

## Principles for Integrated Care Board (ICBs) partnership machinery with recognised trade unions

These principles, agreed by the [ICS Transition Partnership Group](#) of the national Social Partnership Forum (SPF), set out how ICBs as new statutory employers should follow best practice in setting up and running joint negotiating and consultative machinery.

1. ICBs, as statutory NHS bodies, will be added to annex one of the [NHS terms and conditions of service handbook](#), as agreed by the NHS staff council and as such will be expected to understand and implement the relevant annexes relating to partnership working.
2. Existing trade union recognition will transfer with staff from Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to the new ICBs.
3. Where transferred partnership arrangements do not meet the rights to recognition as set out in the NHS terms and conditions of service, these should be reviewed and updated in partnership with trades unions. Where a partnership agreement does not exist, the ICB should agree one within the first six months of establishment, and this should reflect the right to recognition by any of the NHS staff council trade unions.
4. As set out in the [NHS terms and conditions of service](#), effective local partnership machinery should be in place and meet regularly (at least four times per year) to share information, discuss and negotiate issues that impact the workforce in a timely manner. This could include sub-groups to deal with policy development and equality, diversity and inclusion issues. ICBs should also establish a health and safety committee.
5. ICBs should commit to support and develop both new and existing trade union representatives. They should follow [section 25 of the NHS terms and conditions of service](#) in terms of time off and facilities for trade union representatives. Full time officers of unions can provide support to their reps as part of this process and be part of local partnership forums as ex-officio members.

6. As an NHS employer, the ICB should refer to [section 26 of the NHS terms and conditions of service](#) and set up joint consultation machinery based on a partnership approach to industrial relations. Organisations which ensure systematic communication and consultation take place on a wide range of subjects will benefit from better decision making, greater employee understanding and improved industrial relations. ICBs will communicate, consult, and negotiate on any proposals that are likely to affect employees. These include any changes to pay, terms and conditions of employment, working practices, location, size of workforce, hours of service.
7. Partnerships will work in a relationship of trust and the parties will respect each other's confidences and work within a no surprise culture. ICBs should adopt the principles and best practice of partnership working as set out in [annex 27 of the of the NHS terms and conditions of service](#).
8. ICBs should actively seek, listen to, value and respond to the views of staff and their trade unions. Trade unions should be active participants in the process of formulating proposals, the aim is for both parties to work together from the earliest stage to find solutions which fit shared values. Decision making should be by consensus.
9. A template partnership framework will be agreed and shared by the [Transition Partnership Group](#) to support ICBs who do not currently have one. [\*The template partnership framework agreement was published in April 2022 and is available on the [SPF website](#)].

**National SPF**  
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