

Minutes

Meeting: NHSScotland 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme Board
Date: Monday 21 June 2021
Location: MS Teams

Attendees:

Present: (LZ) Laura Zeballos, Deputy Director Health and Social Care Pay, Practise and Engagement (Chair)
(JAn) Jane Anderson, Unison
(JB) Janis Butler, HR Director, NHS Lothian
(NC) Noreen Clancy, Head of Employee Relations, NHS Lothian
(CH) Catriona Hetherington, Acting Head of Staff Governance, Scottish Government
(JO'C) James O'Connell, Regional Officer, Unite
(SL) Steven Lindsay, Full Time Partnership Representative, NHS Grampian, Unite the Union

In attendance: (MC) Margo Cranmer, Branch Secretary, Unison
(LH) Lynn Hunter, Programme Manager, NHS NSS
(RVZ) Roxanne Van Zyl, Project Manager, NHS NSS

Apologies: (JA) Jeff Ace, Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
(AG) Anna Gilbert, Head of Workforce Practice, Scottish Government
(JJ) Jacqui Jones, HR Director, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS)
(NP) Norman Provan, Associate Director (Employment Relations), Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

1. Welcome and apologies

Laura Zeballos (LZ) welcomed those present and acknowledged the apologies as above.

Quorum requirements for the Programme Board are 2/3 of the representative group. Employer members had agreed that Janis Butler (JB) would represent Employers collectively.

2. Minutes from previous meeting and review actions

The Programme Board approved minutes from the meetings held on 30 November 2020 and 1 March 2021, with a minor amendment to title for Jane Anderson (JAn). There were no outstanding actions for attention.

3. Highlight Report

Lynn Hunter (LH) provided an overview on the progress achieved and new tasks to be completed in advance of formal restart of the programme on 1 August 2021.

LH advised that feedback following the March 2021 Stakeholder Briefing requested that the programme consider bringing forward the Embracing Equality, Diversity Human Rights Policy and Gender-Based Violence Policy. The Programme Board agreed to the request for change to refresh these policies alongside the other individual policies. This will follow the refresh of the remaining Supporting the Work Life Balance suite.

Members discussed the proposal that the length of time for the Homeworking Policy to be in 'soft launch', that is the preparatory period for HR Departments and Staffside, to be reduced from 3 months to one month. The Board was in full agreement to reduce the period for soft launch.

In reviewing the milestones, members asked if it was possible to reduce timescales at several stages to deliver the policy earlier. Discussion followed on the potential to schedule an additional SWAG meeting on 28 September, either before or after the SWAG Secretariat meeting on that date, to review the draft policy. This would also require agreement to reduce the period for advance papers, noting this is a single policy. Steven Lindsay (SL) suggested that a request be made to discuss at SWAG Secretariat on 1 July 2021.

ACTION 01: LH / SL to request an item on SWAG Secretariat on 1 July 2021 to discuss potential to schedule an additional SWAG meeting on 28 September, either before or after the SWAG Secretariat meeting on that date, to review the draft policy, and agree a shorter timescale for advance papers e.g. minimum of one week

ACTION 02: Programme Team to refine schedule to compress timescales where possible to deliver the Home Working Policy earlier and share with the Programme Board.

The Board noted the need to manage stakeholder expectations on this policy. The policy is not intended to directly address any terms and conditions issues as they are under the remit of the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (STAC). The more complex piece on cultural reform will be for employers and local Area Partnership Forums (APFs) to lead.

4. Homeworking Draft Policy and Consultation Questions

Steven Lindsay (SL) provided an overview of the process and draft policy for consultation. SL noted that the qualifying service of 26 weeks in the extant PIN has been superseded by the revised Section 33: Balancing work and personal life in the Scottish Agenda for Change Handbook. The Policy Development Group understands that this change may be included in medical and dental terms and conditions. Confirmation is awaited from BMA and Scottish Government colleagues.

Members requested small amendments to the draft to:

- strengthen engagement with staff where changes to work location are proposed by the employer, as per NHS Board's Organisational Change Policy
- adopt language referring to 'adverse impact'
- reflect a positive tone, where applications for home or hybrid working should be supported where possible

Members approved the consultation questions.

ACTION 03: SL / NC / CH to amend draft policy to reflect discussion at the Programme Board. LH to reissue to Programme Board members for comment by 12 noon on 22 June 2021.

5. Formal restart of programme – 1 August 2021

The Programme Board had agreed at the March meeting that formal restart of the programme, adopting the 'Once for Scotland' approach of grouped policy development and with members of the PDG released at the same level as Phase 1, would commence 1 August 2021. LZ sought confirmation from partners that resource could be released. Members reconfirmed the commitment to resource the programme from this date. Janis Butler (JB) advised that this would

need to be kept under continual review. JB noted that pressures are ongoing for Boards and that if Board level priorities change as a result of COVID-19 then resource may require to be diverted.

6. Risk Register

LH provided an overview of the risks. The Programme Board reviewed the risks and mitigating actions.

Risk Description - There is a risk that resources are not available to restart / deliver Phase 2 policies (PDG / SME / Digital). Members agreed that this risk was closely related to risk that a further wave of COVID-19 causes additional pressure on health services and staff redeployment. It was felt that in light of this, and limited resilience to losing a member of the PDG or only securing part release, that the likelihood should be increased from 2 to 3 with an impact of 4 (rescored 12 – Amber).

Risk Description - There is a risk that funding (previously made available through the transformation fund) is not available to secure digital resources. James O'Connell (JOC) asked if the Board was confident that the mitigating actions would ensure funding would be secured. Members agreed to revisit and requested an update following Scottish Government review of the NES Business Case.

ACTION 04: LH update Risk Register based on Programme Board review of risks, and provide a further update to members on the funding for digital resources.

7. Stakeholder Communication – Key Messages

The Board agreed than in place of a Stakeholder Briefing, the cover email advising stakeholders on the consultation and how to respond should:

- Recognise the change in working environment as a result of the pandemic, and that agile working is more common place
- Note the draft policy sets the framework and is intended to support employees and managers in considering and agreeing options for flexible work locations
- Highlight that it is not intended to directly address any terms and conditions issues as they are under the remit of STAC

ACTION 05: LH to draft cover email for consultation to be issued to stakeholders and circulate to the Programme Board.

8. Any Other Business

LH advised that the programme submission to the CIPD People Management Awards 2021 (Best Digital / Technology Initiative in HR/L&D category) has been shortlisted. A team of 3 representatives from across Digital, Policy Development and Programme Management will deliver a presentation to the panel judges on 13 July 2021.

JOC noted issues reported in relation to informal resolution. Members agreed that where practice was across a number of Boards that this should be brought to the attention of the Programme Board. Where practice is specific to a Board, then this should be directed to the employer.

JB suggested that it would be helpful for STAC to be prepared for the terms and conditions elements of home and hybrid working. Noreen Clancy (NC) advised that contact had been made with STAC Secretariat and the draft policy shared. Lynne Khindria confirmed that they are content with the policy statements and that STAC will be involved in the development of the guidance in respect of terms and conditions.

ACTION 06: Programme Team to link in with STAC Secretariat to discuss approach and share revised timetable.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Programme Board is scheduled Wednesday 15 September 2021 from 10:00-12:00.

Additional dates will be scheduled appropriate to the revised plan to bring forward the delivery of the Homeworking Policy.

ACTION 07: Programme Team to schedule further Programme Board dates in line with revised programme plan.