

What are the benefits for each partner?

The SPF enables partners to work together to promote effective partnership working on the workforce implications of policy and strategy. It brings together representatives from the DHSC, NHSE, HEE and the NHS Trade Unions (representing NHS staff) and NHS Employers (which provides the employers' voice). This model enables early discussion, debate and involvement in the development and implementation of policy that impacts on the workforce.

DHSC perspective: Ministers and the DHSC value the SPF, as it provides a forum which upholds high levels of cooperation and commitment to improve health and social care outcomes for patients. The forum provides valuable input and insight into the workforce implications of policy development and supports the implementation of policies.

Working in partnership across the health and care landscape and engaging with the workforce is key to making the best decisions about patient care. Evidence shows that engaged, satisfied employees are more productive and that in the NHS, staff and patient experience are closely linked. DHSC believes that engaging NHS staff in decisions that affect them is a crucial factor in the delivery of safe and high-quality care for our patients.

Trade Union perspective: The NHS Trade Unions believe it is in their members' best interests to engage in partnership working with governments and employers, to seek solutions to challenges and problems. Partnership working puts an onus on both employers and trade unions to engage and consult on all decisions that affect staff. Partnership underpins and facilitates sound and effective employer and trade union relations and has a track record of delivering real gains for staff and patients. As a crucial determinant of the quality of healthcare, a growing body of evidence-based research shows that effective partnership working and staff engagement in NHS organisations improves the patient experience and healthcare outcomes.

Employers' perspective: The SPF allows employers to get an early sight of health policy. It also allows them to give their perspective on how policy should be developed and highlight the possible workforce implications of a policy. In particular, the forum allows employers to

influence how proposals are implemented and, through discussions with partners, to make sure they are workable and realise maximum benefits for patients.

NHSE's perspective: Responsible for the wise investment of over £100bn of taxpayers' resources, NHSE makes critical decisions about patient care which affect the NHS and the people who work in it. The SPF is an invaluable forum which allows for the workforce implications of those decisions to be discussed with employers and staff representatives in an atmosphere of constructive partnership.

NHSE is also responsible for supporting foundation trusts and NHS trusts to give patients consistently safe, high quality, compassionate care within local health systems that are financially sustainable.

With the workforce at the heart of all NHS providers it is imperative that NHSE maintains strong working channels through the SPF to fully understand any concerns and issues that partners may have. There is clear evidence showing the link between staff and patient satisfaction, and NHSE believes that a well-motivated and committed workforce is of benefit to patients.

HEE's perspective: HEE is responsible for the education, training and continuing development of every member of staff, and recruiting for values in order to deliver a better and more representative health and healthcare workforce for England. HEE is committed to working in partnership with its recognised trade union partners and therefore greatly values the SPF, to maximise the successful delivery of workforce strategy and to work for the wider benefit of the service in general.