spending Review

1. SMT noted that Jane Newton had advised that the CSR will now be for one year rather than three. The outcome was expected mid-November.

Catherine Wilkinson, Deputy Director, Finance, Strategy and Transformation

1. Jennifer Howells advised that due to annual leave owing, this is Catherine’s last week in the office. Her formal leaving date is 8 November. Hilary Baker has been appointed as the interim Deputy Director, Finance, Strategy and Transformation until a permanent, financially qualified, replacement is appointed.

Consultancy appointment to support the organisational design work

1. Gill Leng advised SMT that a piece of work was underway being led by Jennifer to engage a consultancy to help with the organisational design work which the Board has discussed previously as part of the future strategic direction. The scope will be further informed by the Board strategy meeting on 21 October 2020, after which Jennifer Howells was asked to share a draft scope with SMT.

**ACTION: JH**