



Wider Group Key comms

17 June 2026

Welcome and introductions

The Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care, Karin Smyth, chaired the meeting.

NHS Staff Standards

The Minister noted that the department and NHS England had engaged with Social Partnership Forum (SPF) members throughout the development of the NHS Staff Standards.

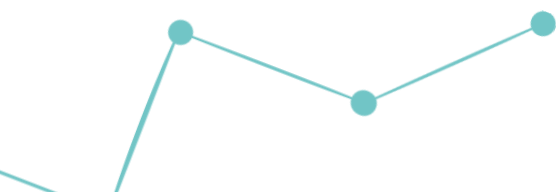
The next phase will be to launch the standards and support implementation. There will be further engagement with the SPF group established to assist this work. SPF members expressed the desire to do this work in partnership where possible.

SPF members complimented the standards and said they bring together key workforce issues. They said the draft resources shared at the meeting will be helpful and advised that it would be beneficial to include what the standards mean to leaders in the communications resources. They also asked about the role of trade unions locally in implementing the standards and them having access to relevant workforce data.

10 Year Workforce Plan (10YWP)

James Murray, the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, took stock of the 10YWP.

Once launched, the intention is for the 10YWP to go to regions and employers, enabling them to identify what it means for their place. The plan will be refined in two years' time.



SPF members raised concerns about the potential impact of artificial intelligence on NHS staff. They also highlighted the need for adequate training for staff on new technology.

System change

There was a discussion on how partnership working will operate at different levels in the new system architecture. Trade unions want to ensure that they can get involved in decisions that affect the workforce at a region or sub-region level. Further work to plan for this will progress through the SPF Strategic Group.

NHS Future Workforce Solution

Colleagues from the NHS Business Services Authority led this agenda item. The NHS Future Workforce Solution will replace the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) in England and Wales.

SPF members highlighted the importance of addressing payroll errors, providing accurate pension information, and calculating sick pay correctly and that current issues with ESR, such as those listed above, need to be addressed before 2030. They also referenced the role the new system could play in supporting more effective collective bargaining.

Lord Mann Review

A Department of Health and Social Care representative spoke on the review recommendations, which the government has accepted.

One of the recommendations covered a review of Uniforms and workwear: guidance for NHS employers. More detailed discussions on this guidance have taken place in the SPF's Workforce Issues Group.

SPF members raised how much was in the review and how the recommendations connect with other workforce-related issues, such as violence prevention and reduction. The SPF will consider the recommendations of the review further and agree where SPF involvement will be most helpful.

Learn more about the [SPF Wider Group](#).

