



SWAG Secretariat
Tuesday 17 February 2026
13:30 – 14:30
MS Teams

Attendees List

Confirmation of members in attendance at the time of writing:

Name	Organisation
Norman Provan (Chair)	Royal College of Nursing
Steven Lindsay	Unite
Gordon McKay	Unison
Mary Morgan	National Services Scotland
Fiona Hogg	Scottish Government
Jane Hamilton	Scottish Government
Christina Stokes	Scottish Government

Additional attendees:

Name	Organisation
Ronan O'Dowd (Secretariat)	Scottish Government
Catriona Hetherington	Scottish Government
Jenny Watson	Scottish Government
Robert Hamilton	Scottish Government
Isabella de Wit	Scottish Government

Apologies have been received from:

Name	Organisation
Jacqui Jones	NHS Lanarkshire
Pamela Jamieson	NHS Dumfries & Galloway

Agenda item 1: Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

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- The Chair welcomed SWAG Secretariat members and confirmed the meeting was quorate.
- Members were advised that Pamela Jamieson has replaced Elaine Watson as an employee representative on SWAG Secretariat, and Diane McDonald will be joining the SWAG Committee.
- Members were asked to note that an item on Paramedics in Community Urgent Care was included in the 2026 workplan. However, timeframes did not align. Exploratory is continuing. An update for SWAG will be provided as soon as possible after that. Members were content for this item to go to next SWAG Committee meeting on Tuesday 17 March.
- Minutes from the meeting on 20th January 2026 were agreed and members agreed to the recording of the meeting for note-taking purposes.

Decision	
D17022026(1)	Members agreed that the Paramedics in Community Care item will proceed to the SWAG Committee in March.

Agenda Item 2: ANP Uniforms

- FH advised that SWAG’s views are sought on the approach and next steps concerning uniform policy. The request is driven by the Nurse Practitioner role and their wish for a distinct uniform. Some Boards already have this measure in place, which is currently contrary to current national guidance and existing policy.
- FH noted that in the wider context, this is not a stand-alone issue, as other staff may also request their own uniform styles. Agreeing to a distinct ANP uniform may set a precedent, and views from members on this issue is needed.
- FH emphasised the need to maintain consistency across Scotland and uphold the ‘Once for Scotland’ approach. The ANP paper shared with members

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outlined procurement and financial issues of deviating from policy and posed questions on how to handle both the ANP request and the wider national approach.

Discussion

- The Chair invited thoughts and discussion from members.
- The importance of maintaining the 'Once for Scotland' approach for all uniforms was emphasised and concerns were expressed about some Boards designing their own uniforms. It was noted that while some flexibility has been shown in the past, the uniform contract has been challenging, and divergence from the national framework creates operational difficulties.
- One member reflected on the implementation of the current uniform contract, noting that requests for exemptions were previously resisted to ensure consistent colour schemes across Scotland and role identifications for patients. It was acknowledged that deviations would add to costs and the need for whether ANPs need to be visually distinguished from other nurses in a medical setting was questioned.
- Members highlighted that the purpose of the uniform was about cost-effectiveness and generating a "one team" approach to the health service. Members did not think that staff require role identification through uniform colours, as working practices should rely on staff introducing themselves and wearing badges that clearly identify them to patients. One member noted their favour of moving to a single uniform but advised that this would need to be enforced.
- One member suggested that the policy should be revisited and that consistency is important for staff, patients, and procurement. It was noted that uniform colours alone are unlikely to convey meaningful information to patients. It was suggested that the current model should be revisited, rather than continuing down the diversification route.
- One member reiterated that the purpose of the uniform is about protecting staff and being fit for purpose. They added that increased uniform variation raises potential security risks.

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- One member suggested focusing on bringing practice back in line with existing policy.
- A trade union representative reiterated the benefits of a simple uniform, noting previous issues with large numbers of styles and colours. Research conducted with focus groups showed that patients wanted staff to feel comfortable. Further deviation was also considered to be costly and unnecessary.
- The Chair proposed reviewing the current policy and restating key principles before returning with recommendations. Members agreed and SG will return to SWAG with a proposal.

Actions	
A17022026(1)	SG to issue a reminder to Boards that the extant National Uniform Policy CEL should be followed
A17022026(2)	SG to revisit the uniform policy to identify whether any minor changes or clarifications are required and bring any recommendations back to SWAG.

Agenda Item 3: iMatter – SLWG Update

- The chair invited CS to present on the iMatter SLWG.
- CS reported that the SLWG has met four times over the past year and have made several decisions.
- The group proposed revising the question on Board member visibility to: “Senior Leaders are sufficiently accessible and communicate effectively”. In the action plan, the term “areas for improvement” should be replaced with “areas for growth” to support staff morale. On Dignity at Work (DaW), the group felt that, while the topic is important, iMatter was not considered to be the appropriate vehicle for these questions. A separate approach aligns with the Strathclyde Review recommendation 6 and would ensure the sensitivity and focus required. The

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group therefore did not recommend incorporating DaW into iMatter.

- CS asked SWAG to approve the agreed changes, remove DaW from the improvement list, and allow the SLWG to continue to work on the remaining improvements. A replacement employer representative will also be required.

Discussion

- Members indicated general support for the proposals but advised that the revised “Senior Leaders” question combines two questions and should be reconsidered.
- Members raised concerns about the proposed wording of “Senior Leaders” noting whether staff share a consistent understanding. It was suggested the wording issues could be addressed by separating the question and providing clearer definitions. CS advised that the SLWG has considered an explanatory note but agreed further clarification may be needed.
- Members would want assurance that if DaW is removed from iMatter, that it would have a dedicated questionnaire, and recognised that financial constraints made an additional questionnaire unlikely. Until that commitment is made, then not in agreement for it to be removed from iMatter.
- One member raised concerns about survey fatigue and the costs associated with running another survey.
- Members agreed that DaW may not fit the core purpose of iMatter, but suggested SG consider options for including an additional question set in the main survey, given the previous financial restraints, to enable a way forward.
- The Chair noted that the wording changes should be resolved and agreed to revisit the DaW questions, potentially as a differentiated question-set in iMatter. He confirmed support of the SLWG to continue, agreed that SG to consider membership and next steps.
- One member emphasised the need to acknowledge the SLWG’s valuable contribution in this space.

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Actions	
A17022026(3)	The iMatter SLWG will revise the wording of the “Senior Leaders” question.

Decision	
D17022026(2)	Members agreed for the iMatter SLWG to continue working on the proposed improvements and consider how to incorporate Dignity at Work questions to the survey.

Agenda Item 4: Wellbeing Essential Needs

- RH explained that the original proposal was to establish a SLWG to take forward staff essential needs work. Following discussion, SWAG agreed this work would sit more appropriately as a formal subgroup with a broader ambition around health, safety and wellbeing.
- RH noted that there is an immediate Ministerial expectation to deliver on the NMT recommendation to develop a toolkit to ensure staff have their essential needs met at work.
- In developing the broader remit, the group have undertaken mapping work with health and safety personnel which has highlighted that health and safety is a complex, highly regulated landscape with established statutory structures and arrangements. To create a fully integrated group would require further detailed work.
- Given the urgency attached to NMT recommendation, RH asked members to establish the group with well-defined focus on well-being essential needs to allow the group to progress the Ministerial ask and work through the appropriate structure remit and membership required.
- RH explained that with this approach they will be able to deliver immediate progress on essential needs, maintain alignment with SWAG’s broader vision and avoid duplication and return with a more fully developed proposal for expansion.

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- RH seeks agreement from SWAG for the establishment of subgroup with initial wellbeing remit that will report back to broaden scope. If agreed, to ask that this item can be taken to SWAG Committee in March.

Discussion

- One member accepted that immediate inclusion of health and safety, given the statutory requirements, would be difficult but noted a future link via the new SWAG representative on the UK Staff Council.
- A staffside representative stressed that outputs of SWAG must apply to all staff. Another member supported a whole team focus and was content with decoupling but requested clearer timelines for revisiting health and safety.
- One member acknowledged concerns about remitted work but stressed the need to avoid parallel workstreams and ensure issues that are naturally within SWAG's remit are handled collectively. A member added that some issues, such as the flexible working policy does not work well for nurses and there may still be a need to be differentiated approaches in some cases.
- Members agreed to proceed with a wellbeing focused subgroup and revisit health and safety integration by the end of the year. Employer and staffside health and safety representation will be considered. The work will take an all-staff perspective.

Decision	
D17022026(3)	Members agreed to establish a wellbeing focused subgroup which will revisit Health and Safety by the end of the year.

Agenda Item 5: Workforce Planning Framework

- Isabella de Wit was invited to present on the draft workforce planning framework.

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- IdW advised that the draft sets out a strengthened approach to planning across NHSScotland. The framework is focused on improving how workforce planning is carried out, across national, sub-national and local levels. Input from SWAG is being sought with an opportunity for further written comments.
- The framework recognises that there can be variation in capability across all levels. There are three sections to the framework.
 - Clarifying the roles and responsibilities nationally and locally.
 - Improving capability across these levels.
 - Improving the breadth of quality of the workforce data intelligence.
- The draft is now being shared for input from different groups, with publication intended in the near future.
- IdW asked for SWAG's views on how best to connect this work with others, and whether it should be formally submitted to Committee.

Discussion

- One member agreed on the need to strengthen workforce planning but raised concerns about timing and the impact of Public Service Delivery Scotland (PSDS) from 1 April 2026. The importance of future-focused workforce intelligence was emphasised, noting current data is largely retrospective. Stressed the need for forward-looking workforce intelligence to understand how reforms will shape future roles and workforce needs.
- IdW agreed and highlighted the need for more scenario-based planning. She outlined a possible division of roles: SG setting national vision and priorities, with PSDS potentially supporting operational delivery, integration work, best-practice resources, and a future workforce intelligence function—though acknowledged this needs to be decided in discussion with PSDS once in place.
- Members reiterated the need for clarity on roles and responsibilities, noting PSDS may not see intelligence as part of their remit. They suggested a wider discussion through the Programme Board.

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- Another member noted that workforce planning is a highly technical process and questioned whether Boards have invested consistently in capability. Suggested that SWAG may benefit from a refresher session to support informed engagement.

Agenda Item 6: AOB

- The Chair invited members to raise any further business.
- One member asked whether the 'Once for Scotland' policies would be updated in time for the April Employment Act changes. SG confirmed papers are going to the Programme Board in February outlining the changes and Phase 3 remains on track for publication before the election period.
- A trade union representative raised a question concerning guidance following the Supreme Court judgment (FWS vs The Scottish Ministers).
- It was noted that SG wrote to Boards in September to reinforce the importance of ensuring that the law is followed, and the Supreme Court judgement implemented. This also highlighted the need for Boards to seek their own legal advice on this matter.
- Plans to publish the Gender Transitioning Guide and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy remain paused, pending further review following the publication of the EHRC code of practice. However as outlined in the September letter to Health Boards, employers must continue to ensure that the law is followed, and the Supreme Court judgement implemented.

Next Meeting: SWAG Secretariat Tuesday 28 April 2026, 10:00 – 11:00

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