

# minutes

## ***Assistant Practitioners Group Meeting***

***24th October 2019, Boardroom 2, Gyle Square, Edinburgh***

**Author:** Karl Hope

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In attendance:

Dr Fiona Hawke (chair)

Dr Valerie Blair

Ms Louise Mifsud

Mrs Maria Murray

Ms Kayleigh Brock

Ms Lorna Brown

Ms Kim Dakers

Ms Morag Dickson

Mr Iain Dignam

Ms Lesley Hogg

Ms Anne-Marie Howley

Ms Julia McIntosh

Ms Celine McNeil

Ms Patricia Meikle

Ms Karen Morris

Ms Catherine Munro

Ms Anne-Marie Ross

Ms Denise Shaw

Mr Karl Hope

SCIN Imaging Manager

AHP Programme Director

Course Director

Professional Officer

NHS Borders

NHS Education for Scotland

Robert Gordon University

Society of Radiographers

Programme Support Officer

NHS National Services

### **1 Welcome, Apologies & Introductions**

Dr Hawke, acting as temporary chair for this afternoon, welcomed all to the first Assistant Practitioners Group meeting.

### **2 Discussion around the format & name of this group**

Dr Hawke raised several possibilities with the group over how they may wish to hold and structure meetings, including the options of meeting in person, and engaging in 'virtual meetings' via teleconference or video conferencing programs.

Dr Blair added the option of using Microsoft Teams, which is currently being rolled out across NHS IT systems as part of upgrades to Microsoft Office.

All members present gave approval for their names to be on a mailing list for the group, to be kept by the subsequently-elected office bearers.

Mrs Murray asked the group what they would like to gain from this type of forum, to which there was a clear response of knowing what other areas are doing – allowing benchmarking of own practice, and suggestion of changes to management, among assistant practitioners (APs).



Chair Keith Redpath  
Chief Executive Colin Sinclair  
Director Fiona Murphy

*NHS National Services Scotland is the common name of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service*

For the name of the group, Ms Morris suggested “**Assistant Practitioners Radiography Online Network Scotland (APRONS)**”. There was unanimous approval for this suggestion, which was subsequently adopted as the name of this group going forward.

Ms Meikle noted that whatever ‘online’ solution the group uses needs to be accessible all the time – giving the example that internal NHS websites are not accessible outside of the corporate network.

### **3 Selection of office bearers**

Ms Munro was proposed as chair of the group by Dr Hawke. The nomination was seconded and passed. Ms Morris was nominated as vice-chair of the group. This was also seconded and passed. Lastly, Ms Howley volunteered as secretary of the group. This nomination was also seconded and passed.

This resulted in the following office bearers being appointed:

- **Chair:** Ms Catherine Munro
- **Vice-Chair:** Ms Karen Morris
- **Secretary:** Ms Anne-Marie Howley

### **4 Terms of Reference (ToR)**

The draft ToR document was presented to the group by Dr Hawke.

In terms of who to report to, the group accepted the suggestion by Dr Hawke that they report to Mrs Murray, in her capacity as Professional Officer at the Society of Radiographers. The membership of the group was decided as extending to all assistant practitioners working within radiography in Scotland. Office bearers were noted as above.

For the frequency of meetings, the group resolved to hold an annual event, and engage in regular online contact, with minutes of meetings being cascaded to group members and published more widely on the Scottish Clinical Imaging Network (SCIN) website.

Changes to the ToR were actioned ‘live’ by Mr Hope during the discussion, and the revised document will be sent to Ms Munro for confirmation and wider circulation among the group members. Mr Hope also resolved to update the SCIN website to provide a repository for any documents generated by the APRONS group.

**Action: Mr Hope**

### **5 Talk by Maria Murray (Professional Officer, Society of Radiographers)**

Mrs Murray delivered a talk on the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR). This was well received by members of the group, and generated robust discussion around the perception of assistant practitioners, and their role within their respective centres.

Group members were encouraged to update their Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IRMER) records where possible.

**Action: All group members**

On a discussion around the Scope of Practice (SoP) document for APs, Mrs Murray also encouraged all group members to check their own SoP document, and compare their day-to-day work with what is actually permitted under their SoP. Discrepancies should be highlighted to management, and/or to SCoR, as appropriate. Mrs Murray noted that if any SoP is more than 5 years old, it should be reviewed and updated as soon as possible.

**Action: All group members**

Regarding specific issues highlighted in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (GG&C), Mrs Murray offered to speak to the relevant Board.

**Action: Mrs Murray**

Mrs Murray also asked the group what they believed their managers would like them to do. Multiple members mentioned the use of APs in theatre; while others highlighted the ability to send images on or undertake discharge of patients without the need to have every move signed off by a registered practitioner. Dr Hawke noted that, in order to be covered legally and in terms of liability, any change to these procedures *must* be reflected in the local SoP and IRMER entitlement before any of these activities can take place.

## **6 Talk by Valerie Blair (AHP Programme Director, NHS Education for Scotland)**

Dr Blair delivered a talk on opportunities available to the group through NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and on career development. This was also well received by members of the group.

Dr Blair noted that there is funding available through NES for an education event or study day. However, Dr Blair added that NES has to apply for this funding from central government, and would lose access to this opportunity in mid-November. Therefore, NES would need to know as soon as possible if the group wished to hold an event prior to the start of the new financial year in April 2020. Dr Blair encouraged the group to come up with ideas for such an event.

Dr Hawke suggested that Mrs Murray or another staff member from SCoR could deliver a talk on accreditation. Dr Blair noted that the format of the event is flexible – suggesting it could take the form of a main theme with 'breakout' sessions, or a standard conference affair. She highlighted that the main aspect of any event is that it must show it is beneficial and useful for its intended audience.

When asked by Ms Mifsud what the deadline was for submitting an event outline, Dr Blair replied that NES just need to know at the moment if an event is wanted, adding that the event must be held before the end of March 2020. When asked by Dr Hawke if they were in favour of having an event before then, the group gave unanimous approval.

Dr Hawke suggested that Ms Munro put out an urgent request for suggestions for the event to the SCIN AP list. Mr Hope agreed to send the distribution list to Ms Munro as soon as possible for actioning this. Mrs Murray suggested giving a deadline of 7<sup>th</sup> November for suggestions.

**Action: Mr Hope / Ms Munro**

Members were also encouraged to feed back to Ms Munro if they knew any AP colleagues who should be included either in such an event or in APRONS in general.

The question arose as to whether to include trainees and abdominal aorta aneurysm screening technicians (AAAs) in both the event and the APRONS group more widely. Dr Hawke noted that the purpose of an education event should be to encourage inclusivity even if not all aspects are of interest to all people. No consensus was reached by the group on the inclusion of trainees and AAAs, therefore Dr Hawke suggested the group decide a policy on this at a subsequent meeting.

**Action: Ms Munro**

Mrs Murray highlighted the potential difficulty of holding a learning event during the normal working week, adding that it would be impossible for all APs on the distribution list to either get the time out of work, or travel from work to an event. Mrs Murray therefore suggested holding the event on a Saturday, though noted that not all centres allow employees to get time off in lieu. When asked by Dr Hawke if they would be in favour of holding an event on a Saturday, a majority of the group gave tentative agreement, but noted that it would be difficult to confirm for certain at this stage.

Mrs Murray added that if members can feed back information to her on their local SoP documents, a workshop could be run at this event on extending Scopes of Practice.

**Action: All group members**

## **7 Next Steps**

Ms Munro highlighted the lack of official uniforms for APs, noting that there is no consistency between NHS Boards on AP uniforms. Ms Munro noted that in some Boards, APs wear the same uniform as helper staff or auxiliaries, which may affect their image in the eyes of patients.

Ms Morton noted that the reason usually cited is the embroidery – there is no official AP embroidery on the Scottish Office list of allowed embroideries. Ms Meikle noted that the uniforms could still be blank, or use more generic terminology like “Healthcare Science” instead. Mrs Murray added that the use of “Healthcare Science” on AP uniforms may require the wearer to be a member of the SCoR voluntary register.

Dr Hawke and Mrs Murray agreed to take the case for uniforms to higher levels within the NHS, and to feed back to the APRONS group. Mrs Murray also resolved to mention concerns raised today at the next SCIN Steering Group meeting.

**Action: Dr Hawke / Mrs Murray**

It was noted more generally by group members that management need to recognise the importance of APs to the field of radiography, adding in one case that APs have not even been included on departmental descriptions. Dr Hawke responded that Mrs Murray is pursuing this matter.

Returning momentarily to the subject of the potential education event, Ms Morton suggested that the event cover material such as IRMER guidelines, basic standard operating procedures, etc., so that group members can justify to managers exactly what they can and cannot be asked to perform. There was general agreement from the group on this.

Moving on, Mrs Murray asked if one of the group could volunteer to be a representative on the Scottish Council of SCoR, to provide a voice to the Society at Board level. Ms Meikle volunteered to take this duty on.

Mrs Murray also asked permission to highlight issues discussed in this meeting in the next Scottish Council report, and in reports to diagnostic managers. The group assented to this. Mrs Murray also noted that workplace grievances should be reported to the local SCoR representative rather than to her personally, as the trade union branch of SCoR deals with those, rather than her office specifically.

The group also wished to note that they are proud of the work they do as APs, and that they would like to feel appreciated in this. Ms Ross noted that APs should feel appreciated, as they form the backbone of radiology departments.

Ms Brown noted that she has a poster on the role of APs that could be presented to highlight the position to anyone unaware. Mr Hope agreed to sort a display for this poster at the SCIN Radiography Event on 7<sup>th</sup> November. Ms Brown resolved to send an electronic version of the poster to Mr Hope.

**Action: Ms Brown / Mr Hope**

Mrs Murray noted that all group members will likely have to give a report to their managers on any learning outcomes or personal actions from today’s meeting, and added that this could provide a good opportunity for members to check their personal Scope of Practice. Ms Mifsud also added that if Robert Gordon University can support or collaborate with the group in any way, to contact her.

## **8 Close**

Dr Hawke closed the meeting at 1600. The group resolved to communicate and arrange a subsequent meeting date in due course.

**Action: Ms Munro**