



SWAG Secretariat
Tuesday 22 April 2025
15:45-16:45
MS Teams or In Person

Attendees

Confirmation of members in attendance at the time of writing:

Name	Organisation
Mary Morgan (Chair)	NSS
Fiona Hogg	Scottish Government
Norman Provan	RCN
Gordon McKay	UNISON
Steven Lindsay	Unite
Elaine Watson	NHS Tayside
Anna Gilbert	Scottish Government
Jane Hamilton	Scottish Government

Additional attendees:

Name	Organisation
Zachary Deponio	Scottish Government
Ronan O'Dowd	Scottish Government
James Vasey	Scottish Government
Marita Buchanan	Scottish Government
Kirsty Merriman	Scottish Government
Ruth Paterson	Scottish Government
Anushka Govias-Smith	Scottish Government

Apologies from:

Name	Organisation
Jacqui Jones	NHS Lanarkshire



Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

- Mary Morgan (MM), Chair, welcomed SWAG colleagues to the meeting, and noted apologies from Jacqui Jones.
- Colleagues confirmed they were content with the minutes from the previous meeting.
- MM welcomed James Vasey (JV) to discuss the iMatter Short Life Working Group.

Agenda Item 1: iMatter Short Life Working Group (SLWG)

- JV noted some background of the iMatter SLWG, as he proposed it in a previous SWAG Secretariat meeting last year, with the hope to introduce improvements, which had been laid out in the terms of reference in the draft terms of reference in Agenda item 1.
- JV updated SWAG members that there are two new members to be added to the Membership List, under the Employers section in the paper. These are Kevin Reith from Fourth Valley, and Jay O'Brien from Orkney.
- iMatter Operational Leads are yet to be confirmed. These will be two representatives from the group of members, and will provide a good spread of representation from across NHS Scotland, providing the more technical side of implementation of iMatter due to using it on a regular basis..
- JV identified the four main points that:
 - Considerations of the University of Strathclyde's 2021 report (included in paper)
 - Exploration of dignity of work questions, which can change depending on relevant matters at the time – in addition to the set 28 questions as part of the standard iMatter questions
 - Considering continuation of alternatives to paper copies of iMatter, such as SMS.
 - Review of action planning, consideration of data protection and confidentiality, and who can access iMatter data.
- JV welcomed thoughts and comments on the draft paper, and on the membership. By colleagues approving this, JV explained that it would allow them to get meetings in place, frequency and scope of which are laid out in the terms of reference.
- JV sought agreement to begin work on the terms of reference, noting any actions relating to the SLWG and any key milestones will be reported back to SWAG.

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Comments

- Elaine Watson (EW) asked in relation to Annex A: University of Strathclyde iMatter Recommendations, if there is a reason why it's these recommendations as opposed to the other, if these are the recommendations the SLWG will focus on, and how that determination was made.
- JV responded that these are the key recommendations that would be relevant for the group to look at and have remit over. JV flagged that in the previous SWAG Secretariat meeting, it was noted that this needed to be a concise group, otherwise the progress could be hindered. It had been scaled down in order to make it manageable budget-wise also.
- Norman Provan (NP) noted that the paper was very useful and there were no problems noted in the terms of reference or University of Strathclyde report. One concern NP noted was that due to the fundamental change in the iMatter process, that will apply to almost every member of the NHS workforce in Scotland, these changes should have sign off from SWAG committee rather than just the secretariat. While not suggesting the work be held up, NP suggested that an email go out to SWAG committee outlining their recommendation that the work be carried out as proposed, and if anyone has any opposing view, a decision can be made as to whether the SWAG committee should reform to discuss this further
- MM agreed with NP, and suggested EW take the final draft to HRDs to make them aware of the changes. MM noted keeping iMatter accredited and validated is of vital importance going forward.
- Anna Gilbert (AG) responded by confirming that the core 28 questions of iMatter are accredited and validated, so despite any other questions being added, these will remain academically validated. There will not be any fundamental changes to the core 28 questions, only slight changes if any.
- Marita Buchanan (MB) confirmed this and stated that the only amendment is for the board member question, which is part of the University of Strathclyde recommendation
- NP was content that his points had been covered in the responses.
- MM noted her support of the board members visibility question being removed.

• **Outcome**

- MM noted that there is support for this paper to move forward, and that JV has some populating to do regarding members roles.

Action

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- MM asked that Steven Lindsay (SL) let their Employee Directors colleagues know about the changes.
- JV is to go out to the full SWAG committee regarding what has been agreed, and requesting final approval to start implementing the changes as laid out in the iMatter SLWG terms of reference by a certain date.

Agenda Item 2: Improving Wellbeing and Working Cultures – Action Plan and “In Practice” Guide

- MM invited Kirsty Merriman (KM) and team to give a presentation regarding the Improving Wellbeing and Working Cultures (IWWC) action plan.
- KM introduced the action plan as an overarching piece, which well-being work fits within, as well as equalities, culture and leadership, for all of health and social care staff. The presentation was to give an update on plans for the IWWC in the coming year, and where it is currently at.
- KM stated that the IWWC sets out the Scottish Government’s ambition to enhance working cultures through a programme of work at national level that focuses on well-being, leadership, and equality. This builds on the nurture pillar of the workforce strategy.
- KM stated that one of the overarching things they want to look at is how can workplace culture be improved, so that people feel heard, valued, and respected, and encouraged to contribute to improving their workplaces. They are looking at starting to use of IWWC in the work being done in the wider reform spaces, looking at the connection between staff engagement, safety and reform.
- KM presented a visual table of the main pillars of IWWC, with the actions and deliverables from the plan outlined under the pillars. This outlined the national work being done to deliver on their ambitions.
- KM stated that the action plan is a living document which is continually being enhanced.
- KM shared that they have been able to secure some baseline funding for some national programmes moving forward which will allow them to deliver on some more actions laid out in IWWC in a secure and sustainable footing.
- KM shared that they are revising the IWWC, looking at what can be built on, close off some actions that have been delivered, refine and revise some of the language, and improve what they already have. They will also look at how it can be more closely aligned to the reform and renewal agenda.
- Km stated that attached to IWWC is the In Practice Guidance, where they will work with stakeholders across the system and co-develop a way to capture some of the case studies and stories from the system. The document will capture illustrative examples that teams, individuals, and organisations can look to for inspiration, either to adopt or to take and build upon to support and enable their own cultures. They currently have around 29 case studies across health, social care and social work that cover the three pillars of well-being, leadership and equalities, which will be published in the summer, and share on the Leading

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to Change website which will be updated more regularly. Here, people will be able to talk about the benefits that various interventions have had for staff, for service users and for the organisation as well, or some of the challenges that have faced in developing or implementing these interventions, as well as tips for those who maybe want to take something similar to their own workplace or their own team.

- KM shared some of the case studies and stated that they hope this resource will be practical resources to help staff.
- The final element of the IWWC package, as presented by KM is the strategic board, which was established in 2003 with the ambition of helping in the publication of IWWC and also to provide some assurance and governance for the action plan. The board has got membership from senior leaders across social work, social care and health, as well as union, local authority, and third sector involvement. KM stated that so far, they have helped to develop statements published in IWWC, given insight into the system and provided live feedback and live examples of how things are often feeling in terms of culture and well-being in the system.
- KM stated that while the board has played a key role in the delivery of IWWC to date, it has become clear that there are more opportunities that can be leaned into and more ways that their expertise and the insights that the board offers can be used, beyond just the specifics of the IWWC work and action plans. They are looking at perhaps being more supportive of the reform and renewal agenda, not just across health but also across the wider system, which will be discussed in June.
- KM provided a summary of actions, stating that there is ongoing engagement with their steering group and working groups that sit underneath that. There is development of the revised version of action plan which will be coming out in the next few months, which there is an opportunity for groups such as SWAG to engage with. The In Practice Guidance will be coming out to stakeholders, hopefully in June, and there is work being done to revise and refresh the terms of remit, the roles and the terms of reference, and of their board, to support some of those national priorities moving forward.
- KM welcomed any questions and comments.

Comments

- MM thanked KM for the presentation, stating the In Practice Guidance will provide a helpful view on the overarching pieces.
- MM recommended KM share the slides, and also have a SWAG Committee meeting dedicated to the IWWC agenda

Agenda Item 4: Once for Scotland Phase 3 Workforce Policies

- MM invited Steven Lindsay (SL) to discuss

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- SL gave an update on stage 3, the consultation, and has received 49 responses, 31 on behalf of organisations and 18 from individuals, and 2 manual responses. This is 5 less than last times. This translates into 372 individual comments for question one on the consultation document, which is for any gaps that the respondent perceives in the policy.
- SL stated that they are still on track to finish the consultation analysis by the end of June.
- SL asked if any members had questions.

Comments

- MM asked if there would be anything helpful for the group from SWAG, and if there is any impact from the supreme court ruling and if any policies need to be reconsidered in light of that.
- SL stated that when the time comes for these policies to be approved, it would be helpful for SWAG members to be able to give the time in their diaries to bring the policies through for approval and give a fair hearing. SL also stated that in light of the Supreme Court ruling, most of the changes would lie in the documents that were produced in Phase 2.2, which are currently on hold.
- AG stated that there are considerations being made to phase 2.2 policies before they go to approval for publication, for which the Cabinet Secretary has requested further reviewing from the Scottish Government on. AG does not anticipate that all policies in phase 2.2 be held back, but will have to go with advice from legal advisors, and is hoping for direction on that shortly.
- MM thanked SL for his contributions and asked for her thanks to be passed on to the programme team also.

Agenda Item 5: Review of Uptake and Engagement – Environmental eLearning

- MM introduced Anoushka Govias-Smith (AGS) to discuss the uptake and engagement for environmental e-learning.
- AGS, is in the climate change, sustainability and environmental team at NHS Scotland, who were responsible for coordinating the development of this e-learning course, which is an all staff course for clinical and non-clinical NHS Scotland staff.
- This was launched on 5th June Scotland-wide by the Sustainability action programme, and comprises of 4 videos that teach environmental sustainability training.
- AGS stated that there is 60% total uptake across the 22 boards, and it is mandatory for year one staff and new starts.

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- AGS stated that there is a risk that the uptake will continue to remain variable between all the boards and also low, and asked for advice and on how to proceed with increasing that uptake, highlighting the need for local boards to promote uptake locally.
- AGS welcomed any thoughts on how they can promote uptake.

Comments

- EW raised concerns about the volume of training expected of staff, particularly once they are working shift patterns. She stressed the importance of delivering training during work hours, as staff should not be expected to complete learning in their own time. She noted that onboarding/induction is a key opportunity to engage staff in eLearning and urged that training be succinct and outcome-focused, recognising this as a wider, systemic challenge.
- NP, as Co-Chair of the Protected Learning Time Group, explained that the group was formed following the 2023–24 pay negotiations, which committed to ensuring all mandatory/statutory/relevant training takes place during working hours. The group is currently standardising core statutory training modules across NHS boards, with the aim of developing a training passport transferrable between boards. A formal mechanism for proposing new mandatory training will be introduced in the second half of the year. Proposals will go to the Learning Leads Group for review and recommendation.
- NP expressed interest in Environment eLearning module and suggested connecting offline to explore a submission. Also noted the need to promote high-quality, non-mandatory training when it does not meet mandatory thresholds but is still relevant.
- MM supported a more joined-up national approach, suggesting the development of a single training catalogue through TURAS, rather than continued use of systems like LearnPro. Also noted a potential opportunity to raise awareness via Philip McLean's presentation to NHS Board Chief Executives in September; that Boards may be encouraged to report training uptake under public sector equality duty reporting, helping focus attention; and a need to clarify whether environmental eLearning should be one-off or recurring, as this affects expectations and implementation.
- AGS confirmed the module is live on TURAS Learn; a 40-minute course, comprising four videos and 21 practical actions staff can take to support sustainability in the NHS, and welcomed the offer to discuss the module further with Norman and agreed to loop in Ruth Innes (suggested by Ruth Paterson), whose team has developed a waste eLearning product.

• Outcome

- MM noted broad support for progressing the environmental eLearning module.

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- It was agreed that AGS would follow up with NP to explore how the module might be considered through the Protected Learning Time Group's formal mechanism for evaluating new mandatory training.
- RP suggested including Ruth Anish from the Assure Sustainability team in those discussions to align with related eLearning materials.
- MM reiterated her support for a single, centralised training catalogue on TURAS and flagged the potential opportunity to mention this work during the September Board Chief Executives' meeting, subject to space and messaging.

Actions

- AGS to contact NP to arrange a follow-up discussion.
- AGS to invite Ruth Innes to join that conversation to consider alignment with the waste eLearning module.