



Social Partnership Forum

The Social Partnership Forum (SPF) brings together NHS employers, trade unions and the Department of Health to discuss, debate and involve partners in the development and implementation of the workforce implications of policy.

Welcome

This bulletin will give you a background to the SPF; let you know how it engages with the workforce implications of policy and how it is working to support staff and employers through the health reforms and the transition to new NHS structures. It highlights the importance of staff engagement and how it can lead to improved patient care. It also links to good practice case studies of successful partnership working in action.

An electronic version of this bulletin will be made available after the conference via the SPF website: www.socialpartnershipforum.org

If you have any questions on what is set out in this bulletin or want to learn more about partnership working in the NHS then email us: webenquiries@socialpartnershipforum.org

Partnership under Pressure Session: 16th November 10:30 to 11:45

You can learn more about the SPF and working in partnership under difficult circumstances at our Partnership under Pressure session. This will give delegates a chance to learn from leading-edge good practice on how partnership working can improve efficiency and quality of care through a positive approach to employment relations. It will also allow delegates to gain practical tools and knowledge to help improve the quality of patient services in ways that engage staff at all levels. Delegates will have the opportunity to learn how the Irish health service responded to the need to save money and increase productivity by using partnership working to improve efficiency, quality and the safety of healthcare. A summary of the session will be made available after the conference via the SPF website.

About us

The SPF has a key role in scrutinising policy and contributing a unique voice on workforce matters. It meets five times a year to allow partners to discuss the workforce implications of health policy. The coalition government is an active partner in the SPF with the forum being chaired by Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health. The chair for NHS Trade unions is Christina McAnea, Unison National Secretary for Health and the chair for employers is Dean Royles, Director of the NHS Employers organisation.

The work of the SPF is taken forward by its subgroups such as the [HR Transition Partnership Forum](#), [Staff Passport Group](#) and [Embedding Partnership Working Group](#). We provide information to the service and in particular our colleagues in regional SPFs through our website, news alerts and regional bulletins. All partners strongly believe in the importance of partnership working, especially during challenging times. Through working together with openness and a mutual respect it is possible to identify innovative solutions to issues which should lead to improved patient care.

Guidance on the Transition

Through the HR Transition Partnership Forum (HRTPF), a number of key HR policy documents including the HR Transition Framework and the NHS Commissioning Board People Transition Policy have been developed with trade unions, NHS, Department of Health, and Arms Length Bodies representatives. The HRTPF is also engaged in the development of further People Transition Policies for the new organisations being set up as part of the transition and guidance for sender organisations. Find out more through the [Managing the Transition](#) section of the SPF website.

Support for Staff

The SPF's web-based [Staff Passport Toolkit](#) provides staff with information on the implications for their terms and conditions, pensions, education and training etc. when they are compulsorily transferred to another organisation. Work is ongoing through the Staff Passport Group to ensure the toolkit remains an up-to-date and useful resource for staff.

The Benefits of Staff Engagement

The results of a two-year project undertaken by a team of independent researchers at [Aston Business School](#) have been published by the Department of Health. Following analysis of the wealth of data contained in NHS staff survey results they found that the experience of NHS staff at work links with performance measures that illustrate the quality of care that NHS trusts deliver. This new evidence shows that increased levels of staff engagement will improve the quality of the services an organisation provides.

The Benefits of Appraisal and the Knowledge Skill Framework (KSF)

In their research Aston Business School also identified well structured appraisal as being an important part of NHS employment practice, leading to improved patient outcomes. An organisation-wide appraisal process that focuses on performance and personal development can help deliver this. The [NHS Staff Council Guidance, Appraisals and KSF made simple - a practical guide](#) (available on the NHS Employers website) provides a flexible, adaptable tool to support the appraisal process and contains a range of materials and sample templates that can be tailored to meet local needs. More practical advice on appraisal will be available on the NHS Employers website shortly: www.nhsemployers.org

Embedding Partnership Working

The SPF is committed to promoting partnership working locally. Working with employers and trade unions in the NHS, we have produced a number of good practice case studies on our website which demonstrate successful partnership working in practice. These include:

- Embedding a culture of engagement at [Royal Bolton NHS Foundation Trust](#). (HPMA engagement award winner, 2011).
- Developing an active and collaborative staff side representation and formal consultation process at [NHS Norfolk](#) (HPMA partnership award winner, 2011).
- Developing and embedding partnership protocols at [Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust](#). (Funded by the SPF Partnership Fund)

Partnership Behaviours Audit Tool

Yorkshire and the Humber SPF has developed a [Partnership Behaviours Audit Tool](#) to assist partnership groups to assess their effectiveness on an ongoing basis.