

# NATIONAL SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM (SPF) FACTSHEET



The National SPF brings together system leaders from NHS England, Health Education England, NHS Improvement, Department of Health, NHS Employers and NHS Trade Unions. The forum enables partners to discuss and debate the development and implementation of policy where there are workforce implications; supporting a co-ordinated approach to service transformation, service delivery and a healthy NHS culture and good staff experience. We also promote the benefits of partnership working between employers and trade unions across the health sector.

## Why work in partnership?

The NHS Constitution requires the NHS to commit to 'engage staff in decisions that affect them and the services they provide, individually, through representative organisations and through local partnership working arrangements'. The SPF recognises what a powerful tool partnership working between employers, policy makers and trade unions can be, and how it makes a real difference to patient care and influences employment practice in healthcare and beyond.

In July 2016, the **SPF partnership agreement** was signed by all partner organisations. The agreement describes the aims of the SPF, partners' shared values and principles for effective joint working.

The how we do partnership hub on the SPF website contains useful tools and resources, and details of the growing body of **academic evidence** on the benefits of true partnership working.

In 2015, an independent review of the SPF concluded that it '**remains one of the most advanced forms of industrial partnership in the British public sector in terms of the quality of the dialogue, the range of issues covered, and its impact on workforce policy**'.

*"Through the SPF, we are able to hear about policy that impacts on the health workforce and influence its development and implementation so that it delivers maximum benefits for patients. Being a member of the SPF gives NHS Employers an opportunity to build on our strong and constructive relationships with partners in the NHS Trade Unions and to work together to address issues and concerns. Partnership working also helps us to deliver products and services that better meet the needs of the NHS."*

**Danny Mortimer, Employer Chair of the SPF and Chief Executive, NHS Employers.**

*"The basis of social partnership is our shared aim to support the NHS workforce to deliver high quality health care services for everyone. Partnership working between employers and trade unions provides a vehicle for genuine engagement whereby staff are consulted and involved in the decisions that affect them, and where they can work with the employer to address issues of concern and agree joint solutions."*

**Christina McAnea, Staff Side Chair of the SPF and Head of Health, UNISON.**

See our website and sign up to our bulletin at:  
[www.socialpartnershipforum.org](http://www.socialpartnershipforum.org)



## What we do

### Supporting system change

A seven day services SPF sub group is looking at the workforce implications of moving to a seven day NHS. The SPF has been working closely with system partners, around development of Sustainability and Transformation Plans and New Care Models. The Care Quality Commission has worked with the SPF around incorporating staff engagement and partnership working into its inspection regimes. The SPF was also instrumental in developing the NHS Pensions Access arrangements and is continuing to support its implementation.

### Tackling bullying in the NHS: a collective call to action

The call to action, signed by Minister and SPF co-chairs in December 2016, recommends a partnership approach in NHS organisations to tackle bullying. The tackling bullying in the NHS web page in the priority areas section on the SPF website, includes links to useful tools and resources developed by partner organisations to improve workplace culture and tackle bullying.

### HPMA partnership award

The SPF sponsors the Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA) award for partnership working between employers and trade unions. A collection of case studies from the 2015 and 2016 partnership award finalists are available on the HPMA partnership award web page on the SPF website.

### Guidance for social partnership working in developing and implementing new care models and system transformation

Published in September 2016 and available on the supporting system change web page in the priority areas section on the SPF website, this guidance aims to support the development of partnership arrangements at cross organisational/new care models and regional level to facilitate effective system change.

### SPF staff transfer guide

The online toolkit was developed in partnership and is available in the priority areas section on the SPF website. It is an easy to use, practical guide to an individual's employment standards and rights, when they transfer to another provider of NHS funded services.

### HR transition guidance

Developed in partnership to support workforce changes arising from the Health and Social Care Act 2012 transition, the guidance has been republished so that useful extracts can be used to support future change processes. The guidance is available in the about us, how we do partnership section on the SPF website.

### Staff engagement guidance

Developed by the SPF as part of the Government's response to the Mid Staffordshire NHS FT public enquiry, the guidance is available in the priority areas, Francis SPF key messages section on the SPF website.

### SPF Learning for Life campaign

Many of the resources developed for the campaign, which promoted learning and development for NHS staff, are still relevant and are available via the learning for life web page in the priority areas section on the SPF website.

### Partnership case studies

Case studies showing the positive outcomes that can be achieved through employers and trade unions working together are available on the case studies web page on the SPF website.

## Contact the national SPF team

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