

# Minutes

**Meeting:** NHSScotland 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme Board  
**Date:** Monday 30 November 2020  
**Location:** MS Teams

## Attendees:

Present:

- (VB) Victoria Bowman, Interim Deputy Director, Workforce Pay, Practise and Engagement, Health Workforce, Scottish Government (**Chair**)
- (JA) Jeff Ace, Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
- (JAn) Jane Anderson, Unison
- (JB) Janis Butler, HR Director, NHS Lothian
- (NC) Noreen Clancy, Head of Employee Relations, NHS Lothian
- (AG) Anna Gilbert, Head of Staff Governance, Scottish Government
- (JJ) Jacqui Jones, HR Director, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS)
- (SL) Steven Lindsay, Full Time Partnership Representative, NHS Grampian
- (JO'C) James O'Connell, Regional Officer, Unite
- (NP) Norman Provan, Associate Director (Employment Relations), Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

In attendance:

- (LH) Lynn Hunter, Programme Manager, NHS NSS
- (RVZ) Roxanne Van Zyl, Project Manager, NHS NSS

Apologies:

- (SLR) Steve Lea-Ross, Deputy Director, Workforce Planning & Development, Health Workforce, Scottish Government

## 1. Welcome and apologies

Victoria Bowman (VB) welcomed those present and acknowledged the apologies as above. Quorum requirements for the Programme Board are 2/3 of the representative group. This meeting was quorate.

## 2. Review Current Position

The 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme was paused at the end of March 2020, as efforts focused on the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Programme Board made the decision on 2 September 2020, that due to continued combined risks of Covid-19, remobilisation, winter and EU Exit not to restart at that time and review again later in the year.

Members discussed the current position and agreed that early 2021 would remain an extremely challenging time for the service in terms of winter, EU Exit, and vaccinations. There is also a requirement on Boards to implement the National Whistleblowing Standards (1 April 2021).

It was noted that this was not only a resource consideration; but in order to give the programme the priority and profile the work deserves and continue the high standard of product, members agreed we should look toward a start date of spring 2021. The Board agreed to set a target date for recommencement and a commitment to work to this.

### 3. Consider any Workforce Policies Critical over the Winter Period

The Board discussed policies that may require review in order to support the system and staff over the winter period.

Home working is an area which Boards have undertaken good work on developing guidance. The distinction was made between the 'here and now' of staff being asked to work from home due to the pandemic and the future of home working. It was noted that although the home working policy is dated, it is predicated on individual risk assessment with staff and should therefore cover requirements.

Members agreed that a pragmatic approach to pull together a simple national framework or guiding principles, drawing on work undertaken in Boards and remitted through the Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance (SWAG) Secretariat. This framework would be utilised in the short term until the Home Working Policy review and refresh is undertaken.

The Board acknowledged that issues raised in relation to home working allowances and expenses are Terms and Conditions and are being taken forward by the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (STAC).

**ACTION 01: SWAG Secretariat to progress the formation of a small short life working group to draft a simple national framework or guiding principles for Home Working building on the good work which has started in Boards.**

The Board also discussed the Adverse Weather Policy. Interim National Arrangements for Adverse Weather were developed and published in a DL (2019). This work has been completed and will as part of the 'Once for Scotland' Programme be formatted into the OFS style and made available on the NHSScotland Workforce Policies website.

Members agreed that there was an action required of NHS Boards to review local procedures to ensure that arrangements for adverse weather are covid safe. For example, the section relating to provisions for working at other sites should be assessed to ensure covid safe practice. Jeff Ace (JA) agreed to raise this through the Chief Executives Group and Victoria Bowman (VB) through the Workforce Senior Leadership Group.

**ACTION 02: JA to raise through Chief Executives Group and VB through Workforce Senior Leadership Group a request for NHS Boards to review local procedures to ensure that the National Arrangements for Adverse Weather relating to provisions for working at other sites is assessed to ensure this is made covid-safe.**

### 4. Update on Whistleblowing Policy

Anna Gilbert (AG) provided an update on the National Whistleblowing Standards and Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO) service which will go live on 1 April 2021. To ensure a consistent approach with the existing NHSScotland Workforce Policies, the Whistleblowing Policy in the 'Once for Scotland' format has been drafted to form the narrative on the NHSScotland Workforce Policies website. This in turn will direct the user to the Whistleblowing Standards which are held on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) / INWO website.

Members were content with the draft, and acknowledged that access would be given on the test website by 14 December 2020, prior to 'soft launch' on 1 January 2021 and 'go live' on the NHSScotland Workforce Policies website on 1 April 2021.

Members requested that wording be added to the covering narrative to explain that the policy had been developed in a different way from the other workforce policies, and not the usual partnership

processes, due to its legal underpinning. The Whistleblowing Standards were developed by the SPSO and subject to full consultation.

**ACTION 03: AG to request additional paragraph to the covering narrative on the NHSScotland Workforce Policies website to provide context on the basis on which the NHSScotland Whistleblowing Policy was drafted. This will explain that the policy was formed in a different way from the other workforce policies due to its legal underpinning, developed by the SPSO and subject to full consultation.**

**ACTION 04: LH/ RVZ to share link to test site for the NHSScotland Whistleblowing Policy with Board members when available (scheduled 14 December 2020).**

## **5. Stakeholder Communication – Key Messages**

The Board agreed the following key messages for inclusion in a briefing to stakeholders:

- Programme will remain on pause over the winter period
- Absolute commitment to resource and complete refresh of remaining workforce policies, and build on success of phase 1
- Our aim is to restart programme on 1 April 2021 (target date)
- Outline the proposed approach, including reprioritisation of policies and completion of mid-policy engagement events
- Provide an overview of key milestones, highlighting key points – and suggested methods - for engagement with the service

**ACTION 05: LH/ RVZ to update programme plan with target start date – 1 April 2021**

**ACTION 06: LH to draft Stakeholder Briefing for review**

## **6. Any Other Business**

Lynn Hunter (LH) advised the Board that there was a need to review PDG resource for restart in April 2021, and highlighted that a request for additional employer representation would follow.

**ACTION 07: LH to confirm PDG resource availability for restart in April 2021 and request additional representation as required.**

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Programme Board should be scheduled for March 2021, in preparation for the programme of work restarting on 1 April 2021.

**ACTION 08: LH to arrange Programme Board meeting for March 2021.**