



NORTH OF ENGLAND NHS SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Terms of Reference

The North of England NHS Social Partnership Forum has been set up by employers, trade unions and NHS Employers to pursue their common purpose of developing a world class health and social care service delivered by a world class workforce in the North of England.

Effective partnership working will produce important benefits that include improved services for patients and users and ensuring high standards of employment practices in the health and care services in the North of England. In the current context of system change – encompassing new structures such as the Sustainability & Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and Integrated Care System (ICSs) – the North SPF has ongoing responsibility to maintain oversight of new models of care, and to ensure the workforce implications of system change are supported through partnership discussions at all levels.

Aims of the North of England Social Partnership Forum

The North of England SPF aims to bring together regional key stakeholders to educate, learn and provide a modern partnership approach to issues affecting the Health and Social Care workforce. In particular it will:

- Seek and promote good practice to be shared at North SPF Conferences
- Support and enable a strategic agenda on key priorities including service reconfigurations, workforce issues and specialist commissioning.
- Promote effective communications between partners.
- Feed regional views into the National SPF
- To identify and promote successful partnership working, which is providing positive benefits to staff, service delivery and patient experience.
- Support the workforce implications of regional commissioning decisions
- To keep the patient at the centre of everything we do.
- At the discretion of the chairs, pick up ad-hoc pieces of work in partnership through designated Task and Finish Groups.
- Ensure that the principles underpinning the [national Partnership Agreement Framework](#) agreed by the Department of Health (now the Department of Health and Social Care), the arm's length bodies, NHS Employers and NHS trade unions operate effectively within the region.
- Contribute trade union and employer perspectives at a formative stage, on the possible workforce implications of the development and implementation of policy.

Principles for effective joint working

The Partnership recognises respective roles and responsibilities, establishes shared values and common purpose and sets some key principles for effective joint working. It provides the basis for a continually improving partnership which will lead to long-term solutions that work both for staff, patients and service users.

All partners recognise the importance of good formal and informal working relations, built on trust and shared responsibility, while still respecting each other's roles and functions which are distinct but complementary. All partners commit to adopt these principles in their dealings with each other:

- Building trust and a mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities.
- A positive and constructive approach.
- Early discussion of emerging issues and maintaining dialogue on policy and priorities.
- Openness, honesty and transparency in communications.
- Where appropriate, confidentiality and agreed external positions.
- Making the best use of resources.
- Agreeing issues for onward cascade.

Shared approach

This partnership agreement is underpinned by shared values and common purpose. In particular, partners:

- have a shared commitment to continuous improvement at a system level, including access to high quality services and delivering a population health management approach in the long term.
- believe the NHS should promote good practice in all areas of staff management, including equality and diversity, staff development and a commitment to security of employment
- agree that the NHS should take a collective approach to support staff that may be affected by system change, especially with reference to the service developments within the STP/ICS footprints.

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Frequency of Meetings

The Partnership will meet annually in the form of a conference event, bringing together the geographical sub-groups based in the North East and North Cumbria, the North West and Yorkshire & the Humber to discuss priority themes for the health and social care workforce.

Additional ad-hoc meetings may be convened when deemed appropriate by the North of England SPF Chairs, to discuss workforce issues across the North of England.

Membership

Membership of the forum will comprise trade union representatives, employers, commissioners and arms' length bodies, more specifically to include:

Management Representatives

Management representatives will include:

- Directors of HR (HRDs) from NHS trusts/providers in the North Region
- Local leaders from Health Education England, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Commissioning Support Units, NHS England and NHS Improvement, and NHS Employers
- Senior representation from Local Government
- Representatives from STP/ICS footprints
- Other appropriate employer representatives

Trade Union Representatives will include:

Trades Union Representatives

- UNISON
- The Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
- The Royal College of Midwives (RCM)
- Unite
- GMB
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)
- The Society of Radiographers (SoR)
- The College of Podiatrists (CoP)
- Managers in Partnership (MiP)
- The British Medical Association (BMA)
- Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association (HCSA)
- British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT)
- British Dental Association
- The British Dietetic Association (BDA)
- The British Orthoptic Society (BOS)
- The Federation of Clinical Scientists (FCS)

Other associated health and care partners to be invited/included at the discretion of the joint chairs.

Chairing Arrangements

The annual SPF Conference will be chaired jointly by the staff chair and management chair. The joint chairs will be responsible for the development of conference agenda and for the review of the efficacy of the forum, supported by NHS Employers.

Facilitation and Coordination of the Meetings

Secretariat for the forum will be provided by the National Engagement Service (North team) at NHS Employers.

Communication

- Chatham House rules to be observed in the course of meeting notes
- Joint public communications will be agreed from time to time.
- At the close of the conference, key communication points for wider dissemination will be agreed.
- All partners undertake to respect confidentiality where required or requested; and otherwise to conduct their dialogue openly.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

There will be an annual review of these terms of reference and arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Date: September 2019