

## Social Partnership Forum - Strategic Group

### Terms of Reference

<b>WORKING ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<p><b>The Strategic Group will consider the impact on, and potential actions for, the workforce of key strategic issues and challenges for the health and care system.</b></p> <p>It will operate under the auspices of the wider national Social Partnership Forum (SPF) Partnership Agreement, supported by the existing SPF Secretariat. It is accountable to the SPF Wider Group.</p>
<b>PROJECT TEAM</b>	<p><b>JOINT CHAIRS/PARTNERS:</b></p> <p>Rebecca Smith, NHS Employers (Co-chair)  Sara Gorton, NHS Staff Side (Co-chair)  Raj Bhamber/Tom Simons, NHS England &amp; NHS Improvement (NHSEI)  Giles Denham/Mark Radford, Health Education England (HEE)  Gavin Larnier/Mike Haslam Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)  Liz Gambrell (NHS Employers)</p> <p><i>Additional representatives:</i></p> <p><i>NHS employers x3 - from wider SPF attendees;</i>  <i>NHS Staff Side x5 – Jon Skewes (RCM), Hannah Reed (RCN), Stella Dunn/Rob Kidney (BMA), Claire Sullivan (CSP), Jon Restell (MiP)</i>  <i>DHSC x1 – TBC</i>  <i>NHSEI x1 - TBC</i>  NB – Navina Evans (HEE) and Prerana Issar (NHSEI) to have open invitations.</p>
<b>DATES</b>	<p><b>2021 dates:</b> 20 January, 17 March, 18 May, 14 July, 20 October,</p>
<b>AIMS</b>	<p>With particular reference to the context of the NHS People Plan and ongoing delivery of the Long-Term Plan, the SPF Strategic Group will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to improved patient outcomes through partnership working and staff engagement on the most significant (<b>non-pandemic</b>) strategic challenges and changes faced by the healthcare system.</li> <li>• Bring strategic partners together to discuss, debate and engage in the early stages of the development and implementation of policy and strategy in the NHS, where there are workforce implications.</li> <li>• Endeavour to find collective, partnership solutions, wherever possible, to the challenges faced by the healthcare system, whilst recognising and valuing each partner’s perspectives.</li> <li>• Support and promote good employment practices and the benefits of good people management.</li> <li>• Enable and support national and regional SPFs to deliver on these aims.</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To operate within the principles outlined in the existing SPF Partnership Agreement – mutual respect, co-operation, and “no surprises” culture.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the development and impact of NHS policies and strategic delivery on the NHS workforce and NHS employers and other providers of NHS-funded services and their staff, where appropriate.</li> <li>• To engage the workforce effectively in tackling future challenges. NB – Covid-19 related issues will be considered separately in the SPF Covid-19 Engagement Group meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree an annual work plan and identify “what good looks like”</li> <li>• The Strategic Group will demonstrate the benefits of partnership working through the delivery of outcomes that are transparent, open and dispel misconceptions.</li> <li>• Commission work from existing SPF subgroups or establish new issue-specific working groups, such as the Covid-19 Engagement Group in response to the pandemic and the Violence Reduction subgroup.</li> <li>• Provide update reports for the SPF Wider Group meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>BUSINESS BENEFITS</b>	<p><b>As described in the Work of Prof Michael West, and referenced in the NHS People Plan, there is a growing body of evidence that effective staff engagement through partnership working results in improved patient outcomes.</b></p> <p>In this context, the Strategic Group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a more transparent and streamlined structure for Trade Union and employer engagement on health and care policy changes and an open and frank discussion on potential outcomes and solutions;</li> <li>• deliver high quality services to patients/users;</li> <li>• improve mutual understanding and respect;</li> <li>• provide an opportunity for partners to contribute their experience and ideas to the development and implementation of the workforce implications of policy on health and care;</li> <li>• lead to more effective policy-making;</li> <li>• contribute to improved staff experience, high standards in employment practice, and improved levels of staff engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL RISKS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working could be understood differently by the partners leading to the Strategic Group being deemed untenable.</li> <li>• The remit of the group might not adequately take account of the role of DHSC as system steward or NHS England and NHS Improvement as having operational oversight.</li> <li>• Existing SPF members, not on the Strategic Group, may feel disempowered and disengage with the Wider SPF.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplication/cross-over - partners may wish to consider what synergies exist between the SPF Strategic Group and other strategic “system” meetings and consider if any links/networks should be exploited.</li> <li>• Establishing the right approach to communications and keeping wider SPF members in the loop may create additional pressures on partners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNICATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates will be provided from Strategic Group to the Wider SPF through a standing item on the Wider meeting agenda.</li> <li>• Key communications from Strategic Group will not be published as discussions may be incomplete and confidential.</li> <li>• Attendees to communicate back to their networks, mindful of sensitivities and confidentiality issues.</li> <li>• For each item at Strategic Group meeting, the group will agree what communications and actions should follow – including what should be networked out and what should remain confidential.</li> <li>• Supporting papers will be provided where necessary to support discussions and are not for wider circulation</li> <li>• Minutes will be action-orientated and concise. They will be circulated only to attendees and Secretariat members and will not be for onward or wider circulation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>TIMING and LOGISTICS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency of meetings:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategic Group will meet four times a year, chaired jointly by the staff side and employer co-chairs; NB – due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Strategic Group meetings were suspended in April 2020 and resumed in November 2020</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agendas and supporting papers will be agreed with co-chairs at least one week before the meeting.</li> <li>• ToR will be reviewed periodically.</li> <li>• Working arrangements will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains an effective forum. Secretariat will be provided by the DHSC SPF team in conjunction with existing employer and staff side secretariat support and nominees from NHS England and NHS Improvement and HEE.</li> </ul>

November 2020

SPF Secretariat