

**SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM
(SPF)
Key communication points arising
from meeting held 16 June 2010**



New chair of the SPF is Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health

VISION FOR THE NHS

Andrew Lansley, CBE, Secretary of State for Health (SofS) attended the inaugural meeting of SPF under the new government he welcomed the opportunity to meet, listen and have dialogue with SPF now and in the future. SofS outlined his vision for the NHS:

1. Putting patients first. Patients must be at the heart of everything we do, not just as beneficiaries of care, but as participants, in shared decision-making. As patients, there should be no decision about us, without us. Patients need to be empowered with better comprehensive information.
2. Seek to achieve continuously improving outcomes. Not politically-motivated process targets, not simply measuring inputs or constant changes to structures, but a consistent, rigorous focus on outcomes – achieving results for patients.
3. Empowering staff to deliver. This is the only way we can secure the quality, innovation, productivity and safe care, all of which are essential to achieving those outcomes.
4. Stronger public health. Only by prioritising health and well-being and by preventing ill-health more effectively, can we achieve the overall health outcomes we seek, not just good health services but good population-wide health outcomes, and reduce the inequalities in health, which so blight our society and ensure a sustainable NHS.
5. More integration of health and social care. We need to reform social care alongside healthcare, so that we can support and empower people – not least as individuals – to be more safe and secure and, themselves, to be able to exercise greater control over their care.

SofS went on to talk about the current financial challenge highlighting that although the NHS is in a fortunate position in relation to other areas of the public sector as it will receive a financial increase in real terms, this does not make it exempt from the disciplines the rest of the public sector are subject to. The NHS will be expected to make year on year efficiencies and these savings will be reinvested in the service in order to meet increasing demographic demand.

MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS

The full ministerial team attended the meeting to introduce themselves to the SPF and speak about their own portfolios.

- Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health
- Paul Burstow, Minister of State for Care Services
- Anne Milton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health
- Earl Howe, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Quality

Full details of the portfolios can be [found here](#)

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The SPF chairs gave a [presentation](#) to the new ministerial team on the values and principles of partnership working in the NHS. This included recognising the importance of having shared values and common goals, and on building relationships based on trust and mutual respect for each other's roles. The challenges facing the NHS were better dealt with in partnership and whilst the partners would not always be in agreement on the issues before them, they would always have the best interests of the NHS as their guiding principle.

The SPF chairs highlighted the successful work delivered in partnership to date, including strong [partnership case studies](#), [pandemic flu guidance](#), [NHS Staff Passport](#) and [maximising graduate opportunities](#).

'SPEAK UP FOR A HEALTHY NHS'

SPF discussed whistleblowing in October 2009 and agreed to set up a joint partnership project with NHS trade unions, NHS Employers and Public Concern at Work (PCaW) to develop agreed, updated whistleblowing guidance.

The working group on whistleblowing worked collaboratively to create updated whistleblowing guidance for NHS organisations. The guidance is aimed primarily at managers in NHS organisations, but emphasises the importance of implementing local policies in partnership with staff and trade union representatives. It is intended to complement guidance already issued by some trade unions to their members. It was also designed to increase awareness of the availability of the PCaW helpline (which provides confidential advice to those who witness wrongdoing at work and are unsure whether or how to raise their concern), and of other resources to support both employers and employees.

The SPF agreed the guidance and thanked the group for their work. The guidance will be launched at the NHS Confederation Conference and will be available via the Social Partnership Forum website.

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO FAILINGS AT MID-STAFFORDSHIRE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

On 9 June 2010 the Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley announced a Public Inquiry into the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. The Public Inquiry has been formed under the Inquiries Act 2005, and will look at the operation of the commissioning, supervisory and regulatory bodies responsible for the Trust. Robert Francis QC will be the Chair.

SPF will be producing a joint submission to the inquiry highlighting the evidence base around staff engagement and patient satisfaction/safety and the use of this as an early indicator.

MS(H) said that we must not forget that staff are continuing to deliver at the trust through difficult times. He also commented that this is also acknowledged in SofS's statement to the House on 9 June.

Further details of the Inquiry including Terms of Reference, procedural statement etc. can be found at <http://www.midstaffsinquiry.com/>

MEDICAL EDUCATION ENGLAND REPORT

Professor Sir John Temple has launched his [report](#) 'Time for Training', an independent review of the impact of the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) on the quality of training for doctors, dentists, pharmacists and healthcare scientists.

The report was commissioned by Medical Education England (MEE). SPF discussed the report and agreed to input a multi-professional view moving forward.