

**Scottish Workforce & Staff Governance Secretariat Minute  
Tuesday 28 September 2021  
MS Teams**

**Present:** Tracey Ashworth-Davies – NHS Education for Scotland  
Caroline Cooksey – NHS Dumfries and Galloway  
Anna Gilbert – Scottish Government  
Pauline Howie – Scottish Ambulance Service - **(Chair)**  
Steven Lindsay – Unite the Union  
Jennifer Martin Nye – Scottish Government  
Gordon McKay – Unison  
Norman Provan – Royal College of Nursing

**In attendance:** Catriona Hetherington – Scottish Government  
John Malone – Scottish Government - **(Minutes)**  
Cat McMeeken – Scottish Government

**Apologies:** Victoria Bowman – Scottish Government

**Agenda Item 1 – Welcome, Introductions, Minutes and Summary of Action  
Points of meeting held on 1 July 2021.**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the Secretariat was quorate.
2. The minute of the meeting and summary of action points were agreed as an accurate record and all action points were marked as completed.

**Outcome:** SWAG Secretariat agreed minutes and action points as accurate.

**Agenda Item 2 & 3 – Wellbeing, Leadership and Talent Management**

Cat McMeeken provided an update on Wellbeing, Leadership and Talent Management. Key updates included:

- Leadership, Culture and Wellbeing are critical interdependencies for the Health and Social Care Workforce. The recovery of services will not be possible if staff are not being supported by compassionate leaders to take care of themselves and others – creating a culture where wellbeing is seen as fundamentally important.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened concerns about the health and wellbeing of all those who work in health and social care. The wellbeing of staff inevitably impacts the quality and safety of services provided in every community in Scotland.

## SWAG

- Addressing the wellbeing and mental health needs of the workforce in both health and social care/social work is now even more crucial than it was prior to Covid-19.
- Mental health problems (anxiety/stress/depression) are the leading cause of sickness absence in NHS Scotland. Focusing on wellbeing as well as mental health enables government to listen and hear examples of good practice that enable staff to feel engaged, supported and valued in their day-to-day work.
- It also helps us to understand how workplace cultures can have a negative impact on staff, resulting in personal distress and ultimately mental ill health, and, conversely, how leadership and culture can promote a positive approach to staff wellbeing, and address barriers to seeking help for mental health issues. An emphasis on wellbeing and building resilience in individuals and systems is key to the prevention of significant mental health issues.
- The NHS Recovery Plan highlights that the recovery of everyone working in health and social work/social care is intrinsic to our collective ambitions for renewing our NHS. It highlights the £8m of investment to deliver a package of measures this financial year to support the physical, mental health and emotional needs of the workforce, including:
  - the National Wellbeing Hub and National Wellbeing Helpline, and the Workforce Specialist Service, which is a confidential multidisciplinary mental health treatment service for regulated health and social services professionals;
  - allocating £2m of the total sum to support primary care and social work/social care workforces;
  - additional provision of psychological interventions and therapies to the health and social care workforce;
  - further development of rest areas;
  - developing guidance to promote effective wellbeing conversations;
  - enhancing occupational health provision;
  - improving access to quality assured peer support and reflective practice.
- We are also developing of a new National Wellbeing Programme, to be implemented from autumn 2021, with the aim of achieving a flourishing workforce supported in their wellbeing and mental health, enabling values of kindness, dignity and compassion to infuse the care they provide, with workstreams covering specific areas of work including ICU, nursing, primary care and social care.

## SWAG

The Chair gave members the opportunity to ask questions and offer feedback. During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Members welcomed the update and highlighted that there are some staff members who work remotely that are less likely to take their breaks especially if they are having to travel between patients/service users;
- Members suggested that remote workers, likely in rural areas, could visit local GP practices for their rest break and use their facilities. Staff would be able to present their NHS badge (or similar) for verification;
- It was highlighted that there are lots of staff undertaking statutory / mandatory training in their own time. Staff should be able to undertake training courses during their shift;
- It was agreed that an update would be presented to SWAG Committee to discuss winter pressures.

**Outcome:** SWAG Secretariat welcomed the update and agreed that a further update be presented to Committee.

**Action point:** John Malone to arrange for Wellbeing update to be added to the agenda at the next Committee meeting.

### Agenda Item 4 – Review of SWAG Committee on 28 September 2021

Members discussed the agenda items presented to Committee on 28 September.

- **Winter Plan** – Members welcomed the winter plan and acknowledged that it was being developed at pace
- **Once for Scotland – Flexible Work Location Policy** – Members accepted the wording within the policy should be slightly amended and that the new version would be circulated to Committee members for final sign-off. It was questioned by member what the ‘soft launch’ process involved. It was confirmed that this provides an opportunity for NHS Boards to raise any interpretation issues or potential implementation challenges prior to ‘go live’. Members queried that there may be expenses for those that work from home however, it was confirmed that STAC would discuss this issue.
- **Independent National Whistleblowing Officer update:** Members welcomed the update.

### Agenda Item 5 – AOB

No further business matter arose.

### Date of Next Meeting

SWAG Committee – 18 November 2021, MS Teams – (14.00 – 15.30)

SWAG Secretariat – 18 November 2021, MS Teams – (15.30 – 16.30)