**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2020

## Present

Andrew Dillon Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Paul Chrisp Director – Centre for Guidelines

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Gill Leng Director – Health and Social Care

Catherine Wilkinson Acting Business Planning and Resources Director

## In attendance

Moya Alcock Associate Director – Corporate Communications

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Science Advice and Research

Judith Richardson Programme Director – Health and Social Care

Marion Spring Associate Director – Information Services – Evidence Resources

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Alexia Tonnel who was represented by Marion Spring.

## Freedom of Information and publication scheme (item 2)

1. The final minutes will be made available on the NICE website subject to the redaction of any exempt material.

## Declarations of interest (item 3)

1. The previously declared interests were noted. There were no conflicts of interest relevant to the meeting.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 4)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 5)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 17 March 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.

## Coronavirus (item 6)

1. SMT reviewed the actions from the daily gold group meetings and discussed the approach for reviewing staff workload and matching capacity with additional workload. It was agreed that the Coronavirus response group (CRG) should discuss options for managing this issue, to inform an SMT discussion at the daily gold meeting on 26 March.

ACTION: MB

1. SMT reviewed the paper for the morning session of the Board meeting on 25 March. It was agreed that Gill Leng would coordinate the collation of comments and prepare an updated version for issue.

ACTION: GL

1. Catherine Wilkinson presented the paper that set out potential issues in relation to the resilience of the finance team, and the current and further planned mitigations to address these. In particular, Catherine highlighted that:
   * In a worst case scenario it would be necessary to run an automated payroll based on the previous month – this would result in errors to be rectified.
   * In the absence of budget holders to approve invoices, the Director of Business Planning and Resources and/or the Chief Executive would approve payments taking a risk assessed approach. The priority will be invoices from small and medium businesses.
   * Given NICE’s cash position, raising invoices will be deprioritised.
   * In terms of budget setting and business planning, if capacity becomes an issue the budgets may be less accurate than usual. The focus will be ensuring financial balance for the 2020/21 year.
2. SMT noted and supported the mitigations set out in the paper. It was agreed the issue and mitigations should be included in the paper to tomorrow’s Board meeting with an update provided to the Audit and Risk Committee in April.

ACTION: CW

1. It was agreed that it would be helpful to develop similar documents setting out the pressures and mitigations in the HR and communications teams.

ACTION: GM/JG

1. Gill Leng highlighted the scope for employees to claim additional expenses when homeworking. Catherine stated she would ask for the weekly allowance to be added as an option in the expenses system and would investigate the eligibility for other additional expenses and allowances when capacity permitted.

ACTION: CW

1. SMT discussed two emails from Grace Marguerie, Associate Director, HR. The first gave feedback from the meeting of HR directors across the health arm’s length bodies (ALBs), the second related to annual leave. In line with the discussion at the ALB meeting, SMT agreed to stand down employee relations cases for the time being, apart from the most serious cases. It was agreed that the draft message to staff about annual leave would be circulated and agreed by email if possible. If further discussion is required on the content, this would be brought to the gold meeting on 26 March.

ACTION: GM

## March Board meeting (item 7)

1. SMT noted the agenda, papers and arrangements for the Board meetings on 25 March. Given this was the first Board meeting using Zoom, it was agreed to limit the attendance to the Board and SMT apart from limited additional invitees for the equality objectives and data analytics items.

## EU exit (item 8)

1. No further update.

## NICE Connect (item 9)

1. Gill Leng noted that the NICE Connect steering group met last week. The work programme is under review and may need to be reprioritised in light of Covid-19. The Capgemini work continues, with aim of completing this as quickly as possible. Gill updated SMT on the recruitment for the Director for Science, Evidence and Analytics, noting that the aim is to hold the final interviews in April.

## London office move (item 10)

1. Catherine Wilkinson stated that the position with the London office move has moved on since the papers were prepared for this meeting. The current focus is now contingency planning for the inevitable slippage in the timetable. The British Council will lead on this issue and the aim is to seek an extension of the current Spring Gardens lease.

## Weekly staff SMT updates (item 11)

1. SMT agreed the staff updates.

ACTION: DC

## Other business (item 12)

1. Nick Crabb noted that the team are receiving enquiries from colleagues in European agencies about NICE’s Covid-19 work and the approach to prioritising guidance development. It was agreed to sign-post enquirers to the information on the NICE website rather than share the Board paper which is more internally focused.

ACTION: NC

1. Andrew Dillon noted that as his last day is 31 March he had agreed with Gill Leng that she would chair the SMT meetings on 30 and 31 March.