

SPF Key Communications



National steering group meeting 13 October 2011

The meeting of the national Social Partnership Forum took place on 13 October with a packed agenda ranging from QIPP to seasonal flu. Chaired by Health Minister Simon Burns, the meeting was joined by ministerial colleagues Earl Howe and Anne Milton.

Introduction

Simon Burns opened the meeting by updating everyone on the progress of the Health and Social Care Bill, which had been voted through for its second reading by the House of Lords. Minister also provided a summary of the work of the Future Forum and Phase 2 of the Listening Exercise and the organisational changes that had occurred within the NHS such as the creation of the PCT and SHA clusters.

Before moving to the main items on the agenda, Staff Side referred to the ballots taking place by a number of trade unions for potential industrial action on 30 November 2011. Both Staff Side and NHS Employers were keen to stress the need for partnership working and dialogue at a national and local level to ensure emergency cover arrangements are in place in the event of any proposed action. The Minister welcomed the positive approach to patient safety.

QUIPP

The meeting received an update on progress in implementing QUIPP across the NHS. DH colleagues reported that strategies had been signed off for local actions and the emphasis was on local trusts planning and implementing QUIPP activities rather than a top down approach. The meeting then heard three presentations about QUIPP in action. The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement gave a short presentation on their productive care programme that was delivering significant savings.

Harry Hayer, NHS employer representative talked through North Bristol NHS Trust's 'Building Our Future' Transformation Programme and the importance that staff engagement and partnership working is playing in making the programme a success. Lesley Mercer, Staff Side presented the work that physiotherapists were actively pursuing to reduce the amount of time people spent in hospital because of falls. The forum welcomed all three presentations and in particular, the Minister Earl Howe thanked participants for their excellent, practical suggestions, which demonstrated that trusts are taking ownership of the QUIPP objectives and seeing tangible results.

Partnership and future ways of working

The forum held a discussion on future ways of working to examine how partnership working can be maintained and built upon in the new NHS architecture, as the impact of the health reforms see existing NHS structures abolished and new ones established. This is a priority issue for the national SPF, which is keen to monitor how SHA and PCT clusters are adapting and evolving their partnership arrangements.

The forum heard a presentation from employer and trade union leaders of NHS London Partnership who explained their plans to 'future-proof' their partnership arrangements to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose. As part of its deliberations, the forum also considered how social partnership principles and learning can be embedded in new commissioning organisations in the NHS. The SPF will continue to monitor and discuss this priority issue over the coming months.

HR Transition

Stephen Welfare provided an update on the work of the HR Transition Partnership Forum, which has continued to engage on a number of key areas to support staff during the transition including the production of a Public Health Concordat, due for publication shortly, and guidance for sender organisations to support the People Transition Policies and the SHA clustering process. A working group has been established to deliver a transition partnership event on 5 December for managers and trade unions. Stephen and Karen Didovich plan to chair a session at the NHS Employers conference in November, which will cover key HR implications for both current and future organisations.

Education and training

Jamie Rentoul, DH provided a report back from the morning's workshop on the future of education and training and a summary of some of the key points that had been raised by delegates. One key message from the event was the consensus view that needs to be a whole workforce approach to education and training. A paper summarising the key points would be provided to the Minister and forum.

Personal health budgets

Alison Austin, DH provided an update on the progress made in the personal health budget pilot programme, informing the group that pilots are progressing well. A programme of work is underway as part of the pilots, which will generate a range of best practice and practical information and early learning that will be shared and disseminated throughout the service. The RCN, RCGP, NHS Confederation, Skills for Health and other key stakeholders are involved in different aspects of the work programme. At the local level pilot sites are involving healthcare professionals in the pilot exercises and engaging them more widely in a number of ways, for example events at GP practices, lunchtime seminars, regional events.

NHS Operating framework

Claire Northridge, DH provided an update in relation to this year's NHS Operating Framework. As usual, the framework will set out the priorities and business rules for the NHS for the year. Claire advised that, although the DH is still at a very early stage of drafting, they hope to be able to publish the operating framework for 2012/13 by the end of November. With a need for the NHS to deliver both a significant reform agenda this year as well as continuing to deliver against the QIPP challenge, the aim is to give the service as much time as possible to plan.

Flu campaign

The final item discussed was the SPF's national staff seasonal flu campaign. Dean Royles from NHS Employers updated the meeting on the progress that had been made to date, including how the campaign was using social media to get the message across to frontline staff. The Minister congratulated both NHS Employers and the Staff Side on their excellent partnership working that was helping deliver a successful campaign.