



REGIONAL BULLETIN – JANUARY 2012

Social Partnership Forum

The [Social Partnership Forum](#) brings together NHS employers, trade unions and the Department of Health to discuss, debate and involve partners in the development and implementation of the workforce implications of policy.

Welcome

Happy New Year and welcome to the first SPF bulletin of 2012. With 2012/13 being the final year of transition to the new commissioning and management system for the NHS, it's set to be a busy year for SPF and its partners.

The bulletin provides information on the latest and upcoming news from SPF and its sub-groups. Partners may find it useful to disseminate the news items to their wider membership networks.

We welcome feedback on this bulletin and input into future bulletins - we are particularly keen to include examples of good partnership working from regional Social Partnership Forums in future bulletins. If you have examples of good practice or case studies that you think would be useful to share with SPF colleagues, please send an email marked 'good practice' to webenquiries@socialpartnershipforum.org

National SPF meetings

Two national SPF meetings have taken place since the last SPF bulletin.

October SPF

Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health was joined by his ministerial colleagues Earl Howe and Anne Milton at the SPF steering group in October. Issues discussed included progress of the Health & Social Care Bill, and future ways of working to ensure partnership working can be maintained and built upon in the new NHS architecture. Updates were received on personal health budgets, QIPP, the NHS Operating Framework, and education and training.

December SPF

At the December wider group meeting the Minister was accompanied by his colleague Anne Milton. Issues discussed included HR transition, national flu campaign, QIPP, the NHS Atlas of Variation, and Health and Wellbeing. The group also received a presentation on learning and skills from Tom Wilson, Director of Unionlearn.

Unionlearn exists to support Trade unions to work with employers to promote a culture of learning in the workplace. The objective is to encourage more staff to receive good quality learning and skills training, ensuring they are properly equipped to undertake their job role, and have opportunities for career development.

Read more about the issues discussed at the national SPF [here](#).

Topics discussed by the national SPF recently include:

[Flu vaccination uptake reaches new heights](#)

The staff flu vaccination campaign which NHS Employers is running on behalf of the Social Partnership Forum is delivering excellent results and the latest figures show that over 40 per cent of frontline NHS staff have had the flu vaccination compared with 17.6 per cent at this time last year. There is still much to do and we are encouraging all frontline healthcare staff to get their flu jab. You can download a series of campaign materials including mythbusters, a flufighter magazine and posters from the flufighter website at <http://www.nhsemployers.org/flu>. You can also follow the campaign on twitter and facebook and details are on the flufighter website.

[NHS Atlas of Variation 2011](#)

The National QIPP Right Care workstream shared the NHS Atlas of Variation 2011; published by DH on 12 December. The NHS Atlas of Variation highlights the amount each PCT spends on clinical services and links this with the health outcomes patients see. Consisting of 71 maps, the Atlas will help commissioners learn from one another, consider the appropriateness of a service, and investigate when clinical health outcomes are not reflecting the financial investment that has been made. Local and regional partnerships are encouraged to consider the Atlas data as part of their discussions on improving services to patients. More information can be found [here](#).

[Personal Health Budgets](#)

In October the [Personal Health Budget](#) 4th interim evaluation report was published. This report includes the early experiences of budget holders talking about their experiences of personal health budgets after three months.

As part of the pilot programme work is underway which will generate a range of best practice and practical information and early learning to be shared and disseminated throughout the service. The RCN, RCGP, NHS Confederation, Skills for Health and other key stakeholders are involved in different aspects of the work programme.

[SPF sub-groups](#)

[HR Transition Partnership Forum \(HRTPF\)](#)

The HRTPF has continued to be engaged on key HR transition workstreams. Over the last three months the group has discussed commissioning support and the workforce issues, public health workstreams including Public Health England and the transfer to local government – these areas have been identified as having critical workforce challenges with much of this work being taken forward through partnership sub-groups. The group has also been engaged on the development of further People Transition Policies, guidance for sender organisations and communications to staff.

The [Public Health Concordat](#) which was published on 17 November was developed by DH with NHS Employers and the Local Government Association and in partnership with NHS and local government Trade unions. The Concordat provides the principles and standards for managing HR processes to support the transfer of PCT public health commissioning activity to local authorities. HRTPF members continue to be engaged on the public health transition to local government.

HR Transition Partnership Event – 5 December 2011

Sir Neil McKay, Chief Executive of NHS Midlands and East and national lead for workforce transition, and HRTPF co-chairs Karen Didovich, Trade union side and Stephen Welfare, NHS Midlands and East welcomed over 100 delegates to a [national social partnership event](#) focusing on the transition programme underway across the NHS, the Department of Health and the Arm's Length Bodies.

Details of the HR transition programme were shared with employers and staff-side colleagues from across the DH, ALBs and the NHS. The event provided an opportunity to:

- hear policy and strategy updates from key leads for the proposed new organisations
- discuss the overall transition timelines and the key milestones between now and April 2011
- provide opportunities for delegates to consider these implications and influence the way that we progress these
- develop a shared understanding of the impact on employer and staff-side workloads
- discuss the role social partnership should occupy both within transition and beyond the current process.

Staff Passport Group (SPG)

The group has continued to be engaged on workforce aspects of a number of policy areas including Any Qualified Provider, the [NHS Standard Contract](#) and the FT failure regime. Frequently asked questions for NHS staff on AQP have been developed through the SPF Staff Passport Group. The document is part of an [AQP Resource Centre](#) which DH has published on the NHS Supply2Health website. The AQP Resource Centre will be updated when further information and guidance becomes available.

Embedding Partnership Working (EPW)

Work is under way to refresh the National Partnership Agreement setting out the partners' shared commitment to the principles and values of joint working. Work is also ongoing to develop an SPF Members' Handbook which contains useful information about the SPF, its principles and purpose. It explains the role played by its partners and how to get involved in supporting the aims of the SPF. It also provides practical information on the SPF's detailed working arrangements. The handbook will be published on the SPF website in due course.

NHS Partnership Fund

Case studies from the successful partnership projects have been published on the SPF website over the last few months. The partnership fund award scheme was launched in November 2008 as a way to encourage and develop partnership working at local employer level within the NHS. A fund of £500,000 was made available by the Department of Health to support this work.

Over 45 applications were put forward by the regional SPFs and the national panel were able to fund 18 partnership projects.

Outputs of the projects included strengthening engagement and partnership working at local levels, development of bullying and harassment protocols, establishment of new learning facilities targeting bands 1-4 and development of a network of in-house mediators to help reduce the time and stress involved in resolving disputes in the workplace. Read case studies from the successful projects [here](#).

SPF Events

SPF Stocktake

SPF is committed to undertaking reviews of its performance and since 2007 two [reviews](#) have been carried out. The purpose of a stocktake is to look at how the SPF currently operates and identify what measures need to be taken to ensure it remains effective in the future. The next stocktake review is being planned for 2012. Results of the stocktake will be published on the SPF website.

'Partnership under pressure' – SPF session at the NHS Employers' Conference in Liverpool

Key features of what makes successful partnership working were highlighted and discussed in the thought-provoking SPF session at the NHS Employers Conference held in November 2011.

The session was chaired by Christina McAnea, Trade union side chair of the national SPF. Christina stressed the importance that partners attach to the SPF as it enables them to engage and influence health policy at a national level which in turn links in to experiences on the ground. Rosemary Exton and Peter Totterdill of the UK Work Organisation Network (UKWON) drew on examples from their own research and experience to emphasise that direct participation from staff in partnership working correlates highly with improved performance, particularly when it is linked to representative participation. Read the full session report [here](#).

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