**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Executive Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2022

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Paul Chrisp Director, Centre for Guidelines

Nicole Gee Interim Chief People Officer

Jane Gizbert Director, Communications

Felix Greaves Director, Science, Evidence and Analytics

Jennifer Howells Director, Finance, Strategy and Transformation

Jeanette Kusel Director, Scientific Advice

Judith Richardson Acting Director, Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel Director, Digital, Information and Technology

## In attendance

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

Kendall Jamieson Gilmore Associate Director, Strategy

Jonathan Waghorne Chief of Staff

David Coombs Associate Director, Corporate office (items 5 and 6.1)

Alison Liddell Programme Director, DIT strategy and governance (item 6.2)

Lisa Hooley Senior OD learning and talent manager (item 7.1)

Lorna Scoular Senior OD learning and talent manager (item 7.1)

Jenniffer Prescott Programme Director, HTA process and operations (item 7.2)

Helen Knight Programme Director, Technology appraisals and HST (items 7.2 and 7.3)

Lori Farrer Associate Director, Topic selection (item 7.2)

Ian Watson Senior technical adviser (item 7.2)

Sheela Upadhyaya Rare disease and Rapid C-19 strategic adviser (item 7.3)

Elaine Repton Corporate governance and risk manager (minutes)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. There were no apologies for absence.
2. ET welcomed Jonathan Waghorne to NICE.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

1. The previously declared interests were noted. Jeanette Kusel declared a new interest having joined the HTAi Business Development Committee.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3.1)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:
* Minute 30 last sentence to read – The aim should be to take a paper to the March public board meeting that provides a strategic summary of NICE's position and role in health inequalities.

## Matters arising (item 3.2)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 14 December 2021 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Gill Leng confirmed that she had received a re-worked version of the annual equality report which she has now approved for submission to the January public board meeting.
3. Jeanette Kusel agreed to contact some of the non-executive directors ahead of the January board meeting to brief them on the proposal to introduce a portfolio appraisal, where appropriate, as a new approach to technology appraisals to help match NICE’s capacity with the demand for products.

**ACTION: JK**

## Hot topics (item 4.1)

**NICE Evidence Search** – ET discussed recent correspondence and an FOI request sent on behalf of a group of librarians challenging the decision to close NICE Evidence Search. ET reviewed how the decision was taken and subsequently communicated externally and considered firstly, how to respond to the group, and secondly, whether there were any lessons to be learned in light of the decision to also remove Pathways from the NICE website at the end of March 2022.

ET members were in agreement that the closure of NICE Evidence Search should stand but asked Felix Greaves’ team to meet with a representative group of the librarians to explain the rationale for the decision, to advise them of the available alternatives to Evidence Search which will be of use to them and the wider information community, and to understand their concerns. Felix was asked to organise a meeting ahead of the January board meeting, so that the Board could be briefed on the issues raised and NICE’s response. It was agreed to include this in the CEO’s update to the board as there might be questions in the public session.

**ACTION: FG/JW**

ET also discussed whether there was an option for HEE or NHSE to take over Evidence Search if they could make funding available. It was noted that there is a paper coming to ET in January regarding the relationship with HEE and considering NICE’s future role in the knowledge information eco-system.

Jennifer Howells asked whether the strategic choices paper agreed in January 2021 needed re-visiting to review progress against all the decisions taken. Gill Leng agreed to review the paper ahead of next week’s meeting for a further discussion.

**ACTION: GL**

**Meeting with the Accelerated Access Collaborative** – ET noted that Gill Leng is to meet with Matt Whitty, CEO of the AAC to discuss NICE’s role and future work with the AAC. It was agreed that Felix Greaves would prepare a briefing paper for discussion with Gill ahead of the meeting.

**ACTION: FG**

**Gold group meeting** – Jennifer Howells confirmed two decisions taken by the Gold group on 21 December following the changes in Government advice:

* Agreed that NICE would move from operating level 2 to 3
* Agreed that during the Christmas holiday period, ET deputies would count towards the quorum for Gold group meetings.
1. **What Works Network** – ET noted an opportunity to bid for a £150k funding allocation from the Government’s Evaluation Taskforce, open to organisations in the What Works Network to support new initiatives or existing programmes of work. NICE has responded to an informal survey from the Taskforce indicating that we would be interested in funding for joint/collaborative work and for new methods development, with the suggested focus on: (1) Developing new ways of creating living guidelines using real world data; (2) Ways of presenting data and research evidence to a range of audiences. Feedback received is that these areas were of interest to the Taskforce, and a need to ensure our positioning is appropriately cross-cutting.
2. A formal call for expressions of interest is expected in early January. It was agreed that Felix Greaves would respond to the EOI once issued, with support from others if needed.

**ACTION: FG**

## January Public Board meeting (item 5)

ET agreed the draft agenda for the January public board meeting.

It was noted that the February board strategy meeting was scheduled to be followed by a board development session in the afternoon, facilitated by Maria Fey. Confirmation was awaited from the chairman if this was still going ahead. Gill Leng agreed to notify Sam Roberts.

**ACTION: GL**

## Integrated performance report (item 6.1)

1. Jennifer Howells introduced the integrated performance report for the January public board meeting and sought comments from ET on the indicators and the commentary. Some amendments were requested which David Coombs agreed to incorporate.

**ACTION: DC**

1. Reference was made to the number of TA&HST terminations in the year to date compared with the previous year. Gill Leng asked this to be included in her CEO update to the private board meeting to give context in terms of the overall numbers, and to highlight the significant increase in guidance published this year compared to last year.

**ACTION: JW**

1. ET noted that the people and finance sections were stable, subject to a slight increase in the rate of staff turnover. Alexia Tonnel asked to receive the turnover figures for DIT.

**ACTION: NG**

## Digital Workplace programme (item 6.2)

1. Alison Liddell presented a draft paper for the January public board meeting giving an update on the digital workplace programme since approval of the business case in May 2021.
2. ET noted that due to the slippage in the programme on both non-pay and pay costs, the impact on next year’s budget could be higher than forecast in the original business plan and may require a re-phasing and re-prioritising exercise to be undertaken if sufficient funding is not available next year. Alison Liddell was asked to review the financial section, and also to highlight the investment in systems which will deliver the most benefits and share the revised version with Jennifer Howells.

**ACTION: AL**

1. ET also considered whether the board’s expectations of what the digital workplace programme will deliver for NICE strategically in the first two years in terms of the overall enterprise architecture, needed to be managed in the paper. It was agreed that a scene setting overview be added in the introduction to highlight the positive progress to date but also to set expectations that this phase of the programme is laying the foundations but will not fix everything in the shorter term.

**ACTION: AL**

## Policy that works conference (item 6.3)

1. It was reported that NICE has been invited to submit ideas to present at the cross-government ‘policy that works conference’ taking place during the week commencing 28 February. It was agreed that NICE should submit topics and seek volunteers as either presenters, to chair sessions or sit on a panel.

**ACTION: JR**

1. ET agreed to submit four topic areas – managed access agreements; real world data evaluations (both health & social care); sustainability (Net Zero); and health inequalities (Levelling Up). The deadline was 5 January.

**ACTION: KJG/JW**

## Creating a future-ready workforce at NICE (item 7.1)

Lisa Hooley introduced a paper from Deloitte setting out the findings of their review of NICE’s current and future skills requirements and skills gaps. The report made 8 key recommendations by capability area, to address the gaps identified.

ET reviewed the results and discussed next steps. It was agreed that each Director would discuss their respective findings with their senior teams, with a view to having a further discussion at an ET meeting in early February when Sam Roberts has joined NICE. It was agreed to share the executive summary with the Board in February, subject to agreement with the new CEO, supported by slides which should detail the work that has already started in teams to address the skills gaps, and to outline the next steps and future plans.

**ACTION: All**

In the meantime, Lisa Hooley was asked to make some small amendments to the report, including an important point to recognise that NICE has a significant number of approved processes it must follow in its work, which will restrict managerial discretion in some parts of the organisation.

**ACTION: LH**

## CHTE Methods and process review: conclusions and final update (item 7.2)

1. Helen Knight sought ET’s comments on a draft report for submission to the January public board meeting which presented the final conclusions and updates made to methods, processes and topic selection for the health technology evaluation programmes, following public consultation. The paper summarised the key themes raised by stakeholders during the consultation, NICE’s response, and the final changes that have been made. A lay summary for each of the three sections will be included ahead of the board meeting.

ET reviewed the paper and requested the following amendments:

* Include reference to a future discussion to be had regarding a more joint approach to decision making in topic selection
* Review the start of each of the three sections to be more positive in the lay summaries and in the covering paper to the board
1. ET queried whether there would be any impact from the new methods and process for TA/HSTs in progress. The legal advice has been not to retrospectively apply the new manual. Helen Knight confirmed the final paper will be shared with the Sponsor team at DHSC. Gill Leng also asked to see the paper again before it is finalised.

**ACTION: HK**

## COVID-19 activities within NICE (item 7.3)

ET discussed the current lack of clarity among the Therapeutics Taskforce and other system partners on exactly what COVID-19 related activities NICE is undertaking. A set of slides has been produced, including a flowchart showing an overview of the current COVID-19 Therapeutics Taskforce Access Pathway, which it was agreed should include a brief overview of all NICE’s role and that of partner organisations. The latest slide set is to be circulated to ET.

**ACTION: HK**

## Guideline development centre contracts (item 7.4)

1. Paul Chrisp gave an update on progress with the transfer of the guideline development centre staff into NICE from 1 April 2022. Letters were sent to all the transferring staff before Christmas outlining the HR process. Jennifer Howells advised that there are a number of issues still to resolve to be confident we have a full list of transferring staff and that all the necessary HR checks have been completed.
2. There will be a NICE staff briefing on 12 January for all the internal guideline staff and an email inbox has been set up to respond to queries.

## Review of the meeting (item 8)

ET agreed the agenda for today was too long, but that this was a consequence of the Christmas/New Year break.

## Other business (item 9)

**IT system issues** – Jane Gizbert queried the problems with the IT system from 31 December which had prevented the press team being able to access any emails. Alexia Tonnel advised that it was a result of a Microsoft problem but there were people on call within NICE, and undertook to investigate and provide feedback.

**ACTION: AT**

**National Clinical Audit Patient Outcomes Programme** **(NCAPOP)** – Judith Richardson advised that internal and external discussions were progressing to gather further information to determine whether NICE should bid for the programme.

**COVID-19 impact on workforce** – ET considered whether it would be appropriate to start planning for potential staff shortages during January in light of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the population. It was queried whether Gold group should be re-instated to review the position. It was agreed to closely monitor staff sickness rates for now and take a decision if the data showed the numbers to be increasing.

**ACTION: NG**

**People and Places Directorate** – Jeanette Kusel raised that some staff in CHTE had said they were not aware of the new directorate being established. ET agreed that there had been communications about the new arrangements, including Nicole Gee’s presentation to the December all staff meeting as the ‘monthly directorate download’.