

## SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM WIDER GROUP

### TERMS OF REFERENCE – updated May 2025

<b>WORKING ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<p>The Wider Group meets quarterly and is chaired by a Health Minister, currently Karin Smyth.</p> <p>The Wider Group is the senior SPF meeting under the auspices of which the SPF Strategic Group meets. The SPF subgroups report into the Strategic Group. The Wider Group can allocate policy issues to the Strategic Group for more detailed discussion. The Strategic Group can commission existing or new subgroups to take forward agreed priority work programmes or projects.</p> <p>Under the joint agenda setting arrangements, items for discussion may be placed on the Wider Group agenda by any of the four partners (NHS Trade Unions, NHS Employers, DHSC, NHS England) on condition that the final agenda is agreed by all partners via the SPF Co-chairs and SPF Secretariat. Additionally, all partners are encouraged to use the forum to showcase effective partnership working in line with the aims of the forum.</p> <p>Partners’ shared values and principles for effective joint working are set out in the SPF <a href="#">Partnership Agreement</a> based on a mutual commitment and shared endeavour to meet the workforce challenges facing the NHS. They should also observe the behaviours and carry out their responsibilities as set out in the <a href="#">SPF Members’ Handbook</a>.</p> <p>The SPF co-chairs are responsible for ensuring that individual members uphold the forum’s spirit of co-production and its partnership principles.</p>
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<p><b>CHAIRS/LEAD PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Karin Smyth, Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care (Chair)          Danny Mortimer, NHS Employers (Co-chair)          Helga Pile, NHS Staff Side (Co-chair)          Matthew Style/Gavin Larnar, DHSC          Tom Simons, NHS England          Full membership details – see Annex A.</p>
<b>DATES</b>	<p><b>2025 dates:</b> 18 June (in-person); 17 September (via Teams) 11 December (via Teams).</p>
<b>AIMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To act as the official, senior partnership forum in the NHS for workforce engagement in national policy, based on a representative model.</li> <li>• To contribute to improved patient outcomes through partnership working and staff engagement on the workforce implications of policy.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To bring partners together to discuss, debate and engage in the early stages of the development of policy and strategy in the NHS, where there are workforce perspectives.</li> <li>• To support and promote good employment practices and the benefits of good people management/workforce engagement.</li> <li>• To promote the value of partnership working externally and within partners' own organisations and actively seek opportunities to promote its ethos more widely.</li> <li>• To enable all partners to consider, co-ordinate and provide timely input or responses to issues on which their views are, and should be, sought.</li> <li>• To embed the ethos of the SPF Partnership Agreement, sharing best practice, ensuring structures, representation and engagement remains relevant to the health and care landscape on key workforce issues.</li> <li>• To receive update reports from SPF Strategic Group and SPF subgroups on their work and to provide further direction as required.</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To operate within the principles outlined in the SPF Partnership Agreement – mutual respect, co-operation, and “no surprises” culture.</li> <li>• To consider the development and impact of NHS policies and strategic delivery on the NHS workforce and NHS employers and other providers of NHS-funded services and their staff, where appropriate.</li> <li>• To engage the workforce effectively in tackling future challenges and healthcare priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus all work on improving outcomes for patients and staff.</li> <li>• Through partnership working, help to embed NHS transformation.</li> <li>• Support development and delivery of national healthcare policy priorities by contributing key workforce perspectives, in particular, through engagement on implementation of the NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan.</li> <li>• Signpost SPF Strategic Group to focus on emerging policy priorities and support the Strategic Group to commission work from existing SPF subgroups or establish new issue-specific working groups.</li> <li>• Develop best practice partnership working case studies, provide a vehicle to showcase those, and share more widely as exemplars of regional, system and organisational partnership working.</li> </ul>
<b>BUSINESS BENEFITS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports delivery of high-quality services to patients/users.</li> <li>• Improves mutual understanding and respect.</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for partners to contribute their experience and ideas to the development and implementation of healthcare policy with implication for the workforce.</li> <li>• Enables partners to hear, first-hand, ministerial priorities and contribute to discussions on how best to support, develop and implement them.</li> <li>• More effective policy making.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to improved staff experience, high standards in employment practice, and higher levels of staff engagement.</li> <li>• Supports strong and effective leadership at local level.</li> <li>• Anchors all activity in the underpinning academic evidence that staff engagement is a compelling predictor of organisational performance and productivity in the NHS as well as patient experience and outcomes.</li> <li>• Leadership by example – the 2019 independent SPF stocktake report reaffirms that the SPF is “a public sector exemplar model”.</li> <li>• Improves connectivity with Regional SPFs, and emerging ICS SPFs, who may be encouraged to attend and share their good practice.</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL RISKS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The remit of the group might not adequately take account of the role of changing NHS system architecture or with other ALBs whose input might be crucial, as they are not included as full partners.</li> <li>• Individuals assigned actions may not take these forward due to other pressures/priorities leading to stagnation of the forum and its work.</li> <li>• A lack of forward momentum at these meetings could result in key representatives withdrawing, or a retrenching of their individual positions to the detriment of the Wider Group.</li> <li>• Focus on key priorities could lead to a lack of focus on other areas of interest that may previously have been covered.</li> <li>• Failure by any of the partners to develop effective social partnership working in relation to key priorities and policies may make the implementation of changes in the NHS ineffective.</li> <li>• Various pressures on industrial relations could undermine partnership working in the NHS.</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key communications from Wider Group meetings are agreed by all partners, published on the SPF website and promoted in the SPF Bulletin.</li> <li>• Attendees to communicate back to their networks in an appropriate and timely manner.</li> <li>• Supporting papers are, wherever possible, provided in advance of meetings to aid discussions, including updates from the SPF subgroups.</li> <li>• Minutes, whilst concise, will provide an accurate reflection of discussion in the meeting and agreed actions and will not be tailored to any individual partner’s perspective.</li> </ul>
<b>TIMING and LOGISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings to be held quarterly, chaired routinely by a Health Minister, and to be a mix of face-to-face and virtual meetings.</li> <li>• Agendas and supporting papers will be agreed with partners prior to the meeting and forwarded to all attendees and members of the group approximately a week beforehand.</li> <li>• Terms of Reference will be reviewed periodically.</li> </ul>

## SPF WIDER GROUP – MEMBERSHIP

Karin Smyth	Ministerial Chair
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### **Trade Unions:**

Helga Pile	Unison Acting Head of Health (SPF staff side co-chair)
Nick Entwistle	Unison (SPF Secretariat staff side rep)
Alan Lofthouse	British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT)
Jacalyn Williams	Unite the Union
Sharone Wilde	GMB (General Municipal & Boilermakers)
Lena Levy/Robert Kidney	BMA (British Medical Association – <i>one rep</i> )
Brian Morton	RCN (Royal College of Nursing)
Joanne Kaye (interim)	RCM (Royal College of Midwives)
Jon Restell	MIP (Managers in Partnership)
Claire Sullivan	CSP (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)
Michael Cornes	Federation of Clinical Scientists (FCS)
Annette Mansell-Green	British Dietetic Association (BDA)
Martin Furlong	Royal College of Podiatry (RCoP)
Sam Aitkenhead	British Orthoptic Society (BOS)
Paul Donaldson	Hospital Consultants & Specialists Assoc (HCSA)
Dean Rogers	Society of Radiographers (SOR)
Nishreen Anna Mansour	TUC – as observers

### **DHSC and NHS England:**

Matthew Style	Director General, Secondary Care and Integration, DHSC
Gavin Lerner	Director of Workforce, DHSC
Louisa Elias-Evans	Deputy Director Industrial Relations, DHSC
Andrew Morris	Head of SPF, DHSC
Tom Simons	Chief HR/OD Officer - NHSE
Angie Walsh	Head of Recognition & Reward - NHSE
Prof Em Wilkinson-Brice (standing invite)	National Director for People, NHSE
Navina Evans (standing invite)	Chief Workforce, Training and Education Officer - NHSE
Mark Radford (standing invite)	Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, Policy & Strategy NHSE
Claire Gore	Director of Future of NHS HR & OD Programme - NHSE

### **NHS Employers:**

Danny Mortimer	Chief Executive and SPF co-chair
Rebecca Smith	NHS Employers
Plus 4 nominated representatives	TBC – rotating attendance

### **Plus others including the Devolved Administration:**

Chris Wilkinson	Northern Ireland Assembly
Catriona Hetherington	Scottish Devolved Administration
Annie Jones	Welsh Assembly
John Rogers	Skills for Health
Position currently vacant	Local Government Association
Amber Whapshott	Business Services Association (BSA)
Position currently vacant	Independent sector healthcare provider
Position currently vacant	ACAS