

# Minutes

**Meeting:** NHSScotland 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme Board  
**Date:** Thursday 08 December 2022  
**Location:** MS Teams

**Attendees:**

Present:

- (AG) Anna Gilbert, Head of Workforce Practice, Scottish Government (Chair)
- (JA) Jeff Ace, Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
- (JB) Janis Butler, HR Director, NHS Lothian
- (CH) Catriona Hetherington, Head of Staff Governance, Scottish Government
- (JJ) Jacqui Jones, HR Director, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS)
- (SL) Steven Lindsay, Employee Director, NHS Grampian
- (GM) Gordon McKay, UNISON Health Committee
- (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

Apologies:

- (NC) Noreen Clancy, Head of Employee Relations, NHS Lothian
- (DM) David Miller, Chief People Officer, Scottish Government
- (LZ) Laura Zeballos, Deputy Director Health Workforce Pay, Practice and Partnership

## 1. Welcome and apologies

Anna Gilbert (AG) welcomed members to the meeting. A warm welcome was extended to Ameet Bellad, Senior Specialist Lead – Workforce Infrastructure, NHS Education for Scotland (NES). Ameet will provide an update on digital developments under item 3.

Apologies were noted from Noreen Clancy, David Miller and Laura Zeballos.

## 2. Minute from previous meeting and review of actions

Members approved the minute of the meeting held on 4 October 2022. AG advised that there were no outstanding actions for review. Members were content with the updates provided in the Action Log.

## 3. Digital – user testing and website development

Ameet Bellad (AB) took members through the presentation. Slides were circulated in advance. The presentation covered:

- Key initiatives within the digital solution (content management, content design, content discovery, technology and security, integration, accessibility)
- Development stages completed and planned for the next iteration of the website
- User feedback on the website prototype
- Benefits management and website data metrics

At the end of the presentation, AB demonstrated the prototype of the new website developed to include the additional suite of Supporting the Work Life Balance policies. AB highlighted a few key features:

- Changes to the home page to incorporate resources and calculators in addition to supporting documents
- Policies displayed alphabetically on the policies landing page and tagged by theme e.g. 'Core' policies or Supporting the Work Life Balance (tag names to be reviewed). This will extend as further policies are refreshed
- The Supporting the Work Life Balance landing page which contains all policies and supporting documents within this suite of related policies
- Resources and calculators – a new development based on feedback from the engagement events containing information or links to key resources e.g. pay scales, SPPA and calculator tools to help employees make an informed choice / provide an indication of the potential impact of any change to their working arrangements
- The calculator work has commenced with an annual leave calculator
- Changes to the contact form for general comments and feedback on the website, and direction to the employee support page for personal queries
- New feature to display version history for technical updates to the policies and supporting documents

Discussion followed on the calculator tools. James O'Connell (JO'C) asked about appropriate disclaimers. JO'C further noted the importance of being able to show the workings for the calculator, based on what information the employee had entered. AB advised that the initial scoping of calculators with payroll and HR colleagues for maternity leave entitlement and change in hours had discussed this. Lynn Hunter (LH) added that the idea of the calculator was to provide an illustration based on the information provided and to inform a conversation with the manager. The discovery workshop also sought to confirm what was a payroll or HR function, and what could be part of a calculator tool.

The Programme Board thanked AB for an excellent presentation and the wider Digital Development Group for the work undertaken.

#### **4. Change Request – Formal Hearing Guide**

LH introduced the item on the change request to the Programme Board to amend the Formal Hearing Guide. The request emerged from the work on programme restart to review the outstanding and new queries received on Phase 1 policies. The suggested amendment was to clarify that Non-Executive Directors would sit on conduct dismissal appeals only i.e. not a requirement for all dismissal hearings. This would reflect current practice. The Board has been provided with further background information, and was asked to consider and reach agreement on the proposed change request.

Janis Butler (JB) was supportive of the change request, noting that the clarification would rectify an oversight at the time of developing the supporting documentation for Phase 1 workforce policies. It is reflective of current practice in Boards.

Gordon Mackay (GM) was not supportive of a change. Whilst acknowledging that this may have been the intention of the Policy Development Group, the governance structure approved the policies on the basis of what was presented.

Jacqui Jones (JJ) was supportive of the change request, however suggested a compromise to amend wording to recommend that Non-Executive Directors would primarily be brought in to conduct cases. Smaller NHS Boards may be more likely to use Non-Executive Directors where they run out of Executive Directors in the structure.

Norman Provan (NP) recognised the challenge for large Boards and large geographical areas in requiring a Non-Executive Director for all types of dismissal hearings.

Discussion followed on the status of the supporting documents, where the policies and associated supporting documents set the standard for employment practice for all Boards to follow. J'OC stressed the importance of clear guides as this is what is used by Boards to apply the policy.

Members agreed that in the absence of a unified position from the Programme Board on the change request that this should be escalated to the Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance (SWAG) Committee.

It was agreed that a paper for SWAG would be drafted and jointly worked up by Programme Board members. The paper should include data on the number of dismissals / appeal hearings by NHS Board.

**ACTION 01: CH to provide an initial draft paper for SWAG on change request to the Formal Hearing Guide for Programme Board member review and development. JB / JJ to source data on the number of dismissals / appeal hearings by NHS Board to inform the paper.**

## 5. Programme Management

LH provided an overview of the progress made and tasks for the next period. Public consultation on the suite of Supporting the Work Life Balance policies closed on 25/11/22. Consultation analysis has started. This is being managed as 2 tripartite analysis subgroups, led by the Chair and Vice Chair respectively, to analyse consultation responses. This facilitates 2 days per week analysis based on PDG members current 1 day per week availability. The PDG are working to prepare a recommended change / no change report for discussion at the Programme Board on 07/02/23. However, the timeline for all 10 policies may require review.

LH outlined the high level analysis of responses. In particular, noting that there was no majority view in the response to the additional question set by the Board – should paid parental leave be extended to step parents? LH advised that the team are currently working through theming the free text responses. It was noted that a number of organisations in their collated response reported mixed views. Initial themes include – parental responsibilities and rights; legal position; evidence; management / implementation; and financial pressures. LH asked members to give this further consideration in advance of the February meeting.

**ACTION 02: Members asked to consider position on the potential to extend paid parental leave to step parents in the context of no majority view from the consultation.**

Steven Lindsay (SL) noted feedback from staffside colleagues that the length of the consultation should be longer for the number of policies for review. The Programme Board noted this feedback for future consideration.

## 6. Any Other Business

Communication of key messages - the Board agreed that, given the consultation has recently closed and analysis started, the next stakeholder communication would follow the February Programme Board.

## 7. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 7 February 2023 from 15:00 -17:00