Local Partnership Forum
Terms of Reference
June 2025

YELLOW HIGHLIGHT = DRAFT SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Partnership Forum (LPF) for Public Health Wales NHS Trust (the organisation) is the formal mechanism where the organisation management and recognised Trade Unions work together to improve the health and well-being of the people of Wales. It is the forum where key stakeholders can discuss and consider the organisation's strategic direction, priorities and plans, and how these will affect the workforce, as well as engage with each other to inform, debate and seek to agree local priorities on workforce related issues.

1.2 The purpose of the LPF is twofold:

1.2.1 It is where key stakeholders can engage with each other to prioritise, inform, debate, and seek agreement on strategic workforce and public health services issues enabling high-level, strategic discussions to take place in relation to the organisation's future direction.

1.2.2 It will also provide the formal mechanism for consultation, negotiation and communication between the Trade Unions and management on specific workforce related matters that arise out of the organisation's priorities and plans.

1.3 Operational, day to day matters will typically be discussed and resolved at Directorate or divisional level.

1.4 There is also the opportunity to resolve any informal/operational matters through regular dialogue at the Partnership Working Informal Meetings. These meetings happen bi-monthly (in the months in which LPF is not due to meet), they are chaired by the People and OD Operations Service Manager or nominated deputy, and attended by members of People and OD and the Staff Side Committee.

1.5 In embracing the ethos of partnership working, the Public Health Wales Board will engage with recognised Trade Unions in the key discussions affecting the organisation and its people at the Public Health Wales

Board and its Committees, LPF and, where appropriate, at Local Directorate or divisional level.

1.6 The LPF will provide the formal mechanism for consultation, negotiation and communication between the Trade Unions and management.

1.7 As above, members of LPF and People and OD will work to resolve operational issues outside of this forum. Depending on the nature of the work being undertaken, there may be a requirement to report back to LPF or for LPF to refer work to the operational group.

1.8 The LPF will maintain a clear two-way relationship with the Welsh Partnership Forum (WPF) and relevant national partnership structures. The annual LPF meeting cycle and workplan will, where practicable, be aligned to enable local issues to be escalated to WPF and national updates to be considered locally. WPF feedback, national partnership priorities, and any issues requiring escalation will be included as standing LPF business. The Secretariat will confirm the WPF meeting schedule when available and propose any consequential changes to the LPF cycle.

2. Principles

2.1 As laid out in the Partnership Working Charter, Public Health Wales promotes partnership working, it supports both the workforce and management to work through challenges and allows us to grow, learn and develop. Our relationships are built on trust and confidence and demonstrate a real commitment to working together.

2.2 The TUC six principles of partnership will underpin the relationships and work of the LPF:

- a shared commitment to the success of the organisation
- a focus on the quality of working life for our staff
- recognition of the legitimate roles of the employer and the Trade Union
- a commitment by the employer to employment security
- openness on both sides and a willingness by the employer to share information and discuss the future plans for the organisation
- adding value – a shared understanding that the partnership is delivering measurable improvements for the employer, the union and employees

2.3 In addition to the above, management and Trade Unions abide by the following general principles which are based on the etiquette adopted by Board Members of Public Health Wales.

2.4 Aspects which are particularly pertinent to LPF Members and attendees are set out below:

- Embody Public Health Wales values
- Adhere to the Nolan Principles of Public Life, Social Partnership Act, and relevant Codes of Conduct
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of a meeting (or when these arise if it becomes evident part way through)
- Be respectful of, and courteous to others, recognising that all contributions have value
- Listen actively and challenge constructively
- Manage conflict objectively, explore differences fully and look for resolutions. Respect any ultimate divergence of view
- Show support and loyalty to other members of the LPF
- Commit and demonstrate throughout to openness, transparency and candour
- Turn mobile phones to silent, focus on the agenda and discussions in hand, and refrain from undertaking other work
- Avoid repeating points made by other LPF Members
- Adopt a solution-focussed approach to decision making
- Be alert throughout to the issues of diversity and inclusion
- Flag up in advance with the Chair if you will need to leave the Forum meeting at any point

2.5 The Joint Chairs will maintain a short LPF operating protocol/ ground rules/ MoU, to be reviewed alongside these Terms of Reference. The protocol will set out practical arrangements for agenda planning, expected behaviours, meeting preparation, attendance, escalation and communication between meetings.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of the LPF is to establish regular meetings between senior management and recognised Trade Unions on matters relating to the key strategic issues and future direction of the organisation and any hosted organisations. Such discussions will be confined to strategic, highlevel

organisational plans and priorities, enabling the LPF to be the formal mechanism for consultation, negotiation and communication between the recognised Trade Unions and management on specific workforce related matters. This will include and enable:

- regular and formal dialogue between the organisation and the Trade Unions on matters relating to strategic workforce and workforce-related organisation issues
- the employer and Trade Unions to put forward issues affecting the workforce
- opportunities for Trade Unions and managers to input into service development plans at an early stage
- consideration the workforce implications of service reviews and organisational change, and identify and seek to agree new ways of working
- consider the implications for our people of NHS reorganisation at a national or local level and to work in partnership to achieve a mutually successful implementation
- appraisal and discussion in partnership of the financial performance of the organisation on a regular basis
- appraisal and discussion in partnership of organisational activity and performance and its implications
- opportunities to identify, discuss and seek agreement on quality issues, including clinical governance, particularly where such issues have implications for our people
- communication to the LPF of key decisions taken by the organisation and senior management
- consideration of national developments as part of the NHS Wales Workforce Strategy and the implications for Public Health Wales including matters of service re-profiling.
- negotiation on matters subject to local determination
- policy development and review (see 4.2)
- development in partnership of appropriate facilities arrangements using the Agenda for Change Facilities Agreement as a minimum standard
- Trade Union representatives being afforded reasonable paid time off to undertake Trade Union duties

3.2 In addition to the above, Public Health Wales may establish local groups at Directorate and divisional level as required, to establish ongoing dialogue, communication and consultation on service and operational management issues specific to each area.

4. Delegated Powers and Authority

4.1 The LPF may establish sub-committees or task and finish groups to carry out, on its behalf, specific aspects of the work of the LPF.

4.2 Policy Development workshops take place regularly to review and develop People and OD policies, procedures, guidelines, protocols, and schemes. This forum is a mechanism by which management and Trade Union representatives, facilitated by People and OD, meet to jointly review and develop policies for recommendation to LPF, Business Executive Team/ Leadership Team and, where appropriate, final ratification by People and OD Committee. The LPF should review and comment on all people related policies, this may be managed either at LPF meetings or electronically between meetings if required. Other policies may also be appropriate for the LPF review, and this should be jointly agreed.

4.3 Minutes of the meetings of the LPF will be forwarded to People and OD Committee for information.

~~4.4 Where matters cannot be resolved they will be referred to an appropriate governance forum.~~

4.4 Where matters cannot be resolved through discussion at LPF, the Joint Chairs will agree the appropriate next step in line with the agreed local and/or national dispute resolution process. The route for escalation, the issue under dispute, any interim position and the outcome will be recorded in the LPF action log or minutes, subject to any confidentiality requirements.

5. Local Partnership Forum Meetings

5.1 There will be Bi-Monthly meetings of the LPF which will consider any key strategic issues and the strategic direction of the organisation as it relates to the workforce. The LPF will maintain an annual workplan. Key items for consideration will be included in the annual workplan in order to support efficiency in agenda management and to ensure relevant people are in attendance.

5.2 These meetings will be chaired alternately by the Director of People and OD and the Chair of Staff Side Committee, or their nominated Deputies, who are Joint Chairs of the LPF.

5.3 An agenda-setting meeting will take place for all Bi-Monthly meetings, between the Joint Chairs of the LPF in order to discuss and agree the agenda.

5.4 For all Bi-Monthly meetings of the LPF there should be 2 management representatives (one of which must be a senior member of the People and OD Directorate and 2 Staff Side representatives, each from separate recognised from separate Trade Unions (one of which must be the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary or Vice Secretary of Staff Side Committee) for the meeting to be quorate.

~~5.5 If a meeting is not quorate no decisions can be made but information may be exchanged, and recommendations can be endorsed at the next meeting (when quorate).~~

5.5 Where a meeting is not quorate, it may proceed for discussion and information sharing only. No formal decisions will be made. Recommendations may be brought back to the next quorate meeting for agreement. The Joint Chairs will review any recurring difficulties in achieving balanced representation and agree proportionate action with the relevant management or Staff Side representatives.

5.6 The cycle of meetings will be determined and agreed at the start of each year but will generally follow the schedule below:

- April
- June
- August
- October
- December
- February

5.7 Joint Chairs can, by agreement, schedule extraordinary meetings with 7 calendar days' notice.

5.8 The business of the Bi-Monthly meetings shall be restricted to matters pertaining to strategic issues and discussion/updates in relation to major change programmes and major corporate initiatives. Local operational issues should be raised at local Directorate level, and/or raised at the

informal Partnership Working meeting and will not be considered at LPF unless it is agreed that such issues have organisation-wide implications.

5.9 The agenda and papers shall be sent out no later than 7 days in advance of the LPF meeting.

6. Membership

6.1 The Director of People and OD and the Chair of Staff Side Committee will be Joint Chairs of the LPF and chair on an alternate basis.

6.2 All members of the LPF shall be full and equal members and share responsibility for the decisions of the LPF.

6.3 If a meeting has more representatives from either Trade Unions or from Management the voting rights of the meeting shall remain equal, suffice to say the focus of the LPF is effective engagement and discussion, and where required negotiation, this is not achieved through the number of attendees but a recognition that the organisation and the Trade Unions are equal partners at the LPF.

6.4 Where matters cannot be resolved they will be referred to an appropriate governance forum.

6.5 The Local Partnership Forum is comprised of the following recognised Trade Unions:

- GMB
- MiP
- Royal College of Nursing
- Society of Radiographers
- UNISON
- Unite

6.6 Membership of Management at Bimonthly meetings will be determined by the specific agenda agreed for the meeting but will include:

- Members of the Executive Team
- Board Secretary and Head of Board Business Unit
- Head of People and OD Partnering and/or People and OD Partner
- Head of People and OD Operations

- People and OD Operations Service Manager

6.7 Deputies should only attend in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement with the Joint Chairs.

7. Staff Representatives

7.1 Public Health Wales recognises those Trade Unions listed above for the representation of members who are employed by the organisation.

7.2 It will be the prerogative of the staff representatives to decide on the formula to achieve the maximum number of representatives for each Trade Union. However, it is generally recognised that a maximum of between 6-10 representatives of both Management and Staff side will be present at each meeting.

7.3 The Joint Chairs will review and agree attendance prior to each LPF Meeting to ensure the meeting is appropriately represented and manageable.

7.4 Staff representatives must be employed by Public Health Wales and accredited by their respective Trade Unions. If a representative ceases to be employed by the organisation, or ceases to be a member of a nominating Trade Union then they will automatically cease to be a member of the LPF. Full Time Officers of the Trade Unions may attend meetings as observers subject to prior notification and agreement of the Joint Chairs.

7.5 Members of the LPF who are unable to attend a meeting may send a suitable deputy (in line with Section 6.3 above) who will be taken into consideration when determining whether the meeting is quorate.

~~7.6 Consistent attendance and commitment to participate in discussions is essential. Where a member of the LPF does not attend within a year (except for reasons of sickness, pre-planned annual leave, maternity leave, etc.), the Joint Chairs will write to the member and bring the response to the next meeting for further consideration and possible removal from the LPF.~~

7.6 Consistent attendance and active participation at LPF are essential. Where a member is unable to attend, a suitable deputy may attend by prior agreement with the Joint Chairs, provided the deputy is eligible

and appropriately briefed. Where a member has not attended any LPF meeting within a year, except for an agreed reason, the Secretariat will bring this to the attention of the Joint Chairs, who will write to the member requesting confirmation of their continuing commitment. Following consideration of the response, the Joint Chairs may declare the position vacant and request a replacement representative.

7.7 The LPF Joint Chairs may also invite any others from within or outside the organisation to attend all or part of a meeting to assist it in its discussions on any particular matter.

7.8 The Joint Chairs will be supported by the Head of People and OD Operations who shall ensure that key and appropriate issues are discussed by the LPF in a timely manner with all the necessary information and advice being made available to members to inform the debate and ultimate resolutions. The Head of People and OD Operations will be accountable for monitoring attendance to ensure the meeting is quorate.

7.9 Administrative support, including the circulation of agenda, minutes and notification of meetings will be provided by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will report concerns to the Joint Chairs and coordinate agreed follow-up action.

8. Reporting and Assurance Arrangements

8.1 The LPF shall:

- Report each of its meetings formally to the People and OD Committee via submission of its minutes
- Bring to People and OD Committee's attention any significant matter under consideration by the LPF through the standing agenda item at the People and OD Committee.
- Provide an annual report to the Board in relation to the activities of the LPF.

8.2 The Trade Unions (LPF staff side) through their Staff side Committee mechanisms, will nominate the members of the LPF staff side to attend the Board and its committees, in accordance with agreed policies and arrangements.

9 Review

9.1 These terms of reference and operating arrangements shall be reviewed annually in line with the Standing Orders. This should be scheduled for April-June each year.