

Workplace health: Long-term sickness absence and capability for work Committee meeting

Date: 30/10/2018

Location: Manchester

Minutes: Confirmed

Committee members present:	
Paul Lincoln (Chair)	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Ralph Bagge (Vice Chair)	(Present for notes 1 – 6)
Ann Williams	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Amanda Sowden	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Mark Gabbay (Co-optee)	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Nayab Nasir	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Louise Thompson (Topic adviser)	(Present for notes 4 – 10)
Rob Allen (Topic adviser)	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Gwenllian Wynne-Jones (Topic adviser)	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Lorna Young (Topic adviser)	(Present for notes 1 – 10)

In attendance:		
Robby Richey	Technical Adviser	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Nicki Mead	Technical Analyst	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Josephine Kavanagh	Technical Analyst	(Present for notes 6 – 10)
Lise Elliott	Programme Manager	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Lesley Owen	Health Economic Adviser	(Present for notes 1 – 10)
Matthew Taylor	Health Economist	(Present for item 5 only)
Elizabeth Bell	Health Economist	(Present for item 5 only)

Apologies:	
Neil Wood	Public Health England Technical Advisor
Jennifer Roberts	Core member
Rob Hampton	Topic adviser

PHAC 3 minutes

Rashmi Shukla	Core member
Sarah Willett	Associate Director
Kaveh Asanti	Topic adviser
Obeghe Edeghere	Core member
Judith Hooper	Core member

1. Welcome, apologies, introductions and objectives for the meeting

The Chair welcomed the Committee members and attendees to the third meeting on Workplace health: long-term sickness absence and capability for work guideline update. The Committee members and attendees introduced themselves.

The Chair informed the Committee that apologies had been received. These are noted above.

The Chair outlined the objectives of the meeting which were to hear and discuss the quantitative evidence for review question 3, hear an update on the economic analysis, agree on areas which would benefit from expert testimony and starting to draft recommendations.

2. Confirmation of matter under discussion, and declarations of interest

The Chair confirmed that, for the purpose of managing conflicts of interest, the matter under discussion was workplace health: long-term sickness absence and capability for work.

The Chair asked everyone to verbally declare any new interests since the last meeting.

No new interests were declared.

3. Minutes from the last meeting

Apart from minor corrections the minutes were signed off as accurate account of meetings 0, 1 and 2.

4. Evidence review: presentation and discussion of findings of Review Question 3

Nicki Mead, Technical Analyst presented the findings of the quantitative review for review question 3: facilitating return to work from long-term sickness absence and reducing risk of recurrence.

This included how the evidence had been selected, PICO, a summary of the methods used and results of the included studies presented as forest plots. Workplace-focused, individual-focused and combined interventions were covered.

PHAC 3 minutes

The Committee had the opportunity to discuss what had been presented and ask questions. The lack of evidence in this area and concerns around bias and generalisability were discussed.

The Committee expressed interest in the identified observational studies and the NICE team agreed to present any significant findings at the next meeting.

5. Cost effectiveness

The Chair introduced Mat Taylor, York Health Economics Consortium who presented an overview of the cost-effectiveness outcomes evidence including the preliminary results.

The Committee had the opportunity to discuss what had been presented and ask questions. It was noted that the lower the cost of the intervention to reduce short-term and long-term sickness absence, the less effective it needed to be, to be considered cost effective.

Mat welcomed suggestions of case studies which relate to work-based and individual-focused interventions which could be used with the economic model for analyses. Ideally this would cover a range of organisation sizes.

The Chair thanked Mat for his contribution to the meeting and the NICE team agreed to collate and distribute the suggestions raised in preparation for the next meeting.

6. Recommendation development (new or updated) – including evidence links to original recommendations

Nicki Mead and Robby Richey, Technical Adviser led the group discussion on drafting new or refreshing existing recommendations.

This included considering whether there was a need for mental health recs as the original guideline mainly focused on musculo-skeletal conditions and whether the evidence should be extrapolated further, rather than relying on expert testimony.

It was agreed that an intervention should start after 4 weeks absence.

Committee were mindful that the comparator (standard care) in many of the studies would be of a high standard and somewhat different to that offered in the UK.

The NICE Team agreed to draft recommendations based on the suggestions and discussions of the committee.

7. Discussion of evidence gaps and requirements for expert testimony

Nicki Mead presented the identified gaps in the evidence base and led the discussion

PHAC 3 minutes

on what questions would be most appropriate to put to an expert.

Committee were unanimous that further understanding of the general UK context regarding sickness absence management was priority and that it would be beneficial for someone from the Department of Work and Pensions to attend a future meeting.

Other possibilities for expert testimony were also discussed

The Committee began to consider areas which should be prioritised for research. Suggestions included the benefit of return to work interviews, the barriers and facilitators around moving from short to long term sickness absence and general return to work. Future research should also look at certain socio-economic groups which may be most vulnerable to long term absence and the consequences of this.

The NICE team agreed to contact appropriate experts with the intention that they will attend PHAC 5 or 6 to give testimony.

8. Stakeholders

Danielle Conroy, Project Manager, referred Committee to the tabled stakeholder list and asked them to review the list and suggest which organisations are considered key in this topic area.

It was explained that whilst it is not possible to direct specific questions at specific organisations it is possible to ask specific questions to all stakeholders and the Commissioning team can reach out to those identified to encourage them to participate in the consultation.

The Committee were asked to highlight any key stakeholders to the NICE team as recommendations begin to be developed, leading up to consultation.

9. Summary & Next Steps

The Chair summarised what had been covered throughout the day and outlined the next steps

10. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting: 12/12/2018

Location of next meeting: Manchester, NICE offices