

**WESTERN ISLES NHS BOARD**  
**STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**12<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 11.00am-1.00pm**  
**MS Teams**

**Members Present**

Dana Murray  
Gillian McCannon  
Sheena Wright  
Abdul Elghedafi  
Julia Higginbottom  
Annetta Smith

Employee Director (Vice Chair)  
Chair of the Board  
Non-Executive Director/Whistleblowing Champion  
Non-Executive Director  
Non-Executive Director  
Non-Executive Director

**In Attendance**

Gordon Jamieson  
Fiona MacKenzie  
Stuart King  
Jane Bain  
Diane Macdonald  
Aaron Dawson  
Alana MacPhee  
Maggie Jamieson  
Nick Fayers  
Lena Morrison  
Chris Ann Munro  
Dianne Weatherston

Chief Executive  
Nurse/AHP Director/COO  
Organisational, Development and Learning Manager  
RCN  
HR Manager  
Health, Safety and Fire Lead  
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
Head of Communication and Patient Information  
IJB Chief Officer  
Employee Relations Officer  
UNISON  
PA to Director of HR and Workforce Development (Minutes)

**1. WELCOME**

Mrs Murray took the chair and welcomed those present. She is chairing today's meeting because Mr Uisdean Robertson is no longer the elected Local Authority representative to the Board.

Mrs Murray extended a special welcome to Mrs Lena Morrison, Ms Julia Higginbottom and Ms Annetta Smith to their first meeting. Everyone introduced themselves.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted from Shuna Mighton, Louise Sullivan and Debbie Bozkurt.

**3. MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS**

**3.1 Draft Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record, subject to the following amendment –

- Page 6, Item 10, Whistleblowing – replace the sentence *'Mr Elghedafi sympathised with Ms MacKenzie's situation, and appreciates that this is in addition to her own workload'* with *'Mr Elghedafi sympathised with Ms MacKenzie's workload pressures, but notes that whistleblowing is a fundamental part of Ms Mackenzie's role'*.

### **3.2 Matters Arising**

#### Minutes of 10.02.22, Page 1, Item 3.2 – Non-Exec Visibility

Mrs McCannon advised that there is now a plan in place to improve the visibility of non-execs. There will be a face to face meeting of the Board in June, and the non-execs have been asked to submit a report detailing their role and responsibilities. A photo will go along with the piece.

#### Minutes of 10.02.22, Page 3 – Recruitment

Mrs McCannon asked if there is any data regarding incidents where a successful candidate has been offered a post, and then subsequently turns it down. Mrs Macdonald stated that on this particular aspect, it is difficult to get reports from Job Train. Anecdotally, the vast majority of candidates who are appointed do take up the post. The organisation supports them in finding housing and in any other area that they require support.

### **3.3 Action Points 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

The Action Points were updated as per the log.

### **4. WORKFORCE REPORT**

Mrs Macdonald presented the Workforce Report and went through the data in detail.

There has been a slight increase in headcount over the last year from 1065 in March 2021 to 1017 in March 2022. A lot of that will be COVID related e.g. vaccination staff, Test and Protect.

There has been an increase in turnover over the last couple of years. Some of that is due to an increase in fixed term contracts, along with the pandemic and the changes to pension regulations.

In terms of sickness absence, COVID related absence has been the biggest pressure. There has also been a high amount of COVID special leave due to the increase in community transmission throughout February and March. The HR team have plans in place and are taking appropriate action with management regarding absence management. Patterns of absence that are causing concern will continue to be monitored.

Sickness absence by job family highlights Dental as an outlier. Management capacity within this area is an issue. Hopefully the recruitment of a new Dental Director will address this.

The main reasons for sickness absence are anxiety and musculoskeletal. There have been some issues with people recording absence stating 'unknown cause'. HR have worked with managers and this has reduced. HR will work with managers and continue to monitor this.

In terms of recruitment, some posts attract more applicants than others, e.g. FY1 and biomedical scientists received a high number of applications. There is an average of 3.5 applications by post.

The difficult to recruit to posts are speciality AHP posts, medics, catering and cook posts. HR are working with the Catering Manager to develop plans to link in with Lews Castle College to develop apprenticeships in that area.

Mr Elghedafi referred to the increase in staffing. He asked if there is an understanding on how many are fixed term contracts, permanent contracts. He asked if the extra COVID posts will be kept on. Mrs Macdonald stated that the biggest focus nationally was Test and Protect, and there are very few on fixed term contracts who had to be considered for

redeployment. Mrs Macdonald stated that she is aware of the risks that fixed term contracts could have for the organisation, and they won't be utilised if it can be avoided.

Mr Elghedafi highlighted the vacancies that have been advertised up to six or seven times. Mrs Macdonald noted that advertising posts repeatedly is not the answer, and stated that we need to look at alternatives. She added that there are national shortages in podiatry, and international options are being explored for that. Mr Elghedafi stated that he hasn't seen any jobs advertised with a market supplement. He suggested that perhaps this is more realistic to attract people to the NHS. Mrs Murray stated that RRP needs to be explored and considered for other areas.

Mrs McCannon noted that some senior managers are still not recording the cause of the sickness absence on SSTs. She asked if there is a way around this. Ms MacKenzie advised that Ms Frances Robertson is now in post as Interim Lead Nurse. She has previous experience implementing attendance management at NHS Grampian, so hopefully we will begin to see an improvement. Ms MacKenzie added that there are three relatively inexperienced SCNs in post, and we are working with them and working on a development programme.

Mr Fayers noted that 3-4 weeks ago local COVID cases per 100,000 outstripped any other area in Scotland since the start of the pandemic. With some small notable exception, services were maintained over that period of time. He commended all staff for making that happen.

Ms Wright referred to the age profile. She asked if there is any indication of retirement age e.g. nurses taking advantage of special class status. Mrs Macdonald advised that nothing significant is coming through. It's difficult to know as it's an individual choice for people to make.

Ms Wright referred to the national campaign to encourage nurses to move to Scotland from England. She asked if there have been any campaigns to encourage nurses to move from the mainland to the island. Mrs Macdonald stated that the national campaign wasn't successful for us as a Board. She added that there is an ongoing programme for return to practice for nurses. A post has also been developed for newly qualified nurses to gain experience in different wards over a 23 month period.

Mrs McCannon asked if there has been an increase in staff wanting to take their pension. Mrs Macdonald stated that there is no hard data on that. Mrs McCannon noted it would be useful to have data on who is retiring in each particular area. Mrs Macdonald will look at that data and report back.

Mr Elghedafi asked if career progression is being explored, e.g. HCAs who want to progress to nursing. He asked if the Board would provide some funding, support and time off to study. He believes that 'growing your own' will be one of the main solutions for recruitment. Mrs Macdonald fully agreed with Mr Elghedafi. Ms MacKenzie agreed and confirmed that this is happening. She stated that based on the Band 4 progression NES were working on, we are working alongside Practice Education, the Lead Nurse Acute and Lead Nurse Community. There is a lot of work ongoing to looking at skill mix and staffing. Mrs MacPhee referred to skill mix, and suggested an opportunity for Physiotherapy to look at problems that occur in hands.

Ms MacKenzie advised that opportunities are also being explored in the southern isles. We're looking at staff dual qualifying e.g. nurse and midwife. We have also put out some feelers in other areas and we have identified people who would consider a post and a move to the island.

Ms Smith referred to the long-term absences, particularly around mental health and musculoskeletal. She asked if there is an action plan either nationally or locally to support staff. Mrs MacPhee stated that there is some work that could go on around musculoskeletal absences, i.e. ensuring physiotherapy are seeing our staff members urgently to help get them back to work. She is not aware of any national initiatives. Ms MacKenzie and Mrs MacPhee will continue discussions out-with the meeting. Ms MacKenzie thanked Mrs MacPhee for her helpful suggestions. She noted the importance of promoting the professions and she added that we have a good group of staff and its important that we value them and support them.

Mrs Macdonald advised that wellbeing is a strand that is coming through nationally, and it's important that we get a good strategic element of what actually is employee wellbeing. She added that all long term absence goes through Occupational Health, and Mr Dawson is continuing work to ensure people have the skills they need to work safely.

Mrs Munro noted that the focus tends to be on nursing in terms of retirements etc. There is also an ageing workforce in support and admin services, which doesn't get the same attention. The level of applications in this area is poor. Mrs Murray agrees that this work needs to go on across the whole organisation and succession planning needs to be looked at in all areas. Mrs Macdonald stated that good workforce planning is key, and all managers should be involved in this.

Ms Smith noted that Mrs Munro has raised a very valid point in terms of admin and support staff. She asked if there have been links developed with the college. Mrs Munro advised that she is linking in with the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme.

**Decision: The update was noted.**

**Action: Mrs Macdonald to look at data on who is retiring in each area.**

## **5. STAFF GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN**

Mr King presented the Staff Governance Action Plan. This will be a standing agenda item, which will be updated ahead of each quarterly Staff Governance Committee meeting.

Mrs McCannon referred to the health and safety figures on page 13. These have been signed off as green, however she believes this should be amber, as it is not complete. Mr King agreed. He will amend this section to amber.

Mr Elghedafi noted that the current trajectory is heading in a positive direction, however it's not moving as quick as he envisaged. Mrs McCannon agreed, however this is mainly due to training not being carried out as a result of COVID restrictions and outbreaks. She appreciates that there is a lot of work to do, while being mindful that Health and Safety is a very small team. Hopefully as we come out of the pandemic, the pace will be increased.

**Decision: The update was noted. Mr King will amend the figures on page 13 from green to amber.**

## **6. iMATTER**

Mr King presented the iMatter briefing paper which was circulated ahead of the meeting. He went on to explain iMatter to the new attendees.

Mr King advised that the iMatter questionnaire will be issued in June this year. Response rates have improved each year. Staff engagement will continue to ensure we get a good

response again. The overall report for the Board should be available for presentation at the next meeting.

**Decision: The update was noted. Mr King to present the iMatter report for the Board at the next meeting.**

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **7.1 RAG Status**

### **7.2 Fire Safety Training**

### **7.3 Mandatory Training**

### **7.4 LearnPro**

### **7.5 HSE Update**

### **7.6 H&S Information Sharing SBAR**

Mr Dawson presented the Health and Safety papers. He advised that going forward, the Flash Report will no longer be presented. Mr Dawson went on to provide a comprehensive H&S update.

In terms of training, progress hasn't been as good as hoped. This was due to a high number of COVID positives amongst staff, and staffing pressures. Mr Dawson forecasts that the red areas will be amber by the end of the year.

Mr Philip Grieve and Mr Peter Lerpiniere from NHS Borders visited NHSWI to provide some expert advice on ligature risks. A lot of learning was taken from the visit, and a ligature action plan has been created off the back of that. Mr Dawson and Mrs Bain have another meeting with Mr Lerpiniere next week. Mrs McCannon noted that she is pleased to see the work on ligatures, and thanked Mr Dawson and Mrs Bain for taking the action plan forward.

The Fire Service completed their annual visits of all WI hospitals. The reports have been received for UBH and St Brendan's, and the H&S team are working through the recommendations.

Walk-rounds have commenced after being on hold due to COVID outbreaks and staff pressures. It is a positive step forward to get back out to meet staff and help with any safety concerns they have.

A trial period will commence for a new Lone Working System (People Safe), which has been recognised and used by other Boards. Mr Dawson met with one of the leads from People Safe and has negotiated a trial period of 10 units for 30 days. He's in the process of completing the paperwork to get the trial underway.

Mrs McCannon thanked Mr Dawson for the update. She noted that the amount of work that needed to be caught up on for such a small team cannot be underestimated, and she can see the influence Mr Dawson has had on this already. Mrs McCannon thanked Mr Dawson for all his work.

Mrs McCannon referred to face fit testing for those with smaller faces. She asked what the alternative options are for them. Mr Dawson advised that fully adjustable masks are on their way, so this will suit those with smaller faces.

Mrs McCannon suggested that one H&S paper be presented at future meetings, rather than multiple documents. Mr Dawson agreed and noted that this is the plan going forward. The committee were also in agreement.

Mrs McCannon referred to the attendance pie chart and asked if this could have different colours rather than three shades of blue, so the data can be seen more clearly. Mrs

Bain apologised and explained that she has a new Excel system on her PC, which she is still getting to grips with it. She agrees that different colours would be better.

Mrs McCannon referred to training cancellations. She asked if there is a benchmark cut off for non-attendance i.e. if someone keeps cancelling repeatedly. She highlighted that the staff member has a responsibility to attend. Mrs Bain advised that there is no process for that. Mr Dawson appreciates that the majority of recent cancellations have been due to the COVID outbreaks and associated staff pressures.

**Decision: The update was noted. It was agreed that going forward, one H&S paper will be presented rather than multiple documents.**

*Mr Jamieson joined the meeting.*

## **8. WELLBEING**

Mr King presented the Wellbeing briefing paper.

Mr King highlighted the introduction of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which can be accessed by staff members and their families. He went on to explain the services available through the EAP. He has held some awareness sessions for staff. A recording of this has been uploaded to the intranet so staff can access it at a time convenient to them. Mr King advised that he will be able to gather data around what the topics of concern are of the people that are using the service. This will be done confidentially and no one will be named.

Mrs McCannon thanked Mr King for the update. She noted it will be interesting to see what the uptake is.

**Decision: The update was noted.**

*Mrs MacPhee left the meeting.*

## **7. APPRENTICESHIPS**

Mr King presented the Apprenticeships briefing paper. It is hoped that this can play a small part in succession planning. He added that in coming years, the hope is that we can expand and 'grow our own'.

Mr King attended some career fairs in March. He highlighted that some of the young people he met have a desire to stay on the island.

Ms Higginbottom asked if there are any other avenues to do outreach work, for example an open day in the hospitals so that people can see what is on offer. Mr King advised that different ways of promoting the organisation are being explored.

Mrs McCannon asked if Mr King has linked in with Skills Development Scotland (SDS). Mr King confirmed that he has linked in with SDS and the local employment team at CnES.

**Decision: The update was noted.**

## **10. SGC ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

Mrs Murray presented the Staff Governance Committee Annual Report 2021-22 for approval.

No comments were noted. The committee approved the report.

**Decision: The Staff Governance Committee Annual Report 2021-22 was approved.**

**11. WHISTLEBLOWING**

Ms Wright advised that Ms MacKenzie took over as chair of the Whistleblowing SLWG on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. The SLWG last met on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022. The national network of whistleblowing champions have met twice since the last SGC meeting.

Ms Wright advised that the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer attended part of the Board Development session on 30<sup>th</sup> March, which was well received. They are keen for local reps to engage with them.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March the national whistleblowing champions group met with the Cabinet Secretary. It was a very productive and constructive meeting. He stated that there would be a renewed focus on whistleblowing post pandemic.

Mr Elghedafi asked if there is a confidential whistleblowing email address where people can direct their concerns. Ms MacKenzie advised that there are specific confidential contacts who are known throughout the organisation and can be contacted directly.

Ms MacKenzie advised that the bigger launch is a work in progress. Mr Elghedafi highlighted that progress isn't moving as quick as it could be. He stated that this is a priority of Scottish Government and of the Cabinet Secretary. He added that mainland Boards are moving with some speed. He went on to ask if there is a communications plan in place. Mrs Jamieson confirmed that the channels and communications plan are in place and will be ready for issue at the launch.

Mrs McCannon stated that there was an early soft launch of the whistleblowing standards to ensure that staff had this available to them. She added that there have been some whistleblowing incidents and it has been reflected that people are fully aware of the process and how to access it. From where we are now, compared to where we were, things have moved forward significantly. No feedback or concerns have been received from the Cabinet Secretary. Mrs McCannon stated that timeframes are challenging when trying to deal with all the other priorities.

For assurance to Mr Elghedafi, Mrs McCannon will give him access to the notes and action points of the SLWG. Mr Elghedafi noted his appreciation of the work that Ms MacKenzie and Ms Wright do behind the scenes to push this through.

For further assurance, Mr Fayers confirmed that from his experience, staff are aware of the whistleblowing process.

**Decision: The update was noted. Mrs McCannon will give Mr Elghedafi access to the SLWG notes and actions by way of assurance.**

**12. TURAS APPRAISAL/LEARN**

Mr King presented the briefing paper. During March, 12 training sessions were delivered for both employees and managers. Separate guides have also been developed for employees and managers, and both are available on the intranet. Mrs Jamieson also circulated them to staff.

Mr King noted that it will be a lengthy and ongoing process to reach 100% compliance.

**Decision: The update was noted.**

**13. FOR INFORMATION**

**13.1 DL(2022)08 - The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

Noted for information.

**13.2 NHS Circular 2022-04 Employee contribution tiers from 1 April 2022 v2**

Noted for information.

**13.3 PCS(AFC)2022-1 - Organisational Change Pay Protection**

Noted for information.

**13.4 DL(2022)11 – Temporary Increase to NHS Scotland Mileage Rates**

Noted for information.

**14. AOB**

No other business was raised.

Mrs Murray closed the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

Mrs McCannon thanked Mrs Murray for chairing the meeting.

**15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Time: 10.00-12.30

Venue: MS Teams