



**SWAG**

**Scottish Workforce & Staff Governance Committee Minute  
Tuesday 27 September 2022  
MS Teams**

**Present:**

Pauline Howie ( <b>Chair</b> )	Scottish Ambulance Service
Jasmin Clark	Royal College of Nursing
Caroline Cooksey	NHS Dumfries and Galloway
Margo Cranmer	Unison
Joyce Davison	BMA
Anna Gilbert	Scottish Government
Gordon Jamieson	NHS Western Isles
Steven Lindsay	Unite
Jennifer Martin Nye	Scottish Government
Gordon McKay	Unison
Kate McDermott	Unison
Norman Provan	Royal College of Nursing
Una Provan	Unison
Claire Ronald	The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Linda Walker	GMB

**In Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Niall Anderson	Scottish Government
Emma Weedon	Scottish Government
Catriona Hetherington	Scottish Government
Kathleen Riach	University of Glasgow
William Adam ( <b>Secretariat</b> )	Scottish Government
Cat McMeeken	Scottish Government
Kirsty Merriman	Scottish Government
Kathryn Brechin	Scottish Government
Lorraine Stronach	Scottish Government

**Apologies from:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Ian Cant	Employee Directors Group
Victoria Bowman	Scottish Government
Tracey Ashworth-Davies	NHS NES
Anne Armstrong	Scottish Government

## Agenda Items

1. Actions and Minutes
2. Menopause & Menstrual Health Policy
3. Adverse Weather
4. Improving Workforce Wellbeing Culture and Strategy
5. Any other Business

### Agenda Item 1 – Welcome, Actions and Minutes

- Pauline Howie welcomed members to the meeting, and noted apologies as per preceding table.
- Minutes were agreed from the meeting on 24 August 2022.
- Action points **09082022 (1)**; **09082022 (2)**; **24082022 (1)**; **24082022 (2)**; **24082022 (4)** were marked as complete. Action point **24082022 (3)** was marked as ongoing.

### Agenda Item 2 – Menopause & Menstrual Health Policy

- The target of policy development is to support women with menopause and those who menstruate.
- The survey captures experience from NHS staff and identifies low resource, high impact support practices
- In final stages of approval. October - BETA testing
- Live late Oct 2022, High level results will be available in Jan 2023, Drafting Policy March 2023, Focus groups spring 2023
- We should recognise that experience varies between different women
- Use [Kathleen.Riach@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Kathleen.Riach@glasgow.ac.uk) for further queries

### SWAG Members Comments

- Pauline Howie referenced UK Wide survey looking at menopause in ambulance service ([CESSATION-Update-Summary-Report.pdf \(swastcpd.co.uk\)](https://www.swastcpd.co.uk/CESSATION-Update-Summary-Report.pdf))
- Key takeaways from that were:
  - Access GPs with sufficient understanding – specialist occ health
  - Education piece for Line Managers
  - Toolkits (peer to peer support)
  - Drop in/coffee sessions etc.
- Important to consider different working environments. For instance ambulances on hot days, or community services, where staff deliberately dehydrate themselves because of limited access to a toilet.
- Managing changes in behaviour – bursting into tears, rage etc. Often individuals do not recognise the link to menstrual health/ menopause in the moment. . How do we raise awareness of symptoms and ensure an empathetic response through supportive application of policy.
- We will need to ensure that we link to other appropriate NHS policies.

- Research doesn't support Paid menstrual leave, which can actually be detrimental for women treated unequally in the workplace. Research suggests that a "break" even of 45 minutes might be sufficient – to get pain killers, or a hot water bottle, or other action.
- Will need line manager support to complete survey and a strong emphasis on how important line managers are within supporting documents.

**Outcome:** Partnership Team to circulate the PPT presentation to Committee Members. Menopause and Menstrual Health Policy to return to the forum next year to report on its progress.

### **Agenda Item 3 – Adverse Weather**

- Scottish Government have reviewed our current interim national arrangements as part of our winter readiness work. Changes to the DL are minimal and have been shared with members
- We have not finalised the policy it will be included within, although it is likely to be in the special leave or work life balance policy.

#### **SWAG Members Comments**

- Would not expect adverse weather within the special leave policy. The emphasis should not be on special leave, rather on everyone co-operating to ensure staff safety.
- Members suggested that adverse weather was included within the managing health at work policy.
- Risk of adverse weather dominating the special leave policy, which could overshadow other important elements.
- Note changes to weather patterns and climate, cautious that the policy does not become too rigid
- Wording needs to be reviewed, too many "mays" and "shoulds", eg Paragraph 24, with wording to be used consistently.
- Gordon McKay noted that, regardless of status as 'essential services' staff, if it was not safe to travel staff should not be expected to travel.
- Gordon also proposed removing the second sentence of Section 8.
- Issues reported with cross health board working. Shared experiences of staff who were asked to work at their closest workplace, and were not well used.
- More emphasis on letting staff know they can get to work safely at other times when they've been advised not to commute at peak times.

**Action:** Policy Team to make changes to the draft DL discussed by SWAG, and to circulate them to the group.

**Outcome:** The Special Leave Policy will include Adverse weather as a reason for special leave but the context of the DL will be fed into the Managing Health at Work

suite of Policies when they are reviewed under the 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies Programme.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Improving Workforce Wellbeing and Culture Strategy**

- Cat McMeeken introduced the Improving Workforce Wellbeing and Culture Strategy.
- Noted that the next version of the document will soon be complete
- In particular highlighted intention to shorten the document, and to incorporate comments raised during engagement.

#### **SWAG Members Comments**

- Cat addressed comments on the use of “workforce” as opposed to “workplace” noting that the strategy is aimed at some staff without defined workplaces. A change could deter them from engaging with the strategy.
- Tone within the narrative of the document can appear ‘paternalistic’ (eg. within the charter). Limited reference to how staff support their own wellbeing needs.
- Choice of language and terminology, including use of the word nurture. ‘Nurture’ will remain only in the context of the published Workforce Strategy. Questioned term ‘prioritising’ wellbeing (i.e Prioritised over what? )
- Questioned how relevant Page 9 – on NCS is at this stage
- Reference to recession will date the document, and should be removed.
- Disagreed with the statement that the only thing that can modernise the service is innovation, things like investment are also instrumental.
- The document could be more concise, accessible and relevant to staff.
- Members questioned why the strategy was focussed towards stakeholders rather than staff. Cat highlighted that it is a strategic document, and has to be strategic in tone.
- Cat cited upcoming changes, and plans for a summary directed to NHS staff.
- Cat highlighted that setting the right tone amongst strategic leaders, can be an effective way to improve corporate culture, as seen in Police Scotland.

**Outcome:** The Scottish Government Wellbeing Team intend to publish the ‘Improving Workforce Wellbeing and Culture Strategy’ in the coming months. A near final version of the document will be circulated to SWAG members, addressing key questions highlighted by the group

#### **Agenda Item 5 – AOB**

- Linda Walker, highlighted Once for Scotland policies being applied wrongly or inconsistently in a number of instances
- Also raised adherence with standards of National Policy by contractors, in particular Serco
- Highlighted issues with locum agency employed to address waiting times attracting staff otherwise working on the bank.



**SWAG**

Terms of Reference were circulated to the group. No concerns were made with minor changes highlighted, and these will be published on the Staff Governance website.

### **Actions**

**27092022(1):** Menopause and Menstrual Health Policy to return to the forum next year to report on its progress. **Emma Weedon**

**27092022(2):** Move NHSScotland National Arrangements for Adverse Weather from the Special Leave to the Managing Health at Work OfS policy, and review Section 8 of the DL. **Catriona Hetherington**

**27092022(3):** Wellbeing team to address the points raised by SWAG on the Improving Workforce Wellbeing and Culture Strategy and to circulate a near final version. **Cat McMeeken / Kirsty Merriman**

**27092022(4):** Updated SWAG ToR to be published on the Staff Governance website. **Niall Anderson**