**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 27 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

## In attendance

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Scientific Affairs (item 7.1)

Vince Doyle Associate Director – Digital, Information and Technology

Kevin Harris Senior Responsible Officer for Patient Safety (item 7.2)

Sebastian Maycock Programme Manager – London Office Move (item 9)

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance and Risk Manager (item 7.3)

Sara Southall Public Health Registrar (item 7.2)

Victoria Thomas Head of Public Involvement

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Alexia Tonnel and Judith Richardson who were represented by Vince Doyle and Victoria Thomas respectively.

## 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 20 October 2020 were agreed subject to minor corrections to paragraphs 15 and 27.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 20 October 2020 were noted as complete or in hand. It was agreed that Jennifer Howells would consider further the data on the extent staff have already booked annual leave and come back to SMT with any suggestions for further action as necessary.

ACTION: JH

1. It was agreed that next week’s SMT meeting should review the draft agendas for the two SMT virtual away-day sessions in November.

ACTION: RT

## Coronavirus (item 5)

1. There were no decisions from the gold group to confirm.

## Board meetings (item 6)

1. SMT discussed the actions from the Board Strategy away-day on 21 October and agreed that the strategy development group meeting on 28 October would consider the next steps and the information to present to the Board in November.
2. SMT reviewed the proposed agenda items for the Board meetings on 18 November 2020 and agreed to move the item on the pilot evaluation of digital health technologies to the public meeting and incorporate the WDES and WRES data into the annual equality report. The December Board Strategy meeting would receive an update on the digital workplace business case.

## NICE and MHRA partnership working to develop an Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (item 7.1)

1. Nick Crabb presented the update on partnership working between the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and NICE to develop an Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway for medicines. Nick noted it would be a novel development covering licensing and patient access and could therefore be an attractive proposition for industry. He highlighted the need to fund NICE’s contribution to this work, first to fully establish the pathway and then participate on a product by product basis when it is established. Without sufficient resourcing to enable NICE’s involvement there is a risk of a gap emerging between the timescale for licensing and patient access.
2. SMT discussed and welcomed NICE’s involvement in this work. It was agreed that the paper should be presented to the November public Board meeting for information, but with further context to explain this specific work relates to medicines and that NICE is engaged with the MHRA on a range of other issues, including on devices, digital technologies, and pharmacovigilance. It was agreed that a schematic showing the proposed new pathway, and NICE’s contribution to it, would also be helpful. Nick confirmed he would liaise with the MHRA to coordinate the level of information being put in the public domain about the proposals.

ACTION: NC

1. SMT agreed that the resourcing for this work should be considered further as part of the business planning process, at which point there should be greater information on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) bid.

ACTION: MB/FG

## Patient safety activity (item 7.2)

1. Kevin Harris presented the update on patient safety activity at NICE since his appointment as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for patient safety in September 2019. Kevin highlighted the planned priorities for the year ahead and the proposal to establish a task and finish group to oversee NICE’s response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety (IMMDS) review. He noted the scope to deal with patient safety issues in a more coordinated manner, supported by additional resources.
2. SMT thanked Kevin for the update and approved the report for submission to the November public Board meeting as the first annual patient safety report. It was agreed that the remit of the proposed task and finish group should be expanded to look at a sustainable model for managing patient safety issues in a structured and systematic way. It was agreed that the group should consider how this new approach could utilise new technology such as artificial intelligence, and should therefore include a representative from the Science, Evidence and Analytics directorate. The group should aim to report by the end of the calendar year so that the implications for future resource requirements can feed into the business planning process.

ACTION: KH

1. It was agreed there should be 6-monthly reports on patient safety to SMT, with an annual report to the Board.

ACTION: KH

## Review of gifts and hospitality policy (item 7.3)

1. David Coombs presented the proposed minor amendments to the gifts and hospitality policy following its periodic review. The review indicated that the policy remains in line with those in other organisations, notably the NHS policy and the Civil Service Code, and therefore only minor amendments are proposed.
2. SMT approved the minor updates to the policy subject to adding a statement on who staff should contact for advice about offers of gifts and hospitality.

ACTION: ER

## Strategic engagement review (item 7.4)

1. Jennifer Howells and David Coombs presented the proposal to commission an external consultancy to undertake a short review of NICE’s approach to strategic engagement with key stakeholders. The work is closely linked with a review of NICE’s organisational design and both reviews may be allocated to a single provider if this will deliver economies of scale and minimise disruption internally.
2. SMT discussed the scope of the proposed review and confirmed that the review is focused on engaging with organisations to influence national policy, rather than the way stakeholders engage with NICE to develop and implement guidance. SMT supported the proposed areas to be covered by the review’s recommendations, noting that a CRM will likely be a central part of ensuring the infrastructure is in place to enhance NICE’s objectives in this area. Given the stakeholder mapping that has already been undertaken, it was agreed that another list of stakeholders is not required; instead the consultants should be asked to produce a prioritised list of high level national and international stakeholders NICE should seek to influence and engage with, using for example an interest/influence matrix. Subject to these amendments, SMT supported the business case and the proposed expenditure.

ACTION: JH/DC

1. Jennifer Howells confirmed that she is reviewing the procurement arrangements with NICE’s legal advisers to ensure that a competitive process is undertaken in a proportionate manner.

## EU exit (item 8)

1. Gill Leng briefly updated on SMT on her meeting with Meindert Boysen and Eric Power to discuss the key issues around EU exit for NICE.

## London office move (item 9)

1. Sebastian Maycock updated SMT on the London office move and advised that the practical completion date is likely to be 2 November 2020, which marks the handover of the second floor to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). As such, this is an important milestone and enables a significant amount of activity to commence to enable the office to be ready for occupation.
2. Sebastian noted some positive progress with issues such as installing the fibre circuits and the facilities management (FM) arrangements. However, there are other significant challenges and risks, including a potential delay to the occupational readiness as a result of the DHSC FM contractor being deployed to COVID related projects. The other key risk is around the data centre, which it may be not be possible to move to the new office due to insufficient electrical supply. Sebastian also highlighted the logistical challenges around removing equipment and furnishings from 10 Spring Gardens, which increases the importance of a clear plan and timetable for moving the existing data centre. He stated that due to the underfloor services, the proposed new layout developed following the COVID secure audit is not possible. The latest iteration reduces the desks available to NICE to 38-40 and will also require some perspex screens.
3. SMT noted the update and requested further monthly progress updates.

ACTION: SM

## Any other business (item 10)

HTAi annual conference

1. Meindert Boysen noted that he had met with the new executive director of HTAi and raised the importance of HTAi deciding the format for their 2021 annual conference that NICE is due to co-host.

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

1. Jennifer Howells updated SMT on the latest position with the CSR and the likely implications for NICE’s financial allocation in 2021/22. SMT agreed that it would be helpful to raise the financial allocation at the annual accountability meeting on 16 November with DHSC, supported by a briefing paper.

ACTION: JH

1. SMT noted the importance of holding an early discussion on the financial pressures and to consider how to weigh competing resource demands. It was agreed that Jennifer Howells and David Coombs would consider the timing for this discussion in the context of the business planning process now underway.

ACTION: JH/DC

Recruitment

1. Jennifer Howells briefed SMT on a number of issues with the electronic applicant tracking system and noted the extensive work underway to remedy these. If there is not sufficient assurance these have been rectified by the start of next week, then it may be necessary to pause recruitment. In the interim, the HR team have confirmed the issues had not adversely affected the outcome for any applicants.
2. SMT members noted the update and discussed recruitment more generally. It was queried whether director approval for every recruitment is necessary and suggested this should more appropriately sit with the programme directors. SMT agreed to discuss this further, and also the authority for approving secondments, at the November away-day session that will consider SMT’s role and the delegations to their senior staff.

ACTION: RT/DC

1. Gill Leng highlighted the background to requiring SMT approval for career breaks and secondments and stated that she would discuss this further with Jennifer Howells.

ACTION: GL/JH