



## REGIONAL BULLETIN – MAY 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.

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### Welcome

This is the second SPF bulletin of 2012. Since January the SPF has published a refreshed Partnership Agreement between health unions, employers and government, and a Members' Handbook to support both current and new members of the national SPF and its sub-groups.

The passage of the Health and Social Care Bill marks the beginning of a new phase in the transition process as work moves from planning and preparation to implementation on the ground. Through the HRTPF subgroup, the SPF has continued to be actively engaged in the HR transition activity.

The bulletin provides information on the latest and upcoming news from SPF and its subgroups. 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 or local 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](mailto:webenquiries@socialpartnershipforum.org)

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### National SPF meetings

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

#### February SPF

Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health was joined by ministerial colleagues Paul Burstow and Earl Howe at the SPF steering group in February. Issues discussed included QIPP, workforce education and training, and the excellent progress of the winter flu vaccination campaign. Updates were received on DH transition, the NHS Constitution, and the HR Transition Programme. The forum re-adopted a refreshed SPF Partnership agreement, and approved a Members' Handbook. It also agreed to promote the NHS Sustainability Day on 28 March amongst members.

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

## April SPF

Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health was joined by ministerial colleague Anne Milton at the SPF steering group on 26 April. Issues discussed included QIPP, the national SPF stocktake, and health and well-being. Updates were received on the HR Transition Programme, establishing the NHS Commissioning Board, the NHS Staff Survey Findings 2011, the NHS Constitution and Personal Health Budgets. Key comms from the meeting will be available on the SPF website shortly.

Topics discussed by the national SPF recently include:

### Refreshed Partnership Agreement and Members' Handbook

The refreshed SPF Partnership Agreement sets out a framework agreed by the Department of Health, NHS Employers, and NHS Trade Unions which describes partners' shared values and principles for effective joint working, and provides a guiding set of principles for partners to work together at national, regional and local level. It also restates the SPF's shared commitment to meet the workforce challenges facing the NHS in a supportive and constructive way. SPF partners will work together, on behalf of their constituents, to help make NHS policy work best for staff and patients.

All members have signed the updated Partnership Agreement and remain committed to upholding the principles outlined within it. The full document can be viewed [here](#).

The SPF Members Handbook has been produced as a useful guide for both current and new members of the national SPF and its sub-groups, and is to be used in conjunction with the SPF Partnership Agreement. The revised version of the SPF Members Handbook sets out in detail the role of the partners and practical information on the SPF's working arrangements, and includes multiple positive examples of partnership working including the HR Transition and the NHS Staff Flu Campaign 2011. More information can be found [here](#).

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## SPF sub-groups

### HR Transition Partnership Forum (HRTPF)

The HRTPF co-chairs, Karen Didovich, RCN and Stephen Welfare, NHS Midlands and East, chaired a second national transition partnership event on 27 March at the TUC. The event was well attended by employer and staff-side representatives from across the DH, ALBs and the NHS. It focused on:

- Public Health transition to PHE and local authorities
- Clinical Commissioning Groups and Commissioning Support
- Local HR transition and partnership

There was also a plenary session providing an overall update on the national transition timescales.

Work is underway to compile a log of the issues raised at the event, and to identify what action is needed to resolve and address the issues.

The key issues arising from the workshop sessions included the need for urgent clarification of:

- the transfer process that will be followed

- the definition of 'substantive' that will apply to the transition
- the formal processes that will apply to the recruitment of senior leaders to CCGs and CSS
- pooling and matching principles and processes.

Further information in respect of all the above will be published shortly.

Presentations from the event are available on the SPF [website](#).

Given the increasing HR transition activity over the coming months, a subgroup of the HRTPF has been established to meet fortnightly to work through the detailed HR processes, to agree where and when HR policy guidance and advice needs to be developed to support the processes. The group consists of national trade union officials and key employer representatives from across the DH, ALBs and the NHS. Current key issues under discussion by the group include those listed above, such as pooling and matching, consultation, and the transfer 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 and procurement regulations for commissioners. A working group of SPG members is currently reviewing and updating the Staff Passport Toolkit; the refreshed version of the Toolkit will be available on the SPF website in due course.

As referenced in the *Reforming the NHS Pension Scheme for England & Wales Proposed Final Agreement*, a partnership review will be carried out fulfilling the commitment to consider reforming the terms of access to the NHS Pension Scheme for England and Wales for staff working in AQPs, APMS services and for staff working in other services funded under the National Contract for NHS services. The review will be carried out under the auspices of the SPF Staff Passport Sub Group.

### Embedding Partnership Working (EPW)

The 2012 stocktake review of the national SPF has now taken place; over 63 questionnaires were returned and a workshop for SPF members was held on 14 March. The outcomes from both the questionnaire and workshop have been included in a final report which makes a number of recommendations to ensure the SPF remains effective in the future. The stocktake report and an action plan arising from the stocktake were agreed and endorsed by the National SPF at their meeting on 26 April. The Embedding Group has been tasked with taking forward the recommendations and action plan. The final report will be available on the SPF website shortly.

### NHS Staff survey results

The NHS Staff Survey results were released at the end of March. SPF partners issued a joint press release welcoming the significant improvements in some of the results of the 2011 survey; the SPF stressed the importance of partnership working to address some of the negative trends highlighted in the survey. The survey shows that staff across the NHS are continuing to provide high quality patient care despite pressures on staff and budgets. Significant progress has been made in improving staff appraisals (from 69% in 2009 to 80% in 2011), a key issue for SPF members. SPF partners will need to focus on driving up the quality of appraisals where there is still room for improvement. Higher levels of equality and diversity training in the NHS also reflect well on SPF support in this area and the number of staff in receipt of training generally

has remained high at 78 per cent. In a welcome development, the number of staff who stated that they know how to report a concern about negligence or wrong-doing in their trust has improved from 87 percent to 89 percent but there is still work to do to persuade staff that when concerns are raised, they will be taken seriously. Further information can be found [here](#).

For the latest information on the work of the SPF please visit our website:  
[www.socialpartnershipforum.org](http://www.socialpartnershipforum.org)

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