

Partnership Framework

1 Partnership Principles

The framework is an enabler to the creation of a workforce consultation, negotiation and engagement forum that has widespread legitimacy within the Viapath business and all segments of the workforce.

All parties will work in support of the growth and success of Viapath and its workforce in line with the core values of innovation, collaboration and expertise.

The Framework will support realisation of the strategic vision and operational performance targets of the Viapath business in meeting the needs of its NHS customers, patients and staff working for Viapath

The parties will work together to ensure that Viapath is an employer of choice amongst NHS and other private sector pathology providers. This depends on delivery of a competitive employee value proposition, the maintenance of an open culture, support for career development and positive employee engagement.

All parties recognise that change is essential for Viapath to take advantage of growth opportunities and respond to the changing requirements of its customers. Equally it is recognised that early employee engagement in initiatives and problems is mutually beneficial.

Communication and decision making should in general be open, and confidential when necessary.

Diversity is recognised and valued and Viapath will work to ensure all staff are treated equally.

Respect and courtesy are key Viapath values and underpin our partnership. This will be reflected in behaviours and communications internally and externally. Disagreements will arise but every effort will be made to resolve these through the workforce forum.

Partnership is entered into by all parties on a voluntary basis and partnership behaviours will be encouraged by support for facilities and training to enable effective joint working.

2 Scope

The Partnership Framework applies to all Viapath employees at all sites and representation on any committee or forum should be reflective of this.

In addition to any wider representation on any committee or forum, membership is guaranteed for Unite, Unison and the Federation of Clinical Scientists Union representatives.

Constituencies will be defined and agreed which are reflective of the entire Viapath organisation.

3 Health and Safety

Health and safety processes will meet statutory requirements, reflect best practice and should fully engage the workforce.

Health and safety frameworks, reporting structures and monitoring arrangements should be clear and transparent.

4 Training and Development

Training and development in Viapath encompasses:

- (i) Mandatory training
- (ii) Continuous professional development and role related training
- (iii) Career enhancing and service development
- (iv) Research related activities and relationships

There should be transparency and equality of access to training, development and study time

There should be transparency of training and development plans, activity data and funding.

5 Change Management

Change is often unsettling, particularly for those directly affected. Organisational changes should be carried out with due regard to legal requirements, relevant policies, best practice, and in a timely manner consistent with the need to both allay concerns and allow acceptance of the change.

Proposals for organisational change will be consulted upon, with a view to ensuring that employees understand the reasons for the change, their views are taken into account and gaining their commitment to it.

Viapath will seek to mitigate the effects of any organisational change, and will take appropriate measures to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

6 Employee Value Proposition

Viapath has an ambition to be an employer of choice and recognises the need to provide terms and conditions and an employment environment attractive to candidates and which facilitates employee recruitment, motivation and retention.

There will be engagement with the workforce around matters associated with the employment offer.

Viapath is focussed on growth and quality and every employee has a role to play in service efficiency and improvement. Individual and collective contribution should be recognised and rewarded.

All parties share the belief that there is a direct link between employee engagement, service quality and organisational success. We are committed to working together to develop a culture and other initiatives that will increase employee engagement.

Regular employee surveys provide an essential measure of employee engagement and survey results and action plans and targets should be widely shared consulted upon.

There will be transparency about staffing levels, recruitment processes and productivity / turnaround data.

7 Pay and Reward

A framework will be developed through which pay and reward can be negotiated. Such a framework should be specific about scope and approach. The staff side representatives on the workforce consultation and engagement forum may submit evidence to the Viapath board in support of any proposals for enhancing overall pay and conditions for the workforce.

8 Governance arrangements

Initially a broadly representative staff side group will be established which will have a membership of ten representatives (including a minimum of one from each union) and each site contributing proportionately. This side will elect a temporary chair and with Viapath management work through a permanent agreement and arrangements for confirming selection and legitimacy of the established forum within the next three months.

9 Dispute Resolution

Pending establishment of the staff side any disputes for a single site may be dealt with by the early stages of the relevant grievance procedure. Disputes relating to more than one site will be referred to the relevant union officer and a Viapath executive officer.

10 Facilities

Pending agreement of a facilities agreement the Viapath representatives will be allowed time, access and support to enable them to represent and support Viapath employees on their site. Those with standing facilities to enable Branch work will have these supported until agreement can be reached.