Minutes

Meeting: NHSScotland 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme Board
Date: Thursday 26 May 2022
Location: MS Teams

Attendees:
Present:

(LZ)	Laura Zeballos, Deputy Director Health and Social Care Pay, Practice and Engagement (Chair)
(JA)	Jeff Ace, Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
(JB)	Janis Butler, HR Director, NHS Lothian
(NC)	Noreen Clancy, Head of Employee Relations, NHS Lothian
(AG)	Anna Gilbert, Head of Workforce Practice, Scottish Government
(CH)	Catriona Hetherington, Acting 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, Unite the Union
(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

1. Welcome and apologies

Laura Zeballos (LZ) welcomed members to the meeting, noting full attendance.

Lynn Hunter (LH) provided background to the pausing of the programme and request from SWAG Secretariat to restart the 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme as soon as reasonably practicable. LH noted Programme Manager and Digital resource secured and contact made with members of the Policy Development Group.

2. Minute from previous meeting and review of actions

Members approved the minute of the meeting held on 14 October 2021. There were no outstanding actions for review.

3. Programme Restart – Discussion Paper

Anna Gilbert (AG) introduced this item noting that the programme has been substantively paused since the start of the pandemic and that there have been significant changes over this time. The policy refresh is more important than ever. There is a need to review the programme approach and to consider policy sequencing and scope, resourcing and governance.

3.1. Sequencing

LH outlined the proposed sequencing of the remaining policies. Stage 1 focuses on the remaining policies within the Supporting the Work Life Balance suite. It is suggested that a consultation is run for groups of policies by stage. However, one of the challenges faced is where a national policy is required ahead of the programme schedule. For example, the immediate requirement for a retire

and return policy ahead of winter. A view was requested from the Board on the approach to policy development where urgent or new policy development was required which is out with the current scope of work.

Noreen Clancy (NC) noted that the retire and return element was a new dimension which is not covered in the current PIN. Janis Butler (JB) agreed that a different and flexible approach would be required for this type of request.

Norman Provan (NP) suggested that it would be pragmatic to schedule this as part of 'Once for Scotland' programme to protect the integrity of the policy and digital product. A process would be needed to consider requests out of current scope against key criteria. NP suggested that an extension of scope would be preferable to a separate process running in parallel to 'Once for Scotland'.

James O'Connell (JO'C) agreed that the programme should facilitate the production of the retire and return policy, and to confirm the governance position to do this.

JB agreed that the standard has been set by 'Once for Scotland'. In terms of prioritisation beyond the agreed scope of work this would rest with the Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance Committee (SWAG). Consideration would need to be given to an agile response. To work on retire and return as part of the SWLB would require an agile approval mechanism, ahead of the full consultation on the suite of SWLB policies.

It was noted that the other policy to be brought under 'Once for Scotland' which is not an existing PIN - and therefore out with current scope - is the menopause policy.

Jacqui Jones (JJ) agreed that SWAG approval would be required to add new policies to the programme of work. JJ noted that it would be beneficial to bring these policies under the programme to ensure the integrity of the 'Once for Scotland' policy style and digital solution. It is important therefore that we find a way to prioritise and schedule policy development and utilise a prioritisation matrix to encompass additions where appropriate.

LZ summarised the discussion highlighting:
- Agreement to recommence the programme starting with the refresh of the remaining Supporting the Work Life Balance policies
- A desire to include retire and return and menopause policies within the scope of the programme to maintain the integrity of the 'Once for Scotland' approach
- Requirement for a process to consider requests for policy development out with scope or required ahead of the grouped policy development schedule
- Review ToR for Programme Board to respond to emerging priorities
- Draft proposal for SWAG discussion and agreement on an agile approach to allow the programme to respond to accelerated requests as these emerge

Members agreed to progress the policy development work in parallel to a paper going to SWAG for approval.

ACTION 01: Programme Team to draft paper for SWAG outlining approach to programme restart; request for extension of scope to include retire and return and menopause policies; and a proposal to respond to emerging policy development priorities, including assessment criteria for requests and, where this does not align with programme schedule, an agile process for sign off.

3.2. Resource

LH outlined the current resourcing position. The Programme Board was asked for a view on how best to resource the policy development work and add resilience, noting working on MS Teams provides opportunity for a wider geographic pool.

JB suggested that a further 2 days employer time was required. JJ agreed to raise this with HRDs to leverage additional resource and would also revisit NSS resource.

ACTION 02: Jacqui Jones to request HRD Group identify further employer resource to participate in the Policy Development Group (estimated 2 days per week) and explore NSS resource to support policy writing.

LZ noted the additional ask on the Scottish Terms & Conditions Committee (STAC) and resources required to work through the T&Cs related elements of policy development.

JB advised that she has recently taken on the role of Vice Chair of STAC Secretariat. JB noted that she would have a key role in linking across the Programme Board and STAC. From Staffside, NP and JO'C are also members of STAC.

NC noted that there are a number of T&Cs considerations with the Supporting Work Life Balance suite. It is important that STAC are in a position to resource this. This will be a key dependency for the policy development work.

NP agreed that there needs to be a recognition of the co-dependencies between SWAG and STAC. It is important that we can share the policy development timetable with STAC at an early stage and schedule to take account where additional work will be required by STAC.

ACTION 03: Policy Development Group to identify policies requiring STAC T&Cs input to share alongside proposed timescales / sequencing with STAC.

3.3. Governance

LH noted that the Terms of Reference for the Programme Board required review. Discussion had already touched on governance as we worked through policy prioritisation and resourcing. LH asked members for views on membership, chair and governance structure.

From an employer perspective it was felt that the current membership was sufficient. Jeff Ace (JA) noted the need to move at pace with a steady pipeline of polices for refresh. Members are committed to delivering the programme and will prioritise this Board meeting. The concept of deputies was discussed. It was agreed that NC would deputise for employers, and Steven Lindsay for Staffside if needed to meet quorum requirements. From a Scottish Government perspective, further representation / deputy would need further consideration.

ACTION 04: Scottish Government to consider deputy to attend the Programme Board.

LZ asked if the policies prioritised and added to the scope of work had any implications for membership. There may be a need for the Policy Development Group to draw on additional resource or expertise. It was agreed to secure the additional employer resource in the first instance. This consideration should be part of the proposition to SWAG on the extended scope.

Members discussed the governance arrangements. LZ suggested a review of the governance and partnership landscape as part of the review of the Programme Board Terms of Reference.

NP noted that there are T&Cs considerations for Retire and Return. There is also a need to ensure that this does not adversely impact on the progression of other staff.

Discussion followed on the need for an agile consultation process to agree and sign off retire and return. In the longer term this will form a new component of the refreshed retirement policy. Members expressed a strong desire for this to form a single policy, separated in the short term. Reference was made to the precedent in the approach taken to agree the Adverse Weather Policy. JB noted that this approach would provide an opportunity to 'test' the policy and feedback learning into the 'Once for Scotland' policy development process.

ACTION 05: Review Programme Board Terms of Reference, including the governance and partnership landscape in which 'Once for Scotland' sits; links across to STAC; response to emerging priorities; and membership / deputies.

4. Communication of Key Messages

LZ summarised the key points of the meeting:
- Agreement to recommence the programme starting with the refresh of the remaining Supporting the Work Life Balance policies
- Recognition of the need to be flexible and able to review the scope of work in order to respond to emerging policy development priorities
- Change of scope to incorporate new policy development requires SWAG approval
- Review governance and revise Terms of Reference for the Programme Board with link across to STAC
- Paper to SWAG outlining proposal to respond to emerging policy development priorities, including assessment criteria for requests and, where this does not align with programme schedule, an agile process for sign off

5. Any Other Business

No further business was discussed.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Meetings to be scheduled.

ACTION 06: Programme Team to schedule series of meetings for Programme Board.