

Social Partnership Forum – Key Achievements (September 2016 – September 2017)

This document sets out the achievements and impact of the national Social Partnership Forum (SPF) over the past 12 months, highlighting where the SPF has supported the NHS and made a difference to policy which is impacting on the NHS workforce.

NHS culture and staff experience

- The SPF Workforce Issues Group (WIG) developed a programme of work to tackle bullying in the NHS, [a collective call to action](#), which was signed by the Minister, employer and trade union SPF co-chairs and published in December 2016. The call to action invites all NHS organisations to: achieve the overarching leadership and cultural change to tackle bullying; support staff to respectfully challenge problem behaviours and publish their plans and progress so staff, patients and the public can hold them to account.

In February 2017, letters from regional SPF trade union and employer chairs were sent to the chief executive, HR director and trade union lead in each provider trust and to the accountable officer in each CCG. A letter from the national SPF co-chairs was also shared with HR leads in independent providers. These letters encouraged organisations to use the 'call to action' as an opportunity to build on partnership working in their organisation to promote a positive workplace culture. The call to action document has been promoted through a dedicated web page on the SPF website. This web page also includes useful information and tools and resources on supporting a positive workplace culture and tackling bullying. Other mechanisms used to create awareness of and encourage organisations to respond to the call to action include: references in SPF and partner organisation bulletins and promotional material distributed at conferences, including Confed17. Visits to the tackling bullying web page on the SPF website show the interest generated with 3386 page views between it being launched in December 2016 and August 2017.

Through close working with the regional SPFs, the national forum is helping to maintain momentum with this important initiative. Regions have interrogated NHS Staff Survey data; set up task and finish groups to support positive workforce cultures and are following up with organisations in their patch to find out progress made taking forward the call to action. This work is recorded in the regional SPF action log and good practice is being identified which will be developed into case studies which will be shared via the SPF website.

The SPF has raised the profile of the partnership approach to tackling bullying and supporting a healthy culture in NHS organisations.

Service transformation

- Following a request from North of England SPF for a staff friendly guide to system change, the WIG developed and, in June 2017, published a [jargon buster](#) which provides a guide for staff working across health and care, to assist them to understand new terminology around system change. The guide is supporting engagement with staff and trade unions in system change and is also providing a universal understanding of the terms used in developments arising from the Five Year Forward View. The need for such a guide is demonstrated by the number accessing it with 227 views in the first week of it going live. The SPF through its partners was well placed to produce this system wide tool that will be maintained and kept up to date.
- Sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) - The national SPF held two STP workshops in January and February 2017 where the workforce implications of the STPs was discussed with staff side, employers and STP policy leads. These workshops enabled partnership working with the key players at a national level on these major policy developments and resulted in the co-chairs of the SPF discussing with Simon Stevens the content, relating to

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the workforce, of the Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View document published in March 2017. These discussions resulted in the inclusion of the need to work with trade unions in de-risking service change, which has led to a greater awareness amongst senior leaders in the NHS of the need to have in place effective staff engagement and partnership working in the STPs, and to provide reassurance to staff on the plans.

- Providing guidance on staff transfers – The [SPF Staff Transfer Guide](#) was further updated in June 2017 to reflect the changes to NHS Pension Scheme which extended the entitlement to the pension scheme to staff working for an organisation subcontracted to provide NHS funded clinical services. The changes also reflect developments related to NHS England’s new models of care as described in the Five Year Forward View. Additionally, the [Pension Access FAQs and the New Fair Deal FAQs](#) have been also reviewed and updated. These pages consistently remain in the top five pages viewed on the SPF website.
- Members of the WIG were consulted on the development of the Health Education England (HEE) Mandate 2017/18, with trade unions raising issues around: sufficient HR and admin capacity in new services; setting apprenticeship standards; the impact of the withdrawal of healthcare bursaries and long-term plans for funding post-registration healthcare qualifications. The Department of Health responded to each point raised and advised they would reflect on these whilst developing the mandate.

Service delivery

- Apprenticeships - An SPF workshop was organised on NHS apprenticeships for members of the SPF Strategic Group on 31 January 2017. The workshop was opened by the Minister and chair of the SPF, Philip Dunne. North Bristol NHS Trust provided an excellent case study on how to embed apprenticeships as a core part of its business model and workforce planning strategy. The outcomes from the workshop were: national and regional SPFs are supporting and promoting local and regional collaborations between employers and higher education institutions across the STP areas and better engagement with regulators to help ensure a focus on quality.

Following this workshop a good example of an apprenticeship implementation project, [Aintree](#), was showcased at the July wider meeting. As well as presenting on their good work, the representatives from Aintree fed back to the Department of Health issues they are experiencing, which are impacting on their ability to fully utilise the opportunities with the new apprenticeships levy.

SPF has ensured that NHS Employers and NHS Staff Side now have seats on the national DH Apprenticeship Oversight Group, which has been established with Arm’s Length Bodies (ALBs). Members of the national SPF have worked closely with DH and the NHS Staff Council to address apprentice pay issues and the NHS Staff Council agreed and published guidance on apprentice pay in July.

Nationally, the SPF has agreed that apprenticeships will be one of its top priorities going forward and it continues to work alongside DH and the ALBs on this important workforce issue.

- Agency Cap – WIG members fed back to the NHS Improvement team on the barriers to reducing agency spend and made a number of suggestions to improve the experience of staff working on the bank. NHS Improvement is committed to working closely with the WIG on their goal to further reduce the NHS agency spend, as input from partners is helping them better develop and implement policy on this issue.
- 7-Day Services - The SPF 7-Day Services subgroup was established in December 2016 to consider the workforce implications of the emerging policy, with a primary focus on 7-day hospital services, mental health and data. This group being in place gave a mechanism to

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enable employers and trade unions to work closely with DH and NHS England to address the strategic challenges arising from the implementation of 7DS. Following a very constructive meeting held in July 2017, it was agreed ongoing SPF work in 7DS will likely be mainstreamed back into NHS England's National Advisory Group (NAG) with 2-way reporting between NAG and SPF Strategic Group. SPF Staff Side & BMA representation has been confirmed at NAG.

Embedding Partnership working

- The number of subscribers to the SPF bulletin has increased to 214 in August 2017. This demonstrates an increased awareness and interest in the work of the SPF and partnership working.
- The SPF sponsorship of the [HPMA partnership award](#) generates publicity for partnership working and the benefits it can bring. The best entries for the award winners have been developed into case studies, videos and podcasts. These are available on the SPF website. The [case study web page](#) on the SPF website is consistently one of the most visited (with 12,845 page views between June 2015 – June 2017), which shows that the good practice is being shared and learning is taking place.

SPF Project Manager
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