



**Scottish Workforce & Staff Governance Committee  
Extraordinary Meeting  
Wednesday 6 December 2023  
14:00 – 15:30  
Meeting Minute**

**Attendance List**

Present:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mary Morgan ( <b>Chair</b> )	NHS National Services Scotland
Jacqui Jones	NHS Lanarkshire
Tracey Ashworth Davies	NHS Education for Scotland
Gordon Jamieson	NHS Western Isles
Paul Bachoo	NHS Grampian
Pamela Jamieson	NHS Dumfries and Galloway
Samantha Thomas	NHS Orkney
Fiona Hogg	Scottish Government
Jane Hamilton	Scottish Government
Anne Armstrong	Scottish Government
Anna Gilbert	Scottish Government
Emma Curren	Royal College of Midwives
Norman Provan	Royal College of Nursing
Linda Walker	GMB
Lyndsay Hunter	Royal College of Podiatry
Claire Ronald	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Scott Anderson	British Medical Association
Steven Lindsay	Unite
Susan Robertson	Unite

In attendance:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Niall Anderson ( <b>Secretariat</b> )	Scottish Government
Nicola Anderson	Scottish Government
Suzanne Thomas	Scottish Government
Greg Logan	Scottish Government
Alice Main	Scottish Government

Apologies have been received from:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Robin McNaught	The State Hospital
Jennifer Wilson	NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Matt McLaughlin	Unison
Ian Cant	Unison
Linda Walker	GMB
Sam Mullin	GMB

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**Meeting: Extraordinary SWAG Committee**

**14:00-15:30, 6 December 2023**

**MS Teams**

**Mary Morgan**

**Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions**

- Mary Morgan welcomed SWAG attendees.
- With the attendees listed above, the meeting was quorate.
- Apologies were noted from Linda Walker, Sam Mullin, Ian Cant, Matt McLaughlin, Robin McNaught, and Jennifer Wilson
- The chair welcomed Paul Bachoo (Medical Director, NHS Grampian) and Samantha Thomas (Nursing Director, NHS Orkney), to the group, and noted that further members would join in January. The chair welcomed Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellows, observing the meeting.
- Minutes of the meeting of 26 September were approved.
- A declaration of interest was shared by Norman Provan, that he is married to Nicola Anderson the presenter for Item 4 on the Dignity at Work survey.

**Agenda Item 2 – iMatter: Health and social care staff experience survey**

- Suzanne Thomas presented high level results from iMatter 2023, and agreed to share the slide deck with the Committee.
- It was noted that response rate levels for national boards were significantly higher than territorial boards but acknowledged that National Boards have better electronic access to iMatter in most cases (excluding SAS) from desk based jobs. It can sometimes make it more challenging for Territorial Boards' staff to access and complete surveys.
- There was a discussion around the apparent dissonance between the iMatter results and what trade unions hear on the ground – i.e., the results painted a better picture.
- However, it was acknowledged that trade union representatives are more likely to encounter disenchanted members of NHS Staff.
- Suzanne also highlighted that these results present a national picture which means there is work to do locally to understand where there are potential pockets of concern or dissatisfaction.
- Concern was raised with regards to the Action Planning process, with some stories of line managers completing these out with team discussion, little being known about levels of reflection and ongoing progression of the plans and consideration of local KPI measures for action plan completion.
- Other members noted that Action Plan completion had improved in 2023 which typically correlates with higher engagement. There was agreement that additional work on action planning may be required [*this is also referenced in the governance discussion*].
- The overview of iMatter results is helpful and it is striking that comments within team stories, often demonstrate that small things make a difference to individuals rather than wholesale changes and interventions.

- iMatter results capture staff experience at a point in time, and one employer noted that improved performance has corresponded with improved sickness levels.
- The question on 'board visibility' also needs consideration to ensure staff are clear about which level of leadership the question is addressing.

### **Agenda Item 3 – iMatter Governance**

- Suzanne Thomas presented the paper and gave an overview of why we have chosen to look at iMatter Governance.
- Employer representatives noted that without visibility of lower-level reports senior leaders cannot take supportive measures in response to specific areas of concern. At present, there is insufficient detail to step in and provide the appropriate support.
- Some Staffside members considered now to be a good time to consider opening access up more as there is higher confidence in iMatter. At present, there is a risk that pockets of concern can be hidden under current governance arrangements, and this could help Boards address them. However, if changes are made staff should be notified in the next iteration of the survey.
- In their absence, it was noted that this was not the view of UNISON. Historically they were against giving greater access to senior managers, as the tool was designed to be Team based.
- Others agreed with the principle of team ownership but thought the current model is too contained and does not provide Boards sufficient detail.
- UNITE raised concerns with widening access, noting that iMatter is not the only tool available to Boards to uncover issues/concerns and referenced the Australian "Culture Matters" survey currently being rolled out in NHS Grampian. In response to concerns being shared through other means (i.e., through the press), emphasised that all mechanisms are appropriate, and have their place, whether internal or external.
- There was some consensus that a focus on expanding action planning would be more beneficial at present, with a view to strengthening the process and their use to understand their impact on overall experience.

### **Outcome**

- **The Chair concluded that the current Governance Framework should remain as agreed but that we try to have a greater understanding of pockets of concern through a review of action planning.**
- **We should explore a mechanism to access data in specific circumstances, where there is a formal request. For instance, where patient safety and staff wellbeing are of concern.**

### **Agenda Item 4 – Dignity at Work Survey**

- Nicola Anderson presented the current position in relation to a Dignity at Work survey and an outline proposal for progressing with a measure of these elements of staff experience moving forward.

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- A Dignity at Work (DaW) project was previously agreed (2019) to be undertaken by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and this was part funded. Due to the pandemic the project was paused and has never been reinstated.
- We are not in a position currently to commit funds to that, however, Nottingham Trent University, still have a commitment to develop a survey to measure dignity at work issues.
- The high-level proposal is to work with NTU and a small partnership group to develop a question set which can be issued through Webropol portal, with NTU doing the analysis and recommendations.
- Members noted that although there were concerns about the previous DaW survey (2017), there is a need to measure this again as there is no national data.
- It was acknowledged that we need to consider timing and distribution method.
- An Anti-Racism survey was discussed at SWAG Secretariat [5 December] and the connection between this and a DaW was discussed. It was highlighted that the DaW survey has been on the SWAG work programme for a number of years, however the anti-racism survey was a new proposal.
- It was noted that the anti-racism survey was for a different purpose i.e., for the purposes of developing anti-racism training materials.
- There was a discussion on the need to review whether DaW questions need to form part of the annual staff survey for future years.
- There was feedback from employers that a separate DaW survey could result in survey fatigue. One noted that whilst we have spent money on the contract with Nottingham Trent, it does not oblige us to proceed with the DaW survey.
- It was noted that the Webropol contract is up for renewal in 2027 with the tendering process commencing in 2026.

## Outcome

- **The Chair concluded that a proposal for a DaW survey in 2024 would be developed by Nicola Anderson and circulated to the Committee.**

## Agenda Item 5 – AOB

- The Chair of National Staff side introduced concerns raised by RCM regarding engagement with Trade Unions in the Best Start Perinatal Subgroup that related to work undertaken between 2018-early 2020 when there was no national staff side inclusion in the Best Start implementation programme. RCM raised concerns today and previously at the implementation board about lack of union representation on the Peri-Natal Subgroup which has resulted in the National Neonatal Services remodelling work (A Five-Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Services Neonatal Intensive Care: Options Appraisal Report) proceeding out with partnership processes. Despite raising this and the future implementation of same in emails and meetings of Best Start Programme Board over the last year, there remains a lack of commitment to ensure national staff side in the imminently pending Implementation of this going forward.

- Periodically, Staff side see programmes where there is not sufficient TU engagement, but that this is usually then resolved through contact with the chair. This has not been the case here, and the full programme of Best Start Implementation work was underway for 2.5 years before staff side seats were conceded with two trade union seats allocated on the implementation board from February 2020.
- A lack of union representation on the Best Start subgroups means that upstream is not able to identify and pre-empt issues that are arising further down the line.
- RCM are not inclined to delay the implementation on that basis but expect the Staff Governance Standard to be adhered to going forward.
- Fiona Hogg noted the concerns over implementation and adherence with partnership engagement. She noted that the approach to engagement was discussed at a recent meeting by the Best Start programme and would encourage a conversation with the SWAG Staff side co-chair, RCM, and the Scottish Government Maternity Team.
- Mary Morgan noted her role overseeing NSD and agreed to discuss Trade Union engagement over Best Start with the director of NSD.
- It was observed that policy leads sometimes mistake the Professional Organisation arms of RCM, CSP and others, with their Trade Union counterparts.
- It was noted that there is significant variation across Scottish Government policy teams around familiarity with Partnership Working, however Scottish Government are currently considering how we improve recognition and participation in partnership both internally and externally.
- The chair noted that the next meeting of SWAG Committee will take place on 24 January 2024

## Actions

**06122023(1)** Nicola Anderson agreed to develop a proposal based on the discussion and circulate to the Committee.

**06122023(2)** Scottish Government to consider a review of Action Planning with proposals to be made to SWAG Committee in due course.

**06122023(3)** Scottish Government to explore a mechanism to access iMatter data in specific circumstances, where there is a formal request. For instance, where patient safety and staff wellbeing are under threat.

**06122023(4)** Fiona Hogg to arrange a meeting with Norman Provan, Emma Currer, and the Scottish Government Maternity Team to discuss engagement over Best Start.

**06122023(5)** Mary Morgan to discuss Trade Union engagement over Best Start with the chair of NSD.

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