**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 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

Alexia Tonnel Director – Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

Hilary Baker Acting Programme Director and Deputy Finance, Strategy and Transformation Director

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (items 6 and 7.1)

Sian Corrigan Senior Communications Manager – Events and Brand (item 7.2)

Martin Davison Interim Associate Director – Finance (item 7.2)

Carla Deakin Programme Director – Commercial and Managed Access (item 7.3)

Dani Mason Associate Director – Brand and Marketing (item 7.2)

Kelly Parry Information Governance Manager and DPO (item 7.1)

Eric Power Programme Director – Medicines (item 8)

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance and Risk Manager (minutes)

Victoria Thomas Head of Public Involvement

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Jennifer Howells and Judith Richardson who were represented by Hilary Baker 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 10 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 10 November 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. SMT briefly discussed some of the actions from the virtual retreat on 12 November. It was agreed that Gill Leng would announce SMT’s change of name in the next all staff meeting, advising it will take effect from 1 January 2021.

**ACTION: GL/JG**

1. It was noted that updates to the Guidance Executive (GE) terms of reference and the committee recruitment and committee declarations of interest policies agreed at the retreat had been actioned by David Coombs, as follows:

**Guidance Executive (GE) terms of reference**

* Removal for the requirement for GE to approve proposals for updating NICE guidance

**Committee recruitment and committee declarations of interest policies**

* Removal of the requirement for SMT to approve the appointment and reappointment of committee chairs

1. Paul Chrisp queried when teams should be advised to stop developing reports for GE on surveillance reviews and quality standard updates, where there are no changes proposed. It was agreed the Directors should communicate this as soon as possible, and Gill Leng would mention it in one of her daily messages.

**ACTION: GL/JG**

## Coronavirus (item 5)

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

## November public board meeting (item 6)

1. SMT reviewed arrangements for the November public board meeting, noting the additional NICE staff who will be joining to present papers.
2. Jane Gizbert was asked to provide an analysis of external guests who observe the meeting, particularly the international guests.

**ACTION: JG**

## Annual review of information governance 2019/20 (item 7.1)

1. Kelly Parry presented the annual review of information governance for 2019/20, highlighting the key activities of the team, the data breaches reported and priorities for the year ahead. SMT thanked Kelly for a comprehensive report which provided a good level of assurance that NICE’s information governance arrangements were robust.
2. SMT discussed the report and supported its submission to the Audit and Risk Committee subject to the following amendments and additions:

* Reduce the number of acronyms.
* Clarify Colm Leonard’s role as Consultant Respiratory Physician and trained Caldicott Guardian.
* Re-word the first sentence of para 23 to make it clearer.
* Define the roles of the existing IG team members within the responsibilities section.
* Link the data breaches listed in para 23 to the table of breaches for easier read across. Also include an explanation of how data breaches are responded to, including third party breaches.
* Include a sub-heading at para 34 (or re-order to give more prominence) to the moderate data breach relating to Commercial in Confidence data shared in error, and include additional text to explain the on-going work to prevent these type of breaches.
* Amend para 35 relating to Hire Lab configuration and system testing, to make clear this work was undertaken by an external software provider not the internal DIT team. Also add a point to confirm that in future it will only be possible to procure IT software externally, with the involvement of the DIT team.
* Include a section on remote working to explain how the IG Team has supported NICE’s transition in conjunction with the DIT team, security measures around the use of Zoom, and whether being remote increases the risk of data breaches.

**ACTION: KP**

1. Alexia Tonnel noted that she would be meeting with Kelly separately to discuss the implications of the end of the US-EU privacy shield framework and the new Data Security and Protection Toolkit requirements for 2020/21, specifically NICE’s approach to protecting IT systems against cyber activity.

ACTION: AT/KP

## NICE annual conference 2021 (item 7.2)

1. Dani Mason presented revised proposals for NICE’s annual conference in 2021 and sought feedback on the preferred option. SMT were supportive of option 2 – to cancel the current contact with Dods and arrange a series of shorter virtual events. SMT were supportive of an initial event to launch the new NICE strategy followed by smaller events based on each of the five pillars of the strategy.

**ACTION: DM**

1. The Comms team was asked to get provisional dates in the diary as soon as possible for an initial event in late-April 2021. SMT liked the idea of using a small studio room for the conference panel and agreed that an approach be made to Lord Bethel’s office to enquire whether he would deliver an opening speech.

**ACTION: DM**

1. In relation to the future face to face NICE conference, the idea of wider, inexpensive event for the ‘NICE family’ was preferred. It was agreed to engage the PD’s Forum to seek their ideas and feedback.

**ACTION: DM**

## Resourcing for AAC, RAPID C-19 and ILAP (item 7.3)

1. Carla Deakin sought SMT support for the expansion of the team currently working for the Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) office and RAPID C-19 to allow for continuity of service should external funding not be secured, and to be able to respond quickly to the work expected to come from the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP) being developed by the MHRA and NICE.
2. SMT recognised the importance of continued support for RAPID-19 therapeutics but questioned the costs (£0.4m), and the urgency of the paper ahead of the imminent business planning process. It was noted that the roles could potentially be funded through industry or the CSR bid, but neither were certain at this point, therefore the request was to secure funding to ensure the RAPID C-19 work can continue post-March 2021, and begin working on ILAP from January 2021. Carla was asked to re-visit the costs and ensure that the posts could potentially be allocated to other roles but was otherwise given approval to go ahead.

**ACTION: CD**

1. SMT discussed the need to develop a standard person specification with a core skill set for the difficult to recruit to roles, such as technical analysts, but ensure the job description allows flexibility to be able to move posts between programmes as and when required, to meet the needs of the business.

## EU exit (item 8)

1. Eric Power provided feedback from a Ministerial EU Exit Delivery Partners meeting he had attended with ALB CE’s and chaired by Edward Argar. SMT noted the brief update on the negotiations with the EU, however most of the meeting had been focussed on emergency planning and concurrent risks materialising over the winter. On the ‘Winter Checklist’ most ALBs had graded themselves as green or amber for most areas. ALBs were asked to include a standing item on board agendas to consider the cross-sector risks.
2. SMT discussed what steps needed to be taken to ensure NICE was considering the three key risks of EU Exit, COVID-19 recovery and winter pressures, and whether the correct triggers were in place to escalate issues appropriately. It was agreed that Eric joins the Gold group and that the group’s agenda be re-framed around the three risks, from now until the end of March, at which time the group could be stood down.

**ACTION: ER**

1. Reference was made to the four core standards of the DHSC’s self-assessment, in the slides shared by Eric. It was noted that the EU Exit posed the highest risk to NICE at the present time. SMT also discussed the likelihood of NICE staff being seconded to other government departments and the potential impact of this on programme delivery. Additionally, the risk of high levels of staff sickness (and committee member availability), which may result in work having to be re-prioritised as happened in March. It was noted that the Sit-rep currently reports lagging data on sickness levels. It was agreed there was a need to develop leading indicators on staff and committee availability in order to identify potential future issues. This was to be discussed at the Gold group, along with the current EU risk in the corporate risk register and the EU Exit specific risk register.

**ACTION: ER**

1. In relation to staff recruitment and retention, it was queried how many existing staff from EU countries had applied for settled status. Grace Marguerie was asked to provide a progress update on ensuring all NICE EU staff have the right to remain and on potential future opportunities and risks around recruitment.

**ACTION: GM**

1. Paul Chrisp raised the risk of medicines shortages. Eric advised that he had been invited to sit on group with Liz Woodeson looking at medicines availability and was in contact with the NICE Comms Team should an issue need escalating. It was agreed medicines should also be considered at the Gold group.

**ACTION: ER**

## London office move (item 9)

1. Alexia Tonnel advised SMT of ongoing IT issues with Redman Place which her team were currently investigating. One related to the cooling system in the main equipment room (MER) which appears to be a problem in the 3 British Council floors, and issues with the design of the IT network which are being discussed with Vodafone and the CQC. Alexia agreed to have a position statement for the Board meeting tomorrow.

**ACTION: AT**

## Review of the agenda (item 10)

1. SMT reviewed the agenda items and agreed that they were all relevant for this meeting. Felix Greaves agreed to defer his paper on resources from next week’s SMT meeting to the business planning session on 11 December.

**ACTION: FG**

## Other business (item 11)

Academic Health Science Networks

1. Rebecca Threlfall provided feedback from the Chairman’s meeting with the AHSN Chief Officer’s Group at which they had expressed a keenness to partner with NICE in the future, notably on a data standards framework. SMT was supportive of a closer working relationship and agreed that a high-level partnership agreement with the AHSNs be developed.

**ACTION: AT/FG/PC**