**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Executive Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (for item 9 onwards)

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

Alexia Tonnel Director – Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

Jeanette Kusel Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (items 1 to 9)

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (items 5 and 11)

Kevin Harris Consultant Clinical Advisor – Health & Social Care (item 7)

Sara Southall Public Health Registrar – Health & Social Care (item 7)

Chris Bird Project Manager – Health & Social Care (item 7)

Danielle Mason Associate Director – Brand and Marketing (item 8)

Sian Corrigan Senior Communications Manager - Brand & Marketing (item 8)

Seamus Kent Senior Advisor – Science, Evidence and Analytics (item 10)

Moya Alcock Programme Director - Health and Social Care (item 12)

Rachel Neary-Jones Senior Manager - Health and Social Care (item 12)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Meindert Boysen gave apologies for the start of the meeting and was represented by Jeanette Kusel until he joined at item 9.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

1. The previously declared interests were noted.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record subject to amendments to paragraphs 15 and 27.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 16 March 2021 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Jennifer Howells confirmed that under-utilised funds in the EAC contracts do not require a disclosure to be made in the annual accounts.
3. ET noted that NICE will be trialling a '9 box grid' to map senior leader talent across the organisation. Each Director will receive training from HR in the coming weeks to help them plot each of their direct reports on the grid, with ET coming together on 8 June for a consistency check.
4. Jennifer Howells confirmed that Grace Marguerie had liaised with the Union rep to discuss travel staff expenses, as part of the work on the future employment offer. Alexia Tonnel added that there may have been a miscommunication that staff will still be able to work within VMware when they return to the office. She clarified this was not the case as the IT thin client infrastructure will no longer be available when the offices re-open. Staff will be required to bring their NICE laptop into the office and the Facilities team will be asked to purchase a stock of spare cables. David Coombs added that the issue was that some staff did not want to carry laptops to and from the office and therefore wanted to work from a personal device at home, via VMware. Alexia confirmed this will not be possible and that the position needed to be clarified in a communication to all staff. It was agreed that a message be included in one of the CEO’s daily emails.

**ACTION: JG**

1. Gill Leng also agreed to include a message in one of her daily emails to confirm that the carers leave policy had been re-instated.

**ACTION: JG**

## March Public Board Meeting (item 5)

1. ET discussed arrangements for the private session and the March public board meeting. Following feedback from board members, Gill Leng undertook to speak with Meindert Boysen about how he intended to position the commercial and managed access paper.

## Hot topics (item 6)

1. ET considered the following items:
   * **Election guidance** – Jane Gizbert had shared the Cabinet Office guidance on conduct in the lead up to the 6 May 2021 elections.  Reference was made to the need to take special care in the three weeks preceding the elections, in this case from 15 April, including avoiding launching any public consultations. ET noted there will be no restrictions on NICE’s powers in this respect. It was agreed to notify the board of the guidance via the CEO’s update and to include an article in YW@N to advise all staff.

**ACTION: RT/JG**

* + **Public health and updates teams, Centre for Guidelines** – Paul Chrisp briefly updated ET on proposals to consolidate the two teams and confirmed that he had spoken with the finance team regarding any necessary provisions to be made before the year end. ET noted that there was concern within the wider system about the loss of public health capacity and agreed that the paper should be sensitive to this when the proposal comes to ET for formal approval.

## Patient Safety Update (item 7)

1. Kevin Harris presented an update on the work of the Patient Safety Oversight Group and requested ET consider a number of issues to ensure a sustainable, pan-organisational approach to patient safety is embedded within NICE. Paul Chrisp suggested one of the consultant clinical advisors from the Centre for Guidelines to join the oversight group.
2. ET noted that there was not presently a formal structure for addressing patient safety issues with dedicated resources to support the work, or a recognised lead to speak on patient safety on behalf of NICE. Decisions are currently referred to Judith Richardson as HSC director, to escalate up to ET, and patient safety was not specifically part of any job descriptions. It was agreed that consideration should be given to creating a formal governance structure for patient safety decision making. Kevin Harris agreed to explore this further with Jennifer Howells, including a review of the oversight group’s terms of reference.

**ACTION: JH/KH**

1. Felix Greaves mentioned there were opportunities for NICE around patient safety data, which require further exploration. It was agreed that Gill Leng and Felix Greaves should discuss a potential structure for this work outside of the meeting as part of the OD design work. Gill also agreed to meet separately with Kevin Harris and Sara Southall to discuss their views on how best to take patient safety forward.

**ACTION: GL/FG/KH/SS**

1. Reference was also made to recent correspondence with the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) regarding wireless foetal heart monitor, which had required a joined up cross-NICE response. Kevin was asked whether the PSOG could co-ordinate this.

**ACTION: KH**

## Event for NICE ‘family’ and the NICE Conference (item 8)

1. ET was asked to consider whether NICE should host an event for the ‘NICE family’ in 2022 and to re-instate the NICE annual conference in 2023, and if so, to agree the size of the events, timing, venue and invitee list.
2. It was agreed to alternate an annual ‘NICE family’ event with the NICE conference. Dani Mason was asked to work with the Senior Leaders Forum to plan the agenda for a 1 day ‘family’ event to be held in late Spring 2022, at a venue with a sufficiently large room for the plenary session and break out rooms, and to agree the invite list which is to include committee members, key contributors to NICE’s work and some, but not all, NICE staff. ET requested an initial report back by September 2021. Further consideration is needed regarding a potential staff-only event in the autumn.

ACTION: DM/SC

## The AHSN Network collaborative and partnership (item 9)

1. Jeanette Kusel requested approval for NICE to enter into a partnership agreement with the Academic Health Science Networks (AHSN) to establish a framework for the development of a mutually supportive joint programme of work, and as key partners in the Accelerated Access Collaborative. Next steps in the paper included formalising the governance arrangements for a joint working group, its membership and a terms of reference which will come back to ET at a later date.
2. ET considered whether a partnership agreement or MoU was appropriate and agreed to proceed with the PA subject to Jeanette Kusel being asked to:
   * confirm the legal status of the AHSN Network to assess whether any future decisions would be legally binding on behalf of NICE, before the PA is signed
   * re-order the document to mirror the NICE and MHRA partnership agreement, whereby the governance arrangements and shared purpose are clearly outlined in the body of the agreement and the areas for joint working are detailed in an annex
   * check the position of Gary Ford with David Coombs to ensure any conflict of interest with his NICE role is appropriately documented
   * share the final version with Gill Leng for sign off.

**ACTION: JK**

## Open call for collaboration in the data and analytics methods and standards programme (item 10)

1. ET reviewed proposals to issue open calls for collaboration to increase the breadth of organisations with whom NICE works and to support the rapid development of methods guidance. The paper outlined the risks and benefits of this approach. Primarily the risks being a perception that the involvement of private companies in the development of NICE's methods (for data & analytics) could compromise NICE's independence, and uncertainty about the success of the approach which is unprecedented at NICE.
2. On balance ET was fully supportive of actively engaging with external stakeholders but with the caveat that concerns around ‘independence’ and conflicts of interest are clearly documented in any contractual arrangements and brought back to ET for review before proceeding. ET was also not in favour of any jointly developed outputs at this early stage in the process. ET asked to see the next document with more detail, before the call goes live.

ACTION: FG/SK

## Business plan 2021/22 (item 11)

1. ET reviewed the latest draft business plan which incorporated feedback from the February board strategy meeting and the DHSC sponsor team. Jennifer Howells advised that until the financial settlement was confirmed, some objectives were conditional. It was noted that the timeframes for delivery of objectives were currently being mapped by Dominic Lawson in the Transformation team and will be linked to a performance management KPI dashboard which Mark Minchin is helping to develop. The KPI targets will be for discussion with the board in April.
2. With regard to reporting progress on the new objectives, a new approach to board reporting was being developed by Rebecca Threlfall and David Coombs. It was agreed that ET should consider the new approach and proposed KPIs and mapping of the objectives sufficiently in advance of the first round of reporting to ensure everyone is clear on what is expected for the board papers.

**ACTION: DC/RT**

1. David Coombs was asked to make some further minor amendments to the business plan before a final version is sent to the designer, following which it will be presented for sign off at the May public board meeting.

**ACTION: DC**

## Integration and Innovation White Paper (item 12)

1. ET reviewed a summary of the recently published white paper: 'Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all' which highlighted the key reforms planned and the implications for NICE, including potential opportunities and challenges.
2. ET noted that the DHSC policy team had offered an opportunity to preview and possibly shape draft wording regarding proposed amendments to NICE’s functions. Areas of interest to monitor closely were any changes affecting NICE quality standards and indicators, and the funding mandate to commissioners. ET welcomed the opportunity to influence any impact on NICE where possible, through the DHSC policy team.

ACTION: JR/MA

## Gold group (item 13)

1. The ET noted the decision at the Gold group to communicate the non-staff expenses policy addendum, which allows guidance committee members to claim for any home working kit they require, in line with the staff policy.

ACTION: JG

## Strategy and business planning (item 14)

1. Nothing further to report.

## Review of the meeting (item 15)

1. ET reviewed the agenda and agreed that there were slightly too many papers but there was a good mix of topics which generated good discussions.

## Other business

1. Alexia Tonnel reported that the DHSC had approved one of the external meeting suite rooms in Redman Place having the highest spec AV/VC kit installed, and the other rooms having standard equipment.