

Roles and Responsibilities

To enable effective operation of these partnership arrangements, all partners agree to recognise and respect each other's roles and functions, which are distinct but complementary.

At national level partners recognise that:

- Ministers are democratically elected and have formal accountability to Parliament and the public as leaders of the health and care system for developing and implementing public policy through the DHSC and its Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs).
- Trade Unions have a responsibility to represent the interests of their members.
- NHS Employers has a responsibility to represent the views of employers in the NHS.
- NHSE has a responsibility to discuss and engage with partners on significant policy decisions, which affect the NHS workforce, and to ensure health interested unions understand NHSE's role, reasons for developing specific policies and its evidence base, and regard NHSE a partner with the best interests of the NHS, patients and the workforce at heart.
- HEE has a responsibility to discuss significant decisions and developments affecting the planning and development of the healthcare and public health workforce.

A range of other organisations, groups and networks exist at a national and regional level with which the SPF liaises and interfaces through the national SPF, its subgroups, and regional SPFs. This includes the Care Quality Commission, UK Health Security Agency and other organisations leading health and care initiatives that impact on the health workforce. The SPF also works with the NHS Staff Council, which is responsible for formal negotiations on pay and terms and conditions issues for staff covered by NHS Terms and Conditions of Service, although SPF itself does not cover these issues.

Partners recognise that regional level partnership forums provide an arena for overarching confidential discussions and debate between trade unions, employers and the system about strategic issues

affecting the NHS workforce. They contribute ideas on the workforce implications of developing policy and its implementation. They take a lead role in promoting good practice and communication between national and local partnership forums to drive up the quality of care for patients and improve staff experience. Further information regarding the different regional partnership forums, can be found on the [SPF website](#).

At local employer level - the SPF recognises the importance of partnership working between management and trade unions in health and care organisations and the positive contribution it can make to patient care. Partners have a shared aim to ensure that effective partnership working is sustained and embedded in all employer organisations and produce and promote tools and resources, made available on the SPF website, to support a partnership approach.