

To: SHA Workforce Directors

12th March, 2010

Dear Colleague,

Transforming Community Services: Engaging Trade Union Representatives

As you are aware I represent SHAs on the Social Partnership Forum. At the last SPF meeting, Trades Unions raised, a number of concerns including the level of Trade Union and staff engagement in implementing “Transforming Community Services: The Assurance and Approvals Process for PCT-provided Community Services”.

“Enabling New Patterns of Provision”, on which the guidance is based, stated

“Staff and their trade unions should be engaged early and fully consulted on future arrangements – they should be substantially involved in debating the issues and their views considered before any decisions are made.”

The latest guidance specifically states that SHAs will ensure that the Regional Social Partnership Forum is fully engaged in the process of assurance. Stakeholder engagement is one of the key assurance tests: and includes the extent of engagement with all key stakeholders including staff and SPF.

It is critical to the success of this process that local SPFs are fully engaged; not only as good practice but because without staff support, transformational change cannot be made. It is important that there is full engagement with Trade Unions and staff at local level and at regional SPFs.

It is important that there is consistency of engagement of SPFs in this process. Where Trade Unions do not feel involved at a local level, it is important that the Regional SPF is seen as the forum to raise concerns. At the national SPF Trade Union colleagues were asked to raise any concerns about a lack of engagement with regional SPFs in the first instance. If TU representatives on the regional SPFs are not satisfied they should be advised to take the matter up with the SHA Chief Executive. Only after this is it appropriate to bring an issue to the national SPF Staff Passport sub-group.

I hope you will review the level of local staff and Trade Union engagement that has taken place, and where this has not been in line with the guidance, that you take steps to increase engagement. I think we all recognise that this issue will be important over the next few months, as proposals are developed, approved in principle, worked-up in more detail, formal decisions made, and implemented by April 2011. These assurance, approval and implementation planning processes provide substantial and important opportunities for engagement, with staff and their representatives, and local stakeholders.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Royles". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dean Royles
Director Workforce & Education

c.c. Staff Passport Sub Group of SPF
SHA TCS Leads