National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Report from the Executive Team

This report is the first of a new standard report to the Board from the Executive Team, replacing the separate Chief Executive and Directors’ reports. It covers key priorities and areas of progress since the last Board meeting, structured by the pillars of our new strategy and the business plan, as well as any key emerging risks. It sits alongside the new integrated performance report, which provides data on the status of our key performance indicators and business plan deliverables.

The Board is asked to review the report.

Gillian Leng, Chief Executive

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

Paul Chrisp, Director, Centre for Guidelines

Jane Gizbert, Director, Communications

Jennifer Howells, Director, Finance, Strategy and Transformation

Felix Greaves, Director, Science, Evidence and Analytics

Judith Richardson, Acting Director, Health and Social Care

Alexia Tonnel, Director, Digital, Information and Technology

July 2021

Introduction from the Chief Executive

1. I am pleased to introduce this first report to the Board from the Executive Team, which replaces the formerly separate Chief Executive and Directors’ reports. This change in our approach to Board reporting is timely. As our new strategy reflects, there are growing linkages between the many elements of NICE's work and a need for us to be more dynamic and flexible in the ways we operate.
2. The main report is structured by the pillars of the strategy and focussed on specific business plan deliverables – those approaching a delivery milestone or where there is other significant progress to report.
3. Our business plan set out seven key priorities for this year: support recovery from COVID-19; undertake rapid and responsive technology evaluations; provide living guidelines; enhance NICE's international position; increase our capacity to assess digital technologies; build new channels of engagement; transform our organisation; and create financial sustainability. Our key externally facing deliverables will be the publication of evaluation methods and processes for health technology evaluations; phase one of a life sciences hub; an accelerated evaluation pathway for medicines and devices; adoption of a new guideline authoring tool; a statement jointly badged with system partners on how NICE’s work supports the health and care system; and an outline framework for the use of real-world data.
4. As you will read, we have made huge progress in key areas over the last two months, of which the whole team can be proud. There are a couple of additional areas of priority work to highlight upfront.

Recent publications

1. We have been working on a number of really important guidelines that are attracting positive coverage. These include published recommendations on acne and on shared decision making in everyday healthcare settings, and ongoing consultations on the prevention and non-clinical management of pelvic floor dysfunction and preventing uptake, promoting quitting, and treating dependence on tobacco. We look forward to completing publication and monitoring the uptake and impact of the recommendations over time.
2. We are also pleased to support the government’s recent publication of the Life Sciences Vision. NICE will play an important role in bringing its ambitions to fruition. The changes we are making to our methods and processes will quicken the pace and scale of our approvals even further and reaffirm our central role in the UK medicines regulatory and access system, our impact on the health of society, and the part we play in the wider innovation landscape.

Supporting recovery from COVID-19

1. The second area to flag relates to our ongoing work to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Key recent activity has included an updated recommendation on Remdesivir and the addition of new recommendations on Colchicine and Azithromycin to the Managing COVID-19 guideline. We have also provided RAPID C-19 reports to the Chief Medical Officer on inhaled budesonide, REGEN-COV and sotrovimab (VIR-7831). Finally, over 40 stakeholders attended our recent event on the long COVID guideline update, including clinicians, practitioners, and patient groups.

Key updates aligned to the strategic pillars

Pillar 1 - rapid, robust, and responsive technology evaluation

Increase our capacity to assess digital technologies

1. Since the last Board meeting, the Office for Digital Health has been established. We have promoted this externally via blogs and social media. Staff have been appointed to the Office and related NHSX-funded projects.
2. The Office has been working closely with the Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC), NHSX and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to set up and coordinate key projects in support of the Multi-Agency Advice Service (MAAS), including to deliver an Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP) for data-driven technologies, develop an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Evidence Standards Framework and facilitate the setup of a new working group on reimbursement.
3. The Office has also been running a tender to establish a new academic collaboration on AI to help build capacity and capability. A new contract will commence from July 2021.
4. We are bringing together a team to determine how to scale up the evaluation of digital technologies once we have completed an initial testing phase. They will consider the scale of the pipeline of products in conjunction with partners, determine resource requirements, outputs, and a sustainable funding model.

Innovative pathways for licensing and access

1. Our various programmes of joint work with the MHRA continue to be highly productive and collaborative. A range of operational arrangements are in place to ensure smooth working between our organisations.
2. NICE is a joint partner with the MHRA in the ILAP programme, developing a frictionless pathway to the timely availability of effective and safe medicines through the alignment of UK health system partners.
3. Standard Operating Procedures have been jointly developed with MHRA and other partners to support key parts of the ILAP programme.
4. As of 18 June 2021, 17 Innovation Passports (IPs) had been awarded by MHRA. Forecasting discussions were held with MHRA to establish the anticipated number of IP awards and Target Development Profile (TDP) submissions for early-, mid- and late-stage products in 2021. We modelled the resource implications across NICE programmes, based on those discussions, and identified some additional resource requirements which are now in recruitment.
5. We are also working together to ensure that relevant operational data is shared at the right time to allow for technology appraisal of Orbis products (for promising cancer treatments) to be aligned with MHRA timelines. An interim process has been co-created with NHS England and Improvement to allow Project Orbis medicines to be accessed by patients prior to publication of a NICE technology appraisal.

Pillar 2 - dynamic, living guideline recommendations

Provide living guidelines

Adopt a new guideline authoring tool

1. To produce living guidelines NICE will require an interactive guidelines platform. To inform the development of an 'alpha' website for NICE's living guidelines, the team is working to establish both guideline developers' user needs and the needs of a wider range of users.
2. We are piloting MAGICapp as a new guideline authoring tool, for selected guideline recommendations. The project team have access to the tool and are experimenting with test guideline recommendations and underpinning content. Work is also underway to understand the flow of evidence data between MAGICapp and other systems, to drive efficiencies for guideline developers.
3. Recruitment has begun for fixed term contract roles for content designers, user experience (UX) researchers, and UX designers to enable us to scale up content transformation later in the year.

Collaboration with Cochrane

1. We have recently strengthened our collaboration with the Cochrane Collaboration, an international network that prepares and maintains systematic reviews, to support our plans for dynamic living guideline recommendations. This work extends the excellent relationship we have had with Cochrane since 2011.
2. NICE's planned living guideline recommendations will need to be underpinned by 'living systematic reviews' which continually update and incorporate relevant new evidence as it becomes available.
3. As Cochrane reviews have consistently been shown to be of higher quality than similar reviews published in print journals, we recently agreed to extend our collaboration to optimise our use of their reviews and topic expertise and to enhance efficiencies by reducing the number of duplicated surveillance and evidence reviewing activity across the two organisations.
4. We have agreed to facilitate the sharing of unpublished data to inform the development of NICE guidelines.
5. We also plan to work together to prioritise reviews at the pre-commissioning stage, to support the update and development of recommendations in the NICE cardiovascular disease guideline suite.
6. Finally, we will explore a licence agreement with Cochrane to access 'RevMan web', the online platform recommended for Cochrane intervention and flexible reviews, to support development and update of NICE guidelines.

Implement the content strategy

1. The content strategy is an ongoing programme to identify and build the capabilities NICE requires to raise its overall digital content maturity over several years.
2. In the last two months we been exploring opportunities to devolve aspects of operational decision making on guideline production to production teams, to streamline our processes and empower our staff.
3. We have also defined an initial set of principles to standardise content design approaches across the organisation.

Pillar 3 - effective guidance uptake to maximise our impact

Update the implementation strategy

1. An external consultancy, the North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS), has been appointed to support the update of our implementation strategy, which will help us to improve adoption of our recommendations and respond to the new role of integrated care systems.
2. NECS will be reviewing internal data and interviewing a range of stakeholders to inform the development of the new strategy. This work is due to be completed by the end of Q3.

Work with community and voluntary sectors

1. We have agreed to establish a new engagement forum with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, to seek their views and advice, and work collaboratively with them on key strategic projects.
2. VCS organisations, usually charities regulated by the Charity Commission, are important partners and stakeholders for NICE. They help us shape our guidance, implement it, and identify what is important to people using health and social care services, families, and carers.
3. The new VCS Forum will build on a previous forum known as Patients Involved in NICE, which worked well for over a decade. It will complement the other established ways that NICE supports public involvement during guidance development.
4. Any VCS organisation eligible to be a stakeholder for NICE's work will be eligible to join the new Forum. We plan to open the call for applications in the coming weeks and to hold the first meeting towards the end of 2021.

The NICE approach to patient safety

1. We have recently completed a review of patient safety activity at NICE, capturing key learnings and recommendations for managing it going forward.
2. This work and progress with implementing the recommendations will be presented to the Board in September 2021, as part of the annual report on patient safety.

Stating how NICE’s work supports the health and care system

1. To encourage a shared understanding of how NICE supports the health and care system, work is underway to develop a statement and diagram that illustrate NICE’s role in conjunction with key partners.

Pillar 4 - leadership in data, research, and science

Initial framework for the use of real-world data

1. As part of our methods and standards programme for data and analytics, we are developing an initial framework for the use of real-world data in guidance development.
2. We have prepared a draft research governance framework, for inclusion as an appendix to the CHTE 2020 updated methods manual, and detailed project specifications for year 1 activities.
3. By the end of September 2021, we will issue an open call for external collaborations on selected methods topics.

Establish a process for data collection with system partners

1. Partnerships and collaboration will be essential ingredients for successful implementation of NICE's strategy. Over the last few months, we have codified strategic collaboration agreements with many of our key system partners to confirm how we will work together to achieve shared objectives.
2. Among them is a new collaboration agreement with NHS Digital that includes a joint strategic priority to drive relevant and timely access to NHS Digital’s Trusted Research Environment (TRE) and plans to work together on the development of new data collections, including the Medical Device Information System and Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration data collection.

Launch the joint master’s programme with The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

1. The joint NICE-LSE Executive Master’s course on the evaluation of health care interventions and outcomes has been launched and a first cohort of 25 students started in June 2021. NICE and LSE have worked together to market the programme, with a target of 30 students for the second cohort.
2. NICE staff will be participating in lectures for the course. We have already delivered a seminar for existing and prospective students on NICE’s work.

**Confirm options for a citable public platform**

1. Historically, NICE has published about 500 underpinning evidence reviews and economic analyses per year on the NICE website as static text (PDF or Microsoft Word). Going forward, we plan to increase the impact and accessibility of this content by publishing it in a citable format. A number of options for a citable public platform were explored earlier this year and we selected the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI)’s Bookshelf in April 2021. NCBI had been including many NICE guidelines and supporting evidence documents on the Bookshelf since 2009. Work is now ongoing to ensure an up to date and comprehensive Bookshelf portfolio and to continuously improve findability.

Progress of strategic enablers

Embrace technology to drive efficiency

**Digital workplace programme**

1. In May 2021, the Board approved the business case to invest in building an efficient digital workplace at NICE.
2. A preparation phase was scoped, and work has since been undertaken to complete initial ‘no regrets’ activities in information management and infrastructure, and digital workplace service design.
3. The procurement for the full external implementation partner has begun, with detailed proposals submitted from shortlisted suppliers. Interviews will be held in early July.
4. In the interim, preparatory work is continuing, and recruitment to roles approved as part of the business case is ongoing.

**Digital and technology roadmap**

1. To plan and prioritise digital and technology resources to support our strategic objectives, the team has created a technology roadmap and a digital, information and technology (DIT) delivery roadmap.
2. The technology roadmap outlines our future target architecture and high-level principles to govern our digital transformation. The Technology Governance Board agreed these principles in July and will have ongoing oversight of the roadmap's implementation.
3. The DIT delivery roadmap allocates team resources to agreed strategic projects and business-as-usual activities on a rolling 6-month basis. It will be a key tool for continuously prioritising and managing the delivery of business objectives that are interdependent with digital and technology development. Through completing this work, we identified some additional resource requirements that are now being addressed.

Foster a modern and inclusive culture

1. An organisational design review has been completed and work has begun to implement the recommendations.
2. We are procuring external support to independently review research, cutting edge thinking and our existing ways of working to offer recommendations and advice on adopting more flexible, technologically advanced ways of working.

Enhanced Strategic Communications and Engagement

**A compelling corporate narrative**

1. To support the launch of NICE's new 5-year strategy a full communications plan was developed, with a core narrative used across all internal and external channels. In the first week post-launch, our new strategy web page received over 9,000 unique page views from 51 countries. The strategy document was downloaded more than 1500 times.
2. More recently, we have developed a narrative to underpin all communications and marketing activity around the forthcoming methods and process manual consultation. The narrative conveys the benefits of proposed changes to NICE's health technology evaluation programme to key audiences and reaffirms NICE's central role in the UK regulatory and access system, and the wider innovation landscape.

**Communications and marketing strategies**

1. We have established an internal cross-directorate working group to develop a new overarching communications strategy for NICE. There are various strands of work underway including audience insight, channel analysis, message development, clarifying our brand proposition, and priority work planning. Through two recent staff workshops, we gathered valuable feedback on internal customers' broad perceptions of communications at NICE. The feedback will inform the team's future plans.
2. Digital health has been a key focus for our recent marketing activity, including two blogs, a week of social media activity dedicated to digital health, and a live event co-delivered with NHSX announcing the development of the MAAS for developers of AI and data-driven tech.
3. We recently launched an internal Values and Behaviours campaign, linking our values to how we will deliver the strategy, including the cultural and organisational changes that will be needed.

Sustainable organisation and transformational change

**Business support function review**

1. In conjunction with the Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit we have reviewed our procurement, recruitment, and financial reporting functions to identify more efficient and resilient ways of providing services.
2. The next step is to develop an action plan to address the recommendations.

**New business function**

1. NICE is creating a 'new business' team to provide internal advice on strategic commercial and procurement matters, business development and financial strategy, including revenue diversification.
2. A new Deputy Director of Finance - Strategy and Commercial, Boryana Stambolova, has been appointed to lead the team and is now in post.
3. We have established an internal working group to oversee our contract management and developed a contract tiering document for internal use.

Transforming our organisation

1. The organisational structure for our new Strategy and Transformation Unit has been developed. Eight roles have been recruited to, including the Programme Director of Transformation and Associate Director of Strategy.
2. New transformation governance structures are in place, including the Transformation Portfolio Board that met for the first time in June 2021.
3. A 2021/22 transformation delivery plan has been produced and a senior change group has been created to support the implementation and embedding of change activities across NICE.
4. To facilitate the delivery of the five-year strategic plan and a continuous improvement culture across NICE, the team is working to create a longer-term transformation strategy and plan. The scope and key areas for the strategy have already been developed. This work will continue in Q2.

Key risks

1. In recent weeks we have faced an increasing risk of insufficient capacity to deliver the demand for technology appraisals, due the growing volume of new technologies and the highly technical skillset of our appraisal team that is difficult to replicate. In the short term, we are prioritising workload and communicating with industry stakeholders about necessary changes to timelines. To ensure we can sustain demand over the longer term, a review of our operating model for health technology appraisal is underway.

© NICE 2021. All rights reserved. [Subject to Notice of rights](https://www.nice.org.uk/terms-and-conditions#notice-of-rights).

July 2021