



11 May 2016

Dear STP Lead,

The [Social Partnership Forum](#) (SPF) has been involved in the development of policy related to the new care models arising from the Five Year Forward View and the Shared Planning Guidance. As these policies move into the implementation stage, we are committed, working with Ministers, to support the service in transforming these plans into reality.

Following discussions in March with Jo Lenaghan from the Strategic Office of the NHS Five Year Forward View Board, we agreed a useful approach would be to write to the leads of Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) areas, to highlight the need to ensure that trade unions are fully engaged in order to help facilitate the successful development of new care models.

You may already have plans to put in place arrangements to enable partnership working with trade unions in your STP area. If this is not the case, then we would ask that you do so. There is a growing body of evidence that shows good staff engagement, such as the partnership approach, can deliver better patient outcomes as well as improve overall organisational performance ([West et al 2011](#), [West et al 2013](#) and [The Point of Care Foundation 2014](#).) The [NHS Constitution](#) also emphasises the importance of staff engagement and partnership working and **requires** the NHS to commit to 'engage staff in decisions that affect them and the services they provide, individually, through representative organisations and through local partnership working arrangements.' The social partners also recently signed an updated partnership agreement reaffirming their commitment to effective joint working and early engagement on service changes.

We would also like to take this opportunity to make you aware of the [SPF Staff Transfer Guide](#). The guide is an online toolkit designed to support staff who are facing transfer to providers of NHS funded services in England. It is an easy to use, practical guide to an individual's employment standards and rights. The guide was developed in partnership with trade unions through the [SPF Workforce Issues Group](#).

We wish you well in your work to establish and develop your STP and feel confident that working with trade unions from an early stage will help you. They can ensure effective staff engagement and support a collective approach to the development of new care models to deliver improved patient care.

We are happy to support you in establishing appropriate partnership arrangements, if need be, and can put you in touch with the relevant trade union representatives in your area. Please send any requests for contact details of trade union representatives in your part of the country to: webenquiries@socialpartnershipforum.org

Yours sincerely,

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Danny Mortimer,
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