

TERMS OF REFERENCE: SOUTH EAST REGIONAL SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM (revised October 2023)

Purpose

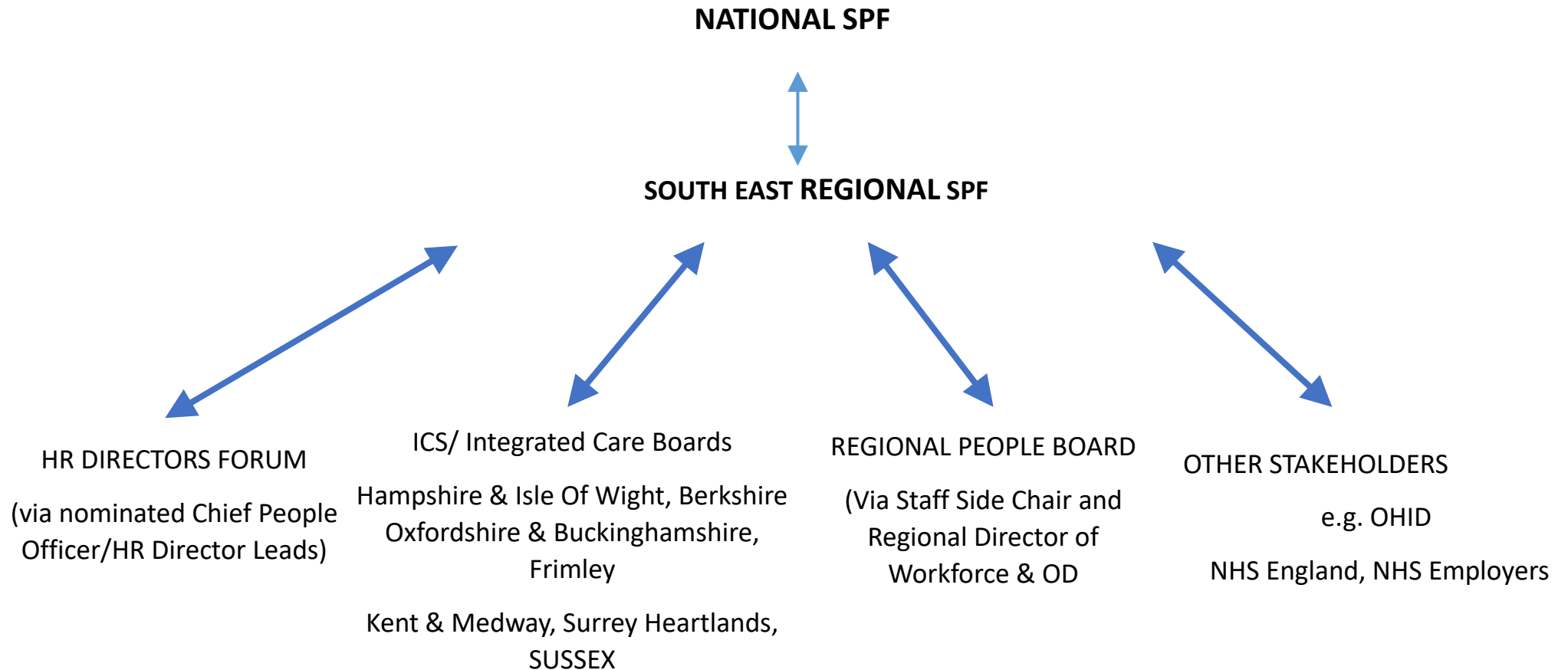
The South East Regional Social Partnership Forum (SE RSPF) is a partnership between NHS organisations in the South East and regional trade union representatives. It mirrors and supports the national arrangements for partnership working on the workforce implications of policy. In its way of working it acknowledges the partnership working that takes place at a system and organisational level. The Regional Social Partnership will use the subsidiarity model below to recognise its regional role and impact:

Activities will be carried out nationally where:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is necessary to meet statutory responsibilities • It is more efficient and effective because of economies of scale and there are clear benefits from a national role in standardisation or implementation • National teams have specific and scarce skills/knowledge that ICSs and local organisations can draw on
Activities will be carried out regionally where:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for coordination and improvement support to deliver national priorities • There is a need to help foster capacity in local health systems • Decisions need to be made across a regional labour market
Activities will be led or coordinated by ICS where	<p>Strong local partnerships are required, included partnerships with local government, social care providers and education providers</p> <p>Planning is needed over a medium-term period e.g. up to 5 years</p> <p>There are benefits of scale from joined up solutions to shared challenges and opportunities</p>
Activities will be led by local employers where	They relate directly to the employment, development, wellbeing and retention of the people that work in that local organisation

The role of this forum is to work in partnership and involve employer, staff organisations and ALBs in meaningfully considering future changes that impact across the region and identifying the workforce implications of these as well as to promote and embed partnership working across the region.

The forum will work at a regional level, recognising that it will be useful to connect with system level Social Partnership forums and to have connectivity with the National Social Partnership Forum.

Promoting partnership working in the NHS at a regional level



Aims

The Forum will in particular:

- Embed the role of trade unions in underpinning effective employee engagement
- Understand the workforce implications of strategic developments and coordinate responses where appropriate
- Ensure regional oversight and scrutiny of local partnership working in the ICS footprints within the South East and facilitate meaningful discussions.
- Support local partnership working in the ICS footprints within the South East region
- Share and promote best practice between organisations and / ICSs
- Support the work of the national social partnership mechanisms and staff council
- Ensure meaningful consultation and engagement is taking place and promote openness, honesty and transparency in communications.

Shared Approach

This agreement is underpinned by shared values and common purpose.

In particular, partners:

- are committed to the values, rights and responsibilities in the NHS Constitution;
- support an NHS which provides high quality and integrated services for patients and service users;
- have a shared commitment to continuous improvement and access to high quality services;
- are committed to the People Promises that form part of the NHS People Plan;
- are committed to supporting and promoting equality and inclusion.

Principles for effective Joint Working

To deliver successful partnership working it is important to develop good formal and informal working relations that build trust and share responsibility, whilst respecting difference. To facilitate this, all parties commit to adopt the following principles in their dealings with each other:

- We will keep the patient or those who use the service at the centre of everything we do;
- We won't always agree but commit to keep talking;
- Early sharing of information in a meaningful way;
- Openness, honesty and transparency in communications;
- A positive and constructive approach based on shared goals and aspirations;
- No surprises and be respectful to positions;
- Be clear about whether we are discussing issues for information, a specific policy direction for implementation, issues which require resolution or items to demonstrate lessons learned;
- Early discussion of emerging issues and maintaining dialogue on policy and priorities;
- Attend (or send a deputy to) at least 50% of meetings.

Benefits

Effective partnership working has the potential to produce some important benefits for all parties. These include:

- Delivering improved services to patients/users;
- Improving quality of decisions through sharing knowledge and experience in proactively leading and managing the workforce implications of health policy and innovation;
- Enabling more effective implementation of policy;
- Reducing duplicated effort by establishing principles and frameworks within which partners can take forward their engagement with staff in partnership locally;
- Providing a transparent and streamlined structure for trade union, employer and staff engagement.

Membership

This will comprise:

- Representation from staff organisations listed in the national Partnership Agreement. The staff organisations will elect a co-Chair and Vice-Chair;
- Representation from the HRD forum (at least one Director of HR per /ICS) from NHS trusts/providers in the South East. Management side will elect a co-Chair and Vice-Chair (ideally 1 from KSS (inc Frimley) and one from BOB/HIOW), this could be a CEO;
- Nominated individuals with understanding of strategic workforce from across the region;
- Representation from ICSs across the South East;
- Representation from NHS England and Improvement Regional HR and OD team;
- Representation for specific discussions from Regional Director of The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities;
- Representation from NHS England;
- Representation from NHS Employers

Meeting Arrangements

The Forum will meet monthly via Teams and twice a year in person as far as is practicable.

NHS Employers, on behalf of the joint chairs is responsible for the administration of the forum, issuing papers and arranging meetings

The chair of the meeting will alternate between the management and staff-side.

Roles and Responsibilities

All parties agree to recognise and respect each other's roles and functions which are distinct but complementary. In particular: Joint Chairs of the Forum have a responsibility for:

- Establishing a strategic agenda for the meeting;
- Maintaining effective links with the national Social Partnership Forum;
- Establishing Task & Finish groups for identified projects or themes;
- Other stakeholders will have legitimate views that will need to be considered and taken into account.

In addition, there are a number of generic roles and responsibilities. Members will be expected to:

- support employee relations through the development of principles and the use of best practice
- Contribute to the development of enabling frameworks
- Share expertise to support the engagement of staff
- Identify and share best practice and on employment issues
- Follow and communicate the principles and processes which are agreed by partners in the South East Social Partnership Forum for dealing with specific aspects of regional policy
- Agree processes for engagement in response to national policy

Working Arrangements

To discuss a wide range of strategic issues in relation to the following themes:

- i. Planning and delivery of care
- ii. Productivity, efficiency and effectiveness
- iii. Quality
- iv. Developing Just and Learning cultures
- v. Equality and inclusion
- vi. Workforce - Recruitment and retention / attracting people to our NHS
- vii. Change management principles
- viii. Education and training

Review Date

The terms of reference will be reviewed in October 2024 to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. A separate priorities appendix will be agreed at the beginning of each financial year that aligns to the National priorities.
