

## **Social Partnership Forum – 9 December 2010**

### **Key communications**



**The Public Health White Paper, HR and operating frameworks as well as the equality delivery system, GP pathfinders and winter flu vaccinations were just some of the issues discussed at the final meeting of the SPF in 2010.**

#### **Update from Clare Chapman, Director-General, Workforce**

Before moving to the main agenda items, Clare Chapman updated the meeting on the Health White Paper and the Health Bill. Over 6,000 responses had been received to the White Paper consultation exercise and a next steps paper would be published on 15 December 2010. The timetable for the Health Bill was still awaited.

#### **NHS Equality Delivery System**

Peter Hall from the Department and Gail Adams on behalf of the staff side jointly updated the meeting on progress made to implement the equality delivery system. The system will support NHS organisations to commission equality services locally and follows a major engagement exercise involving over 700 NHS consultees.

The final framework will be subject to a formal consultation during early part of 2011. The Care Quality Commission has agreed that their inspectors will be trained in the new system and will be looking at whether trusts are using the system effectively as part of their inspection process. The SPF welcomed the scheme. The forum was keen to ensure that equality issues were monitored closely during the transition process facing the NHS and that close working was maintained with members of the Staff Council's equality and diversity group.

#### **Public Health White Paper**

Tim Baxter from the Department gave a comprehensive report on the publication of the Government's Public Health White Paper. He reported on the plans to create Public Health England within the Department of Health and the transfer of public health responsibilities locally to local councils. Members of the SPF were keen to ensure that workforce issues were adequately addressed during the planning process and members welcomed the offer of a workshop to take these matters forward. They also welcomed a commitment from the Department to provide as much robust workforce data as possible to aid this process.

#### **Pathfinder GP Consortia**

Claire Aldiss provided an update on the announcement of the first 52 pathfinders for the new GP consortia arrangements as set out in the Health White Paper from the Department. Claire explained that the pathfinder programme was a rolling initiative and additional groups of GP practices were expected to join over the coming months. Claire

was keen to stress that the pathfinder programme would play a key role in helping to model the future, through both pathfinders exploring some of the issues involved in ensuring effective implementation, and the creation of learning networks to ensure that their experience and best practice was spread across the country. Both the employer and staff side representatives stressed the importance of the pathfinders addressing workforce issues and the need for greater involvement of the Social Partnership Forum in the pathfinder process.

Forum members welcomed the offer to participate in the network established to consider the learning from the programme. The meeting agreed a number of actions including the need for a clear method for future engagement, especially around workforce issues, which would allow the SPF to inform solutions to any issues as they emerge. There was also general agreement that there was a need for visible milestones for the project, which would then offer some much-needed clarity for staff involved.

### **Winter Flu Vaccination<sup>1</sup> – uptake amongst healthcare workers**

The forum discussed how they could be involved in increasing the uptake of the winter flu vaccination amongst NHS staff. Forum members agreed that they would be willing to promote the issue amongst their stakeholders and members during the current winter season and expressed a wish to address this issue early in 2011 so that a more detailed plan could be developed for 2012. There was also agreement that senior clinical and professional leadership was required to address the low take up by certain groups of staff such as clinicians. The need for clinical leadership was emphasized.

### **Update on Visits to Regional SPFs**

Mike Jackson provided an update on the visits to six of the regional SPFs between September and December 2010. He explained that a learning event was planned for 29 March 2011, which would give regional SPFs an opportunity to consider how they would operate within the new NHS architecture proposed in the Health White Paper.

### **Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS)**

Nic Greenfield from the Department reported on the success of the recent MARS scheme and explained that a formal evaluation of the scheme was now underway. He also explained that following a request from Yorkshire and the Humber SHA, trusts will be able to request approval from their SHA to run their own MARS based on the nationally agreed scheme. Any agreed scheme would need to be completed by 31 January 2011.

### **Education and Training Commission Consultation**

Nic also updated the SPF on the proposed consultation on education and training, which was expected to be published on 20 December 2010. The consultation period would close in March 2011. The proposed timescale was welcomed by SPF members

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Immunisation/index.htm>

who noted the importance of the process and the impact on all sections of the workforce.

### **NHS Operating Framework and HR Framework**

Nic confirmed that the operating framework was scheduled to be published on 15 December 2010. He explained that work was continuing on the development of the HR framework and that all those involved were committed to providing employees and employers with clarity where possible. The staff side agreed that there was a common interest in developing the framework, although the process was proving difficult due to key policy decisions being awaited.