

# Minutes (Approved)

## NHS NATIONAL SERVICES SCOTLAND BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2020 VIA TEAMS DIGITAL PLATFORM AT 0930 HRS

- Present:** Keith Redpath, NSS Chair  
 Julie Burgess, Non-Executive Director  
 Kate Dunlop, Non-Executive Director  
 John Deffenbaugh, Non-Executive Director  
 Lorna Ramsay, Medical Director  
 Alison Rooney, Non-Executive Director  
 Colin Sinclair, Chief Executive  
 Carolyn Low, Director of Finance
- In Attendance:** Gordon Beattie, Director of National Procurement [Items 14 & 15]  
 Jacqui Jones, Director of HR and Workforce Development [Items 1-13]  
 Deryck Mitchelson, Director of Digital and Security [Items 1-13]  
 Mary Morgan, Director, Strategy, Performance and Service Transformation  
 Matthew Neilson, Associate Director – Strategy, Performance and Communications [Items 1-13]  
 Lynsey Bailey, Committee Secretary [Minutes]
- Apologies:** Rachel Browne, Audit Scotland  
 Ian Cant, Employee Director  
 Mark McDavid, Non-Executive Director  
 Mark Taylor, Audit Scotland
- Observing:** Inire Evong, Audit Scotland  
 Stephanie Knight, Scottish Government

### ACTION

1. **INTRODUCTION**
  - 1.1 Mr Redpath welcomed all to the meeting which was being held virtually via the TEAMS platform.
  - 1.2 Before starting the formal business of the meeting, Mr Redpath asked the Board Members if they had any interests to declare in the context of the Agenda items to be considered. No interests were declared.
2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING [Papers B/20/55, B/20/56 and B/20/57 refer]**
  - 2.1 Members noted the minutes from 26 June and, following a brief discussion, approved them in full. Members then considered the minutes of 14 August and, following another brief discussion, also approved them in full.



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Chair Keith Redpath  
 Chief Executive Colin Sinclair

- 2.2 Members noted that majority of actions were either completed or covered by the agenda. In respect of the action to review Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) spend for future reporting, Members agreed this could be closed – they had been provided with the initial details and were content this would be monitored through the Finance, Procurement, and Performance Committee.

### **3. FEEDBACK ON RAMS**

- 3.1 Mr Sinclair spoke to his presentation on the process and outcomes for this year's Resource Allocation Meetings (RAMs), noting both the content overlap with other items on the agenda and the increasingly challenging and changeable current landscape. The response to the COVID 19 pandemic would continue be a major focus in the coming months so the work around Test, Trace and Vaccinate, and increasing testing capacity, would be a critical priority.

NSS would also play a major part in supporting NHS Scotland remobilisation. Members noted the other immediate priorities identified over the coming months, the key pieces of work which were part of the longer term focus, NSS's proposed strategic intent up to 2024, and the longer term opportunities and current risks. Members were updated on the status of the NSS recovery programme and how that was expected to progress.

- 3.2 Mrs Jones spoke to the slides summarising the workforce needs and planning, highlighting the focus on supporting staff working from home, embedding new ways of working to allow increased flexibility, and finding ways to maintain a positive staff experience.

Ms Low then spoke to the slides outlining the financial plans and the next steps, highlighting that the Scottish Government would be publishing its financial plans for 2021/22 and beyond in December 2020 and NSS's financial planning would be revisited in light of that.

There was a working assumption that COVID 19 related activities would be fully funded on a limited, non-recurring basis, and some of the fixed costs would be recovered. Following discussion about exploring opportunities to increase income generation, Members noted that this would form part of a wider strategy for delivering a balanced position rather than being taken in isolation. Members were very content and assured by the RAM update, and commended the clear, concise messages.

### **4. FLU VACCINATION PLAN [Paper B/20/61a refers]**

- 4.1 Members noted the paper, which summarised the preparations and plans for delivering this year's flu vaccine.

Members were given an overview of the system for monitoring the uptake and attendance at appointments. Members also discussed the possibilities for capturing data on staff who received the vaccine through their GP or a pharmacy. Members acknowledged that this would be reliant on staff voluntarily submitting that information but even though it was not likely to be fully reflective, it would be an enhancement on previous years' data.

Members discussed the communication plans for promoting the clinics, which would involve Board and EMT members, and were supportive. However, there was recognition this may be perceived as giving mixed messages and staff may experience a significant level of discomfort or reluctance about coming into the office for a vaccination - particularly in light of the newly announced restrictions. Members felt that it would be important to acknowledge that it may feel contradictory but

reassure staff that an appointment would involve minimal time in the office, emphasise the importance of flu vaccinations in supporting the COVID response, and highlight that travel/attendance for health and care appointments was a valid and appropriate exception.

Mrs Rooney summarised the discussions which had taken place around the flu vaccination plans at the recent NSS Clinical Governance Committee and Dr Ramsay gave an overview of the priority groups which had been identified to receive more personalised communication. The Board approved the plan as presented.

## **5. NSS FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020 [Paper B/20/71 refers]**

- 5.1 Members were pleased to note that there were no emerging themes or concerns in relation to feedback and complaints received, and that NSS's acknowledgement and handling rate remained consistently high.

Mrs Morgan highlighted the inclusion of the customer survey feedback and NSS's responses, as well as the new report format which provided consistency with other reporting. Members appreciated the new format and commended the work done to maintain NSS's track record in this area.

Members sought and received clarity on the definitions of customer effort, advocacy and customer satisfaction and Mr Neilson agreed to provide this context in future. Members asked if it would be possible to use Statistical Process Control data and were advised that this was being worked towards. Mr Neilson and Mr Deffenbaugh agreed to discuss this outside of the meeting. The Board approved the Annual report for publication.

**Action: Mr Neilson and Mr Deffenbaugh agreed to discuss use of Statistical Process Control to present data in future versions of the Feedback Report.**

**M Neilson/  
J Deffenbaugh**

## **6. CHAIR'S REPORT [Paper B/20/60 refers]**

- 6.1 Mr Redpath took Members through his update. In particular, he highlighted the overview of the recruitment arrangements put in place following Mr Sinclair's announcement of his intention to retire in March 2021.

Members were also provided with an update on the current non-executive recruitment, noting that the last few candidates were due to be interviewed the following day and a final outcome was expected in around three to four weeks' time.

## **7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE**

- 7.1 Members were advised that all Boards would be reviewing their planning for the next six months to ensure they were as prepared as they could be to meet the challenges likely to emerge in that time. Members were keen that the Chief Executives' Group thoroughly considered how resources like the Louisa Jordan hospital could be used to ensure that any response to increases in COVID 19 over the winter would not have the same impact on elective procedures as the initial response at the start of the pandemic.

On a personal note, Mr Sinclair wished to record his thanks for the well wishes he had received following the announcement of his intention to retire.

**8. PEOPLE REPORT [Paper B/20/61 refers]**

- 8.1 Members discussed the paper, which provided updates on a range of workforce issues such as sickness absence, case management, training, staff turnover, appraisals, recruitment, and occupational health, safety and wellbeing.

Members were pleased to note that the sickness absence rate had remained low in spite of the pandemic, with the short-term absence rate at the lowest rate it had been in the previous three years and only a small increase in the long-term absence rate.

Members were provided with an overview of the analysis undertaken into the impact of the increase in remote working on the accuracy of absence data, and the work being done to mitigate this. Members expressed concerns regarding any inaccuracy in the absence data, and where that might stem from, but they were advised that managers themselves did have accurate absence data. The issue was ensuring it was being properly recorded in each of the relevant centralised systems, as this needed to be done separately for each system. Members were assured that any errors in this had mainly arisen from staff adapting to new ways of working, which HR was supporting them with.

Members were very supportive of finding ways to allow these separate systems to share data more readily so that it only needed to be entered once.

- 8.2 Mrs Jones went on to highlight HR's work in supporting the establishment of the National Contact Tracing Centre, and exploring provision of a shared service to Social Security Scotland. Members asked about modern apprenticeships and were provided with an overview of the plans in place to continue NSS's commitment to that initiative.

On a more general note, Members were keen to understand how they would be assured about how managers were adapting their management style in line with remote working. Mrs Jones provided an overview of the current survey, which was being used to take a "temperature check" and identify any remedial steps that might need to be taken. Members would be updated on the survey results and outcomes through the People Report as appropriate.

**9. FINANCE REPORT [Paper B/20/62 refers]**

- 9.1 Members discussed the report in full, which advised that NSS was on track for meeting its financial objectives. In particular, Members were pleased to note that positive conversations had taken place with Scottish Government colleagues in respect of finalising the 2020/21 funding position and confirming the planning assumptions for future years.

Members acknowledged that, although the risk that NSS would not receive full funding for its COVID-19 support work was low, it would remain a risk until funding was allocated.

Members were briefly taken through the other actions underway, which had been agreed by the EMT or was being led by Ms Low. Members were assured that the strategic priorities over the next six months were being taken into account, any underspend that was not involved in remobilising services would be returned, and that the capital programme was on track. Members thanked Ms Low for her reassuring report.

## 10. DIGITAL AND SECURITY UPDATE [Paper B/20/63 refers]

- 10.1 Mr Mitchelson spoke to his report, which provided an update primarily in relation to the current focus on COVID-19 activities, but also provided an overview of the work across the National programmes and key Digital and Security updates.

Members were also given an update on digital platform work and the positive direction this had taken. The efforts made during the COVID-19 response work had meant NSS's reputation had never been higher in respect of Digital and Security. The relationship with Scottish Government was also stronger, with clear recognition of NSS's strengths and capabilities. Members were pleased to note the good progress which continued to be made.

## 11. UPDATES FROM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES [Paper B/20/64 refers]

- 11.1 Members noted the reports provided from the other committees. In particular, Ms Burgess wished to highlight two points of discussions at the recent NSS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) in particular.

The first highlight was the work to embed the Information Governance agenda following its inclusion in the ARC's remit. This had gone well and would be developed over future meetings. The second highlight from ARC was the discussion regarding service audit and the challenges in getting recognition of the progress made in recent months.

Ms Low assured Members that she was liaising with Mr Neil Thomas at KPMG to agree a solution. Members asked to receive monthly updates from Ms Low and gave her their full support in her approaches to KPMG.

Mrs Rooney wished to highlight the Clinical Governance Committee's decision to support a programme of undergraduate nursing student placements within NSS, as this was a particularly exciting new development.

**Action: Ms Low to provide monthly updates to Board Members on progress towards finding a solution in respect of Service Audit challenges. C Low**

## 12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- 12.1 Members had received the following items circulated for information only:
- NSS Staff Governance Committee Annual Report 2019-20 [paper **B/20/66** refers]
  - NSS Finance, Procurement and Performance Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 approved minutes [paper **B/20/67** refers]
  - NSS Staff Governance Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 approved minutes [paper **B/20/68** refers]
  - NSS Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019 approved minutes [paper **B/20/69** refers]
  - NSS Clinical Governance Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 approved minutes [paper **B/20/70** refers]

Other than requesting a brief amendment to paper B/20/69 to reflect Ms Burgess's attendance at that meeting, Members noted the papers as provided.

## 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1 Members were advised that a development session was being planned for 21 October 2020, which would be focussed on active governance.

**In Private Session****14. NSS REMOBILSATION PLAN**

- 14.1 Members discussed and noted the contents of the paper provided. Following assurances and clarification around availability of resources and the range of services in scope, Members approved the plan.

**15. WAREHOUSE CAPACITY**

- 15.1 The Board considered a report in regard to the above and thereafter heard Mr Beattie speak to the contents of the paper. Following some additional points of clarification on lease terms and how this aligned with existing capacity, Members agreed they were happy to approve the proposal, subject to confirmation from the Scottish Government about the necessary funding.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 16.1 The next ordinary meeting of the Board was scheduled to take place on Monday, 21 December 2020.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 1302 hrs