



Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance (SWAG) Secretariat
Tuesday, 5 March 2024
15:00 - 16:00
Meeting Minute

Confirmation of attendees at time of writing:

Name	Organisation
Fiona Hogg (Chair)	Scottish Government
Jane Hamilton	Scottish Government
Suzanne Thomas	Scottish Government
Norman Provan	Royal College of Nursing
Steven Lindsay	Unite
Gordon McKay	Unison
Mary Morgan	National Services Scotland
Tracey Ashworth-Davies	NHS NES

In attendance:

Name	Organisation
Niall Anderson (Secretariat)	Scottish Government
Maruf Kadiir	Scottish Government
Harry Dozier	Scottish Government
Kenny Nairn	Scottish Government
Lyndsay Turner	Scottish Government
Daniel MacDonald	Scottish Government
Matt McLaughlin	Unison

Apologies have been received from:

Name	Organisation
Anna Gilbert	Scottish Government



Agenda Item 1 – Welcome, Introductions and

The meeting was quorate, with attendees listed above.

Members approved the SWAG Secretariat meeting minute from 24 January 2024

The following actions were marked as complete:

05122023(1): Mary Morgan, and Norman Provan, to identify additional items for discussion at SWAG.

24012024 (1): Presentations from 24/01/24 meeting to issue to SWAG Committee

The following action was addressed under AOB:

24012024 (2): Agree a date for an in person SWAG meeting in 2024.

Agenda Item 2 – Harry Dozier, and Azita Jabbari-Arabzadeh

- Members of the SG Workforce Equality team provided an overview of an NHS Scotland reasonable adjustment project. They also outlined work on Incident Reporting and an Anti-racism survey.
- CRER are collating the responses from NHS Scotland staff to the anti-racism survey, and are conducting analysis.
- The deadline for the Anti-racism survey was extended to provide additional time to increase uptake in a number of rural and island boards.
- An anti-racism leadership statement is currently under consideration, with the opportunity for thoughts and feedback regarding that proposal.
- The team also referenced ongoing work on objectives for NHS chairs and links with the introduction of anti-racism resources.

Comments

- Chief executive and chair objectives are agreed early in the year, and work engaging on anti-discrimination objectives should be in place soon.
- A gap analysis of existing work would help us to understand how all of these workstreams work together to support people with protected characteristics.

Agenda Item 3 – DDIT iMatter Update

- Suzanne Thomas provided an overview of the Doctors and Dentist Training Staff Experience Survey, and results.
- The overall experience score has increased to 6.8, up by 0.3, and the data shows improved experience scores for each of the 6 questions within the survey.
- The survey had a response rate of 33%, a drop of 4% points from 2022, although the sample size remains valid.
- Scores on treating individuals with dignity and respect, and line managers caring about their wellbeing have risen the most [+3].



- Only 17% of teams input action plans for the 2023 survey. Action planning is difficult for DDiT staff as their roles are transient, with posts on a 6 month rotation.
- The iMatter team are considering whether the survey provides the information we need, and what alternative approaches might look like.

Comments

- Those surveyed within NES, are working within a range of different health boards, which means responses are omitted from individual board results.
- If we are considering a fresh approach, then are there other experience questionnaires in the public sector that we can align with, or use as comparators?
- Members asked whether we have considered combining with the iMatter survey.
- There is a significant lag-time between rotations, iMatter runs, and action planning which make it challenging to fully align DDiT placements, and combine data with the full iMatter survey.
- It remains important that we isolate the unique experiences of the DDiT cohort.
- Officials acknowledged the need to consider whether the current methodology is working, and how action planning could be more meaningful for DDiT.
- The iMatter team are also reviewing questions on board member visibility within the iMatter questionnaire, which is being reviewed by a working group. 'I am involved in decisions that affect me' question will also be reviewed, as staff will not be aware of which decisions are taken locally and at a national level.

Agenda Item 4 – AfC Review

- Lyndsay Turner provided an overview of the latest position in relation to the Agenda for Change review workstreams.
- Following the commitment to review the AfC System, we are recommendations which will take effect from 1 April 2024 from the Review working groups. These include:
- A consistent approach to Protected Learning Time across all NHS Scotland Boards, which includes the completion of statutory, mandatory and profession specific training within working hours.
- A defined process in which to undertake a review of Band 5 nursing roles. Specifically, any Band 5 nurse will be able to self-apply for a review of their role if they believe they meet the criteria.
- The first 30 minute Reduction in the Working Week for all AfC staff, as part of the reduced working week workstream.
- Further details, including implementation on each of these areas are being issued to the service.

Comments

- The Protected Learning Time group was not able to complete some preparatory work as other workstreams concluded and the review awaited sign off.



- One workstream which is crucial for progressing the work is identifying core learning by job family, which provide clarity on what is covered by PLT proposals.

Agenda Item 5 – Retire and Return Policy

- Matt McLaughlin, Head of Health for Unison raised an item regarding the Retire and Return Policy.
- At present Trade Union members who leave, but return to the NHS via Retire and Return do not have direct payments through the DOCAS payroll system reinstated. This could include Trade Union or Credit Union subscriptions.
- The following solutions were proposed:
 - I. Retire and return paperwork should have a clear statement advising staff that any existing deductions from will need to be restarted.
 - II. At the point of on-boarding they should be reminded previous deductions will not transfer
 - III. Boards should provide a list of leavers and joiners as part of their obligations to partnership.
- He asked whether elements should be remitted back to the Once for Scotland Programme Board

Comments

- Co-chair's were content to share a form of words for comms.
- Sharing any leavers list must be GDPR and information governance compliant.
- OfS policy on Facilities time, says that employers are able/required to provide names of new employees to Trade Unions. As the policy hasn't changed, it may not need to go to OfS Programme Board, but a communication should be issued.
- When you have a retire and return conversation with your manager, this should be on a checklist. It should be included in the policy and letter.
- The group agreed to amend the guidance, as this is not a single point in time issue, and a single comms message may be lost over time.
- SG Officials agreed to a two prong approach with communication and making adaptation to guidance.
- Employers queried whether unions had provided cover in the interim, and union reps confirmed special cover had been applied in exceptional circumstances.

Agenda Item 6 - AOB

Application of Retire and Return

- Those returning under the original interim 'Retire and Return policy', are not treated identically to those under the current policy.
- Staff originally returned under a fixed term contract, but should be presumed to have permanent status, in line with existing policy.
- This approach was favoured by SWAG Secretariat members, but it was agreed to refer the matter to the Once for Scotland Programme Board for full consideration.



Enhanced Psychology Practitioner Roles

- The Job Evaluation Group noted the activity of the Enhanced Psychology Practitioner roles, developed by a partnership subgroup for national use.
- The group have finalised four job descriptions, which will go to the Job Evaluation group for agreement, but highlighted challenges during the development phase.
- The chairs of that group sought to make SWAG aware of its progress, and noted that they may need to re-loop to ensure that employers are fully aware of the role.

Comments:

- SWAG members noted that representatives on the EPP working group includes NHS employers, as well as NES.
- They also highlighted that an internal conversation at NES had taken place about lessons from unintentional omission of Trade Union engagement.
- Work should be done to improve awareness of partnership working. Officials noted that this work is already underway.

In-Person Meeting

- The group discussed the most opportune time to meet in-person, and were flexible about using either the April or September meeting.

Actions :

- SG Partnership Officials to develop a partnership communication and induction materials
- Progress communication and adaptation to Retire and Return guidance to resolve issues regarding disruption to Trade Union membership fees
- Arrange an in-person SWAG Meeting for April or September Committee and Secretariat