

WESTERN ISLES NHS BOARD
STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting
12th August 2021, 10.00am-12.30pm
MS Teams

Members Present

Uisdean Robertson
Dana Murray
Gillian McCannon
Abdul Elghedafi
Tim Ingram
Sheena Wright

Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Employee Director (Vice Chair)
Chair
Non-Executive Director
Non-Executive Director
Non-Executive Director

In Attendance:

Avril Keen
Chris Ann Munro
Louise Sullivan
Stuart King
Jane Bain
Jocelyn McConnachie
Christine Kennedy
Nick Fayers
Fiona MacKenzie
Dianne Weatherston

Director of HR and Workforce Development
UNISON
Head of Clinical Governance and Professional Practice
Employee Relations Officer
RCN
Non-Executive Director
Employee Relations Officer
IJB Chief Officer
Nurse/AHP Director/COO
PA to Director of HR and Workforce Development

1. WELCOME

Mr Robertson took the chair and welcomed those present.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted from Gordon Jamieson, Shuna Mighton and Debbie Bozkurt.

3. MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS

3.1 Draft Minutes of 13th May 2021

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3.2 Matters Arising

Action Plan

Ms Wright noted that she will meet with Mr King to discuss read across between the Staff Governance Action Plan and Whistleblowing Action Plan.

3.3 Action Points 13th May 2021

The Action Points were updated as per the log.

4. CONSTITUTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Mr Robertson presented the paper for noting.

The paper was noted with the following comments:

- 2.1, first bullet point - '*support delivery of efficient and effective*;' **incomplete statement.**
- 3.4 missing an '*and*' between NHS Board and Non-Executives...
- 9.4 the committee chair will report to the board on an exception '*basis*' rather than '*bases*'.
- Query if constitution should be amended to include Ms Jocelyn McConnachie
- Amend '*interim chair*' to '*chair from June 2021*'
- Consistency to be applied throughout, i.e. the terms 'NXD', 'non-executive directors', 'non-executive board members' are all mentioned. Request that only one term is used throughout for consistency.

Decision: Mrs Weatherston will relay the above bullet points to Mrs McPhail.

5. WORKFORCE REPORT

Mrs Keen presented the Workforce Report to the committee. Sickness absence has now been broken down into departments. She noted that if a department is very small, if one person is absent it can result in some misleading figures, i.e. in a department of four people, if two are off it shows a 50% absence rate.

The overall sickness absence is slightly increasing. This is a nationwide trend, and it appears to have started increasing since the schools broke up for summer holidays. It could be that people were stressed already, and now have school holidays to deal with, as well as existing work pressures etc. Mrs Keen stated that her team will work on sickness absence going forward. She noted that Occupational Health have also seen an increase in referrals.

Mr Elghedafi referred to the sickness absence by band. He noted that people could be identified when looking at the highest band, and he suggested that band 8 be grouped with the senior managers in order to ensure anonymity. The committee agreed to this amendment.

Ms Wright asked if Mrs Keen anticipates sickness absence reducing once the schools return. Mrs Keen is unable to anticipate if this will resolve on the schools return. She noted that the long-term absences need to be investigated on an individual case basis, and Mrs Anne MacLean has started working on this.

Ms Wright asked if there is a trend in terms of school holidays. Mrs Keen advised that there is no trend. There will be no comparisons for this year, as this year has been so different to any other.

Mrs Murray noted that from conversations she has had with various staff groups, they are feeling very tired. During the midst of the pandemic, there was an all hands on deck approach. This has been a long haul for staff and some are extremely tired. Some staff have reported finding it difficult wearing a mask and apron all day in a hot hospital, and there is no end point for staff in terms of getting back to a more normal way of working. There's also the issue that the patients staff are dealing with are sicker than pre pandemic. All this combined may become too much for staff, as they are physically and mentally exhausted.

Mr Ingram agreed with Mrs Murray's points. He noted that unless there is a good understanding of why people are absent due to sickness, then remedial steps can't be implemented. He asked if there are enough processes and resources to be able to reduce the risks to wellbeing, mental in particular. Mr Elghedafi noted the importance of understanding the pressures staff are under. Mr Fayers noted that more clarity from Scottish Government would be helpful in terms of working practices for staff.

Mrs Keen advised that the Board got an unannounced inspection from HIS at the beginning of July 2021. Staff gave feedback that they were well supported, and nothing negative was reported from that inspection.

Ms MacKenzie agreed that staff are weary and tired. She noted concerns that there are not enough nurses in the system, and that there is a need for things to be done very differently. A concern for staff in Western Isles Hospital, in particular, is the constant challenge of getting people back into the community, and delayed discharges. Hospital staff are supporting those acutely unwell, and also supporting those delayed discharges.

Mrs Bain referred to the musculoskeletal absences over the last 18 months. She noted that the intensity of activities carried out in the workplace hasn't reduced, however activities out-with the workplace were greatly reduced during lockdown, which will affect people physically. Mr Ingram asked if any of the musculoskeletal incidents were RIDDOR reportable. Mrs Bain noted that one incident which occurred in July 2021 was reportable.

Mr Ingram noted his concern for the executive team, and he noted the importance of ensuring everyone is able to care for themselves. Mr Fayers stated that the support between the executive team is very high. Mrs Keen agreed and noted that Mr Jamieson encourages support within the team. Ms MacKenzie echoes Mr Fayers and Mrs Keen's comments.

Mrs Keen advised that Eden Scott have been nationally procured as the recruitment agency for NHS Scotland. NHSWI have tasked them to recruit to Consultant posts. The campaign will target the whole of Scotland and possibly England.

Mrs McCannon thanked Mrs Keen and her team for pulling together this new detailed Workforce Report.

Decision: In the 'Sickness Absence by Band' section, Band 8 to be grouped together with senior managers to ensure anonymity.

6. WORKFORCE 3 YEAR PLAN MARCH 2022

Mrs Keen stated that an Integrated Joint Workforce Plan will be submitted to Scottish Government in March 2022. The plan will initially be presented to the Board, and then to this committee for noting.

Decision: The update was noted.

7. STAFF GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN

Mr King presented the Staff Governance Interim Action Plan Key Points from April 2020 to April 2021.

Mr Ingram referred to the 'Well Informed' section. He asked if there is a Communication Plan behind this. Mr King advised that there is a Board Communication Plan, and suggested Mr Ingram contact Mrs Jamieson, Head of Communications for further clarification around this.

Mrs McCannon referred to the 'Appropriately Trained' section, and asked how many staff signed up for the Leadership Programme. Mrs Sullivan advised that engagement was good, with 22 participants attending.

Mrs Keen asked the committee to bear in mind that this Interim Action Plan is already out of date, as it was valid from April 2020-April 2021.

Decision: The update was noted.

8. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mrs Keen stated that moving forward, a health and wellbeing strategy will be developed, and Mrs Anne MacLean will be progressing this. Mrs MacLean will be invited to the next meeting to provide an update.

Mrs Murray asked what groups of staff were spoken to in terms of the HIS report. Mrs MacKenzie advised that they went to all wards and spoke to SCNs, staff nurses and healthcare assistant. Ms MacKenzie suggested discussing this in more detail with Mrs Murray out-with the meeting. Mrs Murray agreed.

Decision: The update was noted. Ms MacKenzie and Mrs Murray will discuss the HIS report in more detail out-with the meeting.

9. WHISTLEBLOWING TRAINING

Mrs Keen noted that the intention is to make whistleblowing training statutory or mandatory for all staff, as a one off completion. Ms Wright stated that there will be two modules available on Turas, one for all staff and one specifically for managers, none of which are overly onerous.

Mr Wright advised that the office of the National Whistleblowing Officer will be holding seminars. The first one is due to take place on 7th September 2021 and will focus on the role of the confidential contacts. The seminars will be recorded, so that people can listen at a later date if they are unable to attend the session. Mr Elghedafi believes it's important for non-executives to have a brief awareness of whistleblowing. Mrs McCannon noted that an awareness session will be arranged for non-executives.

Ms Wright advised that as a Board, good progress can be demonstrated since the standards were issued on 1st April 2021. Ms Wright will provide a further update at the next meeting.

Decision: The updated was noted. Ms Wright will provide a further update at the next meeting.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY

10.1 RAG Status

10.2 Fire Safety Training

10.3 Mandatory Training

Mrs Bain presented the flash report and RAG status to the committee, and went through each in detail. She highlighted that 94% of staff have been Face Fit tested, which is likely as close to 100% compliance that will be reached due to absences/mask exemptions etc.

A room has now been allocated in WIH on a Monday and Tuesday to carry out moving and handling training, so training figures should increase.

Mrs Bain advised that ligatures continue to be monitored. Unfortunately, Fire risk assessments are on hold as Mr Kennedy is on sick leave.

Mrs McCannon noted concerns in relation to moving and handling training for medical staff which shows zero have completed the training. She asked if the training records for medical staff can be located and checked, to ascertain if they've done the training previously. Mrs Sullivan suggested she contact Ms Kirsty Tait to track down the training records for medical staff. Once the training record has been obtained and the position is clear, Ms Tait can liaise with Dr McAuley to discuss a way forward. Mrs Sullivan will also discuss how training is recorded with Ms Tait.

Action: Mrs Sullivan to contact Ms Kirsty Tait to request that she obtain the training records for medical staff. Mrs Sullivan to discuss how training is recorded with Ms Tait.

11. HOMEWORKING POLICY CONSULTATION

Mrs Keen advised that the Homeworking Policy has now been issued for consultation. There will be many comments from trade unions and managers around the whole of the country. Trade unions have been very vocal at STAC in terms of what they want to see in the policy.

Decision: The committee noted the update.

12. COMPENSATORY REST GROUP

Mrs Keen noted that the compensatory rest allocation wasn't fair or equal across the Board. A group have been meeting in partnership to work together to find a solution. A solution was reached and is currently being piloted by radiology and theatre. Both the final proposal and SBARs from both radiology and theatre will be presented to APF on 1st September 2021. If the proposal is approved by the APF, it will be added as an addendum to the Working Time Directive Policy.

Decision: The update was noted.

13. iMATTER

Mr King advised that the iMatter survey will be issued on 6th September 2021 and will be available for completion for a three-week period. Managers are required to update their teams between now and 6th September, to ensure correct reporting lines. Mr King noted that by the next meeting, survey reports will have been issued and he will provide an update.

The action plan period runs from 11th October to 12th December. During this time, managers should be looking at their reports and agreeing action plans with their teams.

The non-executives agreed they would benefit from an induction to the iMatter process. Mr King agreed to liaise with Mrs McPhail to find a suitable date.

Action: Mr King to arrange an induction to the iMatter process for the non-executives. Mr King to liaise with Mrs McPhail to find a suitable date.

14. HEALTH, SAFETY AND FIRE LEAD

Mrs Keen advised that a new Health, Safety and Fire Lead has been appointed. The successful candidate will take up post on 1st October 2021.

Decision: The update was noted.

15. HR MANAGER

Mrs Keen advised that a new HR Manager has been appointed. The successful candidate will take up post on 25th October 2021.

Decision: The update was noted.

16. INDUCTION

Mrs Kennedy advised that corporate inductions haven't taken place since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. It likely won't be appropriate for large groups to gather for some time to come, therefore the proposal is to look at starting an online corporate induction. Mrs Kennedy and Mrs Keen met with NHS Highland, as they already have an online induction, to gain some information. Mrs Kennedy has done a lot of research already, and the next step is to get a project team together to begin set up.

Mrs Keen noted that although corporate inductions haven't been held since March 2020, local inductions have continued throughout the pandemic.

Mrs Sullivan asked that if the Board commits, could resources also be used in other areas. Mrs Kennedy noted that yes, they could. NHS Highland have added onto theirs for other areas.

Decision: The update was noted.

17. PDPs

Mr King noted that one of the biggest issues in terms of restarting PDPs is data cleansing of the system, as the information needs to be up to date before rollout. However, this is currently underway, and in the coming weeks, we should be in a position to roll this out. Mr King advised that online training will be available via Teams.

Decision: The update was noted.

18. FOR INFORMATION

18.1 National Whistleblowing Standards

Noted for information.

18.2 PCS(AFC)2021-2 - Pay for Agenda for Change Staff

Noted for information.

18.3 PCS(SDIA)2021-1 - Scottish Distant Islands Allowance

Noted for information.

Mrs McCannon highlighted that there is no equity in terms of distant islands allowance (DIA). Mrs Keen advised that she has been participating in a sub group of STAC regarding DIA. The group agreed that NHS Scotland DIA should be in line with COSLA, and this has been supported by STAC, trade unions and national HR Directors. The agreed paper has been through STAC and is now with Scottish Government.

Mr Elghedafi agreed that DIA should be a set figure across all public sectors.

18.4 DL (2021)22- Self Isolation Exemption for Health and Social Care Workers

Noted for information.

18.5 CMO letter July 2021 – Shielding

Noted for information.

19. AOB

No other business was raised.

Mr Robertson closed the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Date: 11th November 2021

Time: 10.00-12.30

Venue: MS Teams

APPROVED