**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Executive Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director, Centre for Health Technology Evaluation and Deputy Chief Executive

Nicole Gee Interim Chief People Officer

Felix Greaves Director, Science, Evidence and Analytics

Jennifer Howells Director, Finance, Strategy and Transformation (part-way through item 4 onwards)

Judith Richardson Acting Director, Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director, Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

Fiona Glen Programme Director, Centre for Guidelines

Danielle Mason Associate Director, Brand and Marketing, Communications

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

Martin Davison Associate Director, Finance (item 6.1)

Ben Dunbar Revalidation Adviser (item 5.1)

John Pegington Acting Head of Management Accounts (item 6.1)

Jenniffer Prescott Programme Director, Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 5.2)

Natalie Spray Programme Manager, Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 5.2)

Boryana Stambolova Deputy Director, Finance – strategy and commercial (items 1 to part of item 4)

David Coombs Associate Director, Corporate Office (minutes)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Paul Chrisp and Jane Gizbert who were represented by Fiona Glen and Danielle Mason respectively. Jennifer Howells gave apologies for the start of the meeting and was represented by Boryana Stambolova for this period.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

1. The previously declared interests were noted.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3.1)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 3.2)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 31 August 2021 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. It was noted the transformation team are currently reviewing the objectives in the 2021/22 business plan and will present proposals on activities that could potentially be deprioritised for discussion at the next transformation portfolio board meeting.

## Hot topics (item 4)

1. **Ivermectin**: Fiona Glen highlighted the recent media coverage about Ivermectin and asked ET to consider whether NICE should produce an evidence review on the drug’s use as a treatment for COVID-19. ET considered the risks and benefits of undertaking such work and agreed on balance there was benefit of doing so, as this would fit within the context of the current COVID guideline. It was agreed to discuss this further with NHS England.

ACTION: FGl

*Jennifer Howells joined the meeting, replacing Boryana Stambolova*

1. **Board strategy away-day:** ET discussed the arrangements and planning for the Board strategy away-day on 20 October. In order to provide sufficient time for the discussion with NHS England it was agreed to defer the proposed second guest speaker to another meeting specifically focused on the link between licensing and HTA. Meindert Boysen agreed to provide this feedback to the invited guest. Gill Leng agreed to circulate the latest proposed agenda for the Board strategy away-day with ET.

ACTION: MB / GL

## Annual revalidation report (item 5.1)

Judith Richardson presented the annual revalidation report which confirmed that the policies, systems and processes needed to support the appraisal and revalidation of doctors at NICE are in place and that statutory requirements have been met. Judith noted that in previous years the annual report has been submitted to the Board for approval. However, this year a decision has been made to ask the ET to sign off the report on the basis that the regulations require ‘executive management’ approval.

1. In response to a question from ET, David Coombs explained the arrangements set out in the revalidation policy for NICE to support committee chairs and members with their revalidation and their appraisal with their host employer.

ET approved the report; noted the work undertaken to support other health and care professionals in their revalidation and continuing professional development; and approved submission of the annual report and statement of compliance to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) with Gill Leng signing on behalf of the Board.

ACTION: GL

## Future ways of working: committee meetings (item 5.2)

1. Jenniffer Prescott and Natalie Spray presented the update from the group looking at the future arrangements for committee meetings. The paper outlined two key proposals. The first is to pilot holding the virtual committee meetings through the Zoom webinar functionality, which should provide a more efficient approach and better experience for attendees. The second is to hold a small number of hybrid committee meetings each year once the required AV equipment is in place.
2. ET thanked the group for their work and discussed the proposals and recommendations. ET highlighted the importance of measuring the benefits of the shift to webinars and holding some hybrid meetings. There was encouragement to seek input from the transformation team on benefits measurement and consider how Deloitte’s work on the future ways of working may assist with the proposals for hybrid meetings. ET members queried whether the planned AV facilities in the London and Manchester offices would be sufficient for the proposed number of hybrid meetings. Natalie Spray confirmed the team had looked into this and were confident two rooms would be sufficient.
3. ET supported the proposals in the paper subject to (a) ensuring there are clear measures to track the benefits of holding committee meetings as webinars and a small number of hybrid meetings each year; and (b) the team reconciling their analysis of meeting room requirements with the modelling undertaken for the business case to the DHSC to ensure the other tenants’ in the London office requirements have been considered. ET requested a progress update at a suitable point, including the position against these metrics.

ACTION: JP/NS

1. ET supported maintaining the current position of not routinely recording meetings, and only allowing this in defined circumstances and in accordance with the agreed information governance safeguards.

## Finance update (item 6.1)

Jennifer Howells presented the update on the financial position at the end of July 2021 and noted expenditure plans are in place to deliver an outturn close to break-even. However the forecast outturn is a £0.9m underspend, to take account of potential slippage in expenditure. Jennifer clarified that the forecast excludes potential but uncommitted expenditure of £1m.

Given the reduction in headroom, ET noted the importance of a robust process for agreeing any additional expenditure beyond that already identified. It was agreed that Jennifer Howells would take responsibility on behalf of ET for approving requests for additional expenditure in 2021/22, but may wish to escalate any requests that continue into 2022/23 for a wider ET view on priorities in advance of next year’s business planning and budget-setting process.

ACTION: JH

1. Nicole Gee highlighted potential cost pressures relating to the organisational design work and culture change, which she agreed to discuss further with John Pegington.

ACTION: NG/JP

1. Alexia Tonnel highlighted a request for expenditure on consultancy to support the work on the life sciences hub. It was noted that this currently requires approval by ET under the existing standing financial instructions (SFIs) but under the proposed revised SFIs, spend of this level would not require full ET approval. Pending approval of the revised SFIs, Alexia agreed to prepare a short paper for ET seeking approval for the expenditure.

ACTION: AT

ET noted that proposals for the 2022/23 business planning and budget setting round are due before ET in the coming weeks and asked that these proposals consider how to factor in the uncertainty about the outcome of the bid for additional resources through the comprehensive spending review.

ACTION: JH

## Review of the meeting (item 7)

Mixed views were expressed about the item on committee meetings, with some ET members suggesting this did not reflect ET’s strategic role. It was suggested that the issue would have been a helpful topic for discussion at the proposed operational management group and it was noted that proposed terms of reference for the group will come to ET in the coming weeks as part of a wider discussion on delegation from the ET level.

ACTION: RT/DC

## Other business (item 8)

**Executive portfolio review:** ET agreed a request from Nicole Gee to hold a face to face ET session in the next fortnight to ensure clarity over the executive portfolio review and the high level organisational design.

ACTION: RT/NG

1. **Standing orders (SOs)/standing financial instructions (SFIs):** Jennifer Howells stated that the proposed revised documents are due to be discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) tomorrow, following review at ET last week. The documents require formal Board approval and this is scheduled for the November Board meeting to allow time to make any changes requested by the ARC. ET supported asking the ARC and Board to agree to implement the changes around tendering thresholds and the level at which ET approval is required for consultancy spend, in advance of the Board’s full review of the documents, as this will help ensure the available funds can be efficiently utilised in 2021/22.

ACTION: JH

1. **GIN annual conference:** ET confirmed that centres/directorates could decide which staff can attend the upcoming virtual conference and this did not require escalation to the full ET.
2. **September Board meetings:** It was noted that next week’s ET meeting would provide the opportunity to look ahead to the Board meetings the following day. Gill Leng asked ET members to let her know which issues they would like her to highlight in the verbal introduction to the executive team report at the public session.

ACTION: ET