

**SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM STRATEGIC GROUP  
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

<p><b>WORKING ARRANGEMENTS</b></p>	<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> It will operate under the auspices of the wider national Social Partnership Forum (SPF) supported by the existing SPF Secretariat.</p>
<p><b>PROJECT TEAM</b></p>	<p><b>JOINT CHAIRS/PARTNERS:</b>          Danny Mortimer, NHS Employers (Co-chair)          Christina McAnea, NHS Staff Side (Co-chair)          Stephen Moir, NHS England          Lee Whitehead, Health Education England (HEE)          Charlie Massey, Department of Health  <i>Additional representatives: NHS employers x2 - from wider SPF attendees; NHS Staff Side x4 – Jon Skewes (RCM), Josie Irwin (RCN), Raj Jethwa (BMA), Claire Sullivan (CSP).</i></p>
<p><b>DATES</b></p>	<p>2015 dates: 4 February, 5 May, 8 September and 1 December</p>
<p><b>AIMS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To contribute to improved patient outcomes through partnership working and staff engagement on the most significant strategic challenges and changes faced by the healthcare system.</li> <li>• The Strategic Group will 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>• The Strategic Group will endeavour to find collective, partnership solutions, wherever possible, to the challenges faced by the system, whilst recognising and valuing each partner’s perspectives.</li> <li>• To support and promote good employment practices and the benefits of good people management.</li> <li>• To enable and support the national and regional SPFs to deliver on the above aims.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p>	<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> <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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DELIVERABLES</b></p>	<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</li> </ul>

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	<p>and dispel misconceptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission work from existing SPF subgroups or establish new issue-specific working groups.</li> <li>• Provide update reports for the wider SPF meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>BUSINESS BENEFITS</b>	<p><b>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 DH as system steward or NHS England as having operational oversight.</li> <li>• Existing SPF members, not on the Strategic Group, may feel disempowered and disengage with the Wider SPF.</li> <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>
<b>COMMUNIUCATION</b>	<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 only be provided by exception and where necessary to support discussions – they should be password protected.</li> <li>• Minutes will be action-orientated and concise. They will be circulated</li> </ul>

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	<p>only to attendees and Secretariat members and will not be for onward or wider circulation.</p>
<b>TIMING and LOGISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frequency of meetings are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Strategic Group will meet 4 times a year, chaired on a rotational basis by the staff side and employer co-chairs ;</li><li>○ Wider SPF will meet three times a year, chaired by the Minister.</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 DH SPF team in conjunction with existing employer and staff side secretariat support and nominees from NHS England and HEE.</li></ul>

**January 2014**, updated December to reflect revised attendee list and 2015 meeting dates.