Involving Partner Organisations Procedure

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1.0 Purpose of this procedure

This procedure applies where NHS Lothian has a direct partnership, service arrangement or other formal involvement with a Partner Organisation requiring governance assurance. Partner Organisations (POs) deliver services on behalf of, in partnership with, or in support of NHS Lothian services, whether within NHS premises, community settings, Partner premises or people's homes. It supports the policy requirement that all Partner delivered activity – including volunteers and paid staff – is subject to appropriate governance, oversight and assurance.

The procedure ensures that:

- Partnerships are safe, person-centred and aligned with NHS standards
- Governance requirements are proportionate to risk and scale of the activity delivered
- Key organisational functions are engaged early and appropriately
- Innovation and partnership working are enabled, where appropriate
- This procedure applies Scottish Government Clear Pathway Guidance where Partner Organisation recruited volunteers are involved and applies equivalent governance and assurance principles to services delivered by Partner Organisation staff or mixed workforce models.
- The level of governance applied should be proportionate to the scale, complexity, duration and risk of the proposed activity. Not every partnership will require the same level of assurance, however all activities must receive sufficient governance oversight prior to commencement.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies where Partner Organisations delivering activity on behalf of, jointly with, or formally integrated into NHS Lothian services, whether within NHS Lothian premises, community settings, Partner premises or people's homes, including:

- PO recruited volunteers
- PO recruited staff
- Mixed models of delivery

Where activity is procured or commissioned, the Procurement Team must be engaged to ensure a procurement exercise is carried out if this is required. The principles of this procedure should still be considered to ensure consistency of governance and assurance arrangements.

3.0 When this procedure applies

3.1. Activities that require consideration under this procedure

This procedure should be followed where NHS Lothian is establishing, funding, commissioning, supporting or formally partnering with a Partner Organisation to deliver activity for NHS Lothian patients, carers, visitors or staff.

Examples may include:

- A Partner Organisation delivering a service on NHS Lothian premises.
- Reserved places within a community programme specifically for NHS Lothian patients.
- A referral pathway into support, established exclusively for a defined NHS patient group.
- NHS Lothian Charity funding or contributing resources to the activity.
- Jointly designed or co-produced services where NHS Lothian has an ongoing governance role.

In these cases, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and due diligence checks are required.

3.2. Activities that do not require a formal agreement under this procedure

This procedure does not apply where NHS Lothian staff are signposting or informing patients, carers or service users about community-based services, activities or support that are publicly available and independently delivered by a Partner Organisation.

Examples may include:

- Providing information about a local peer support group.
- Signposting an individual to a community wellbeing service.
- Informing patients about activities or support available through organisations such as Health in Mind, Volunteer Edinburgh or other community-based organisations.
- Sharing information about services that are openly accessible to the wider public.

- Making a referral to Partner Organisation, with patient consent and no further interaction with the organisation on the patient's behalf

In these circumstances, patients access the service through the organisation's normal routes and NHS Lothian has no role in the delivery, governance, funding, prioritisation or management of the activity.

Routine referral or signposting to an existing community service does not in itself constitute a formal partnership. This procedure becomes applicable where NHS Lothian and the Partner Organisation develop a dedicated referral pathway, reserved capacity, service specification or ongoing governance arrangement for a particular NHS patient group.

Similar activity types not in scope here but covered by other policies and procedures as per the table below:

Activity Type	Governance Route
NHS Lothian recruited volunteer	Volunteering Policy and associated procedures
Honorary Contract An honorary contract is for clinical academics who are employed by Higher Education Institutions or other organisations in a research and/or teaching capacity and who also provide services for NHS patients.	If a manager wants to make a request for someone to work in the area on an honorary contract, they should complete the honorary contract offer form and attached it to a ticket request through the Recruitment Service Now portal.
Observer Contracts An observer contract is issued to a visitor to NHS Lothian who will not have any patient contact and will only be observing procedures, practices, etc. The only exception to this is for medical theatre observers who they may be invited to place their hands in a patient cavity in order to follow the procedure being carried out but they are not authorised to carry out surgical procedures.	Requests for observer contracts for doctors and dentists should be sent to the medical personnel team. Requests for all other staff groups should be sent to the workforce development team.
Work Experience	Workforce Development Team
Fundraising activity	Charities and Fundraising Policy
Representatives of belief communities	Spiritual Care Policy

Celebrity, media or other VIP guest visits to hospitals.	Site Management and Communications team
Organising or managing patients who need to be or are referred to external healthcare providers to help meet waiting-time targets and service capacity demands.	Organised via the External Providers Office

4.0 The Procedure

Stage 1 - Identify Need

There must be a clearly identified need, with clear outcomes and beneficiaries in order to progress.

The Voluntary Services Team should be notified and involved at the earliest possible stage. No proposal should progress beyond initial exploration without discussion with Voluntary Services.

Activity may be initiated by:

- NHS service led request
- Partner proposal
- Service re-design
- Patient engagement /consultation / proposal

Initial discussion should consider:

- What is the need/problem/gap?
- What do we already know/what is our evidence?
- What does success look like? Outcomes, measurables.
- Who will benefit? How do we/will we know?
- What would improve patient or service experience?
- Will this duplicate something that already exists?

Stage 2 – Explore Suitability

Is it appropriate to seek delivery of this work from an outside organisation?

Consider:

- How will the activity be funded? Where NHS Lothian is funding, commissioning or procuring the activity, the NHS Lothian Procurement Team must be involved at the earliest opportunity. Procurement colleagues will advise whether a formal procurement exercise is required and ensure alignment with the NHS Lothian Supplier Management Procedure.

- Is the involvement appropriate? Not replacing statutory obligations?
- What model is most suitable:
    - Volunteers
    - Staff
    - Mixed
- If involving volunteers, is this appropriate, does the organisation have the appropriate mechanisms in place to support volunteers?
- Who is best placed to lead on the engagement and ongoing dialogue with the organisation?
- Who has been consulted/ who needs to be consulted? Could the Get Involved Network support with this?
- Is an Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment needed?

Stage 3 – Partner Identification

Who is the most appropriate partner to approach/work with?

Identify the most appropriate organisation based on:

- Skills and experience
- Ability to recruit/support workforce
- Local presence or specialism
- Availability to the population the service will support
- Ability to fulfil due diligence requirements

Agree:

- Who will act as a point of contact from NHS Lothian and who will act as point of contact in the organisation?
- Who is leading on what?
- What will success look like? How will we know? What are we measuring?

Stage 4 – Role/Service Design

Develop:

- Clear role and/or service description
- Defined tasks and boundaries and ensure these are clearly understood
- Expected outcomes and benefits
- Clarity on how volunteers complement staff roles
- Clear assurances that any volunteer involvement is not as a substitute for employed staff

This must include:

- What the role or service will and will not do
- Where the role or service will take place
- When the role or service will take place
- Interaction with NHS staff
- Where there are accommodation needs, local accommodation groups should be consulted
- Staff and volunteer role descriptions, clear induction processes and supervision arrangements

Stage 5 – Risk Assessment

Undertake a proportionate risk assessment including, but not limited to, the following:

- Patient safety
- Lone Working arrangements (where required)
- Information sharing
- Environment
- Safeguarding
- Role boundaries for patients and staff

Mitigations must be agreed before progression.

Stage 6 – Due Diligence

The Voluntary Services Team will coordinate and record due diligence activity, with advice sought from relevant specialist services where appropriate e.g., if there are professional or clinical requirements for any staffing roles. The Voluntary Services Team will coordinate due diligence and determine, in consultation with relevant specialists where required, whether sufficient assurance has been obtained to proceed.

Due diligence checks will cover:

Governance and organisational status

- Registration (e.g. OSCR)
- Governance structures
- Consideration should be given to the organisation's capacity and sustainability to deliver the proposed service where appropriate.

Insurance

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employer's Liability Insurance (where applicable)
- Professional Indemnity Insurance (where applicable)
- Evidence of current insurance certificates
- Confirmation that the proposed activity falls within insurance cover

Policies and procedures

- NHS Lothian Public Protection Policy, NHS Lothian Adult Support and Protection Procedures and the Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency Child Protection Procedures
- NHS Lothian Health & Safety Policy
- NHS Lothian Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Standard Operating Procedure
- National Infection Prevention and Control Manual
- Equality & Human Rights
- NHS Lothian Data Protection Policy

Workforce management

- Recruitment and vetting
- Disclosure Scotland/Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services
- Training and supervision

Referral arrangements

- Where referrals are being made between organisations, agreed referral and escalation processes should be documented.
- Ensuring Information Governance and IT Security teams have been engaged with where Data Sharing or Email transmission is required.

Legal and regulatory compliance

- Relevant licences, permits or registrations
- Regulatory requirements specific to the activity

Risk management

- Activity-specific risk assessments
- Evidence of business continuity arrangements where the service is critical to patient pathways or service delivery

Identification

- ID, uniform or branding

Service arrangements

- Named leads
- Defined outcomes
- Escalation arrangements
- Review arrangements

Please see Due Diligence Checklist and Guidance which should be used when undertaking stage 6.

Where the organisation does not have existing policies or procedures in place or is unable to meet expected standards in one or more of these areas and there is a desire to proceed, an action plan should be drafted stating how the expected standards will be met and by when.

For some areas e.g., environmental policies, a statement of intent may be sufficient to proceed. The organisation will be unable to begin their activity until the due diligence checks are signed off as satisfactory.

A realistic timeline should be set within the action plan to rectify any issues which have been identified. If this cannot be met or extends beyond a 6-month period, a decision as to whether to proceed or stop should be agreed with the Head of Volunteering and communicated to the organisation.

NHS Lothian Voluntary Services team can provide templates for the creation of documents pertaining to volunteer involvement.

The purpose of due diligence is not to regulate outside organisations but to provide NHS Lothian with assurance that organisations operating within the scope of this procedure are suitable, appropriately governed, insured and safe to deliver the proposed activity.

Stage 7 – Information Governance (if applicable)

Where personal data is involved:

- Early engagement essential with Information Governance/IT Security teams to establish what is needed e.g.,
- If a Data Protection Impact Assessment required
- If a Data Sharing or Data Processing Agreement is required
- If Safe Email Transmission Set Up is required

Stage 8 – Formal Agreement

Where required:

- NHS Lothian Voluntary Services team will issue the Service Level Agreement (SLA)
- Defines:
    - Roles
    - Responsibilities
    - Standards
    - Review arrangements
    - Location and scope of delivery
    - Escalation arrangements
    - Defined outcomes
    - Named leads

NHS Lothian Voluntary Services use the approved NHS Lothian SLA template for arrangements managed under this procedure. External agreements must not be signed without appropriate review and approval.

Stage 9 – Approval and Sign-off

Approval must be secured before delivery; the Voluntary Services team will support with reaching the correct approval but this is likely to be:

- Service Lead
- Site Director / Chief Officer
- Information Governance (where applicable)
- Procurement (where NHS Lothian funding is involved)
- Voluntary Services

Final approval should be granted by the relevant Site Director or Chief Officer (or delegated authority) once all governance requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

Governance approval confirms that NHS Lothian has received sufficient assurance that the organisation is appropriately governed, insured, managed and suitable to undertake the proposed activity.

Stage 10 – Implementation

Before starting we should ensure:

- The workforce is appropriately trained
- Local induction has been completed
- Named contacts are agreed and shared

Voluntary Services will provide:

- Infection, Prevention and Control guidance
- Safeguarding expectations
- Key site information
- Access to appropriate training and support materials e.g., Occupational Health referrals, TURAS learn resources, car parking information etc.

Stage 11. Ongoing review of SLAs and Due Diligence

Due diligence should be routinely reviewed once annually or at the request of either party if there have been significant changes (e.g., change to the service, change in named contact/head of project/service, updated or new policies/procedures).

SLAs should be reviewed every two years alongside the due diligence; however, updates can be requested by either party out with this timeline.

First time SLAs should be put in place for one year, after this SLAs can align with service funding terms provided, they are checked every two years for accuracy.

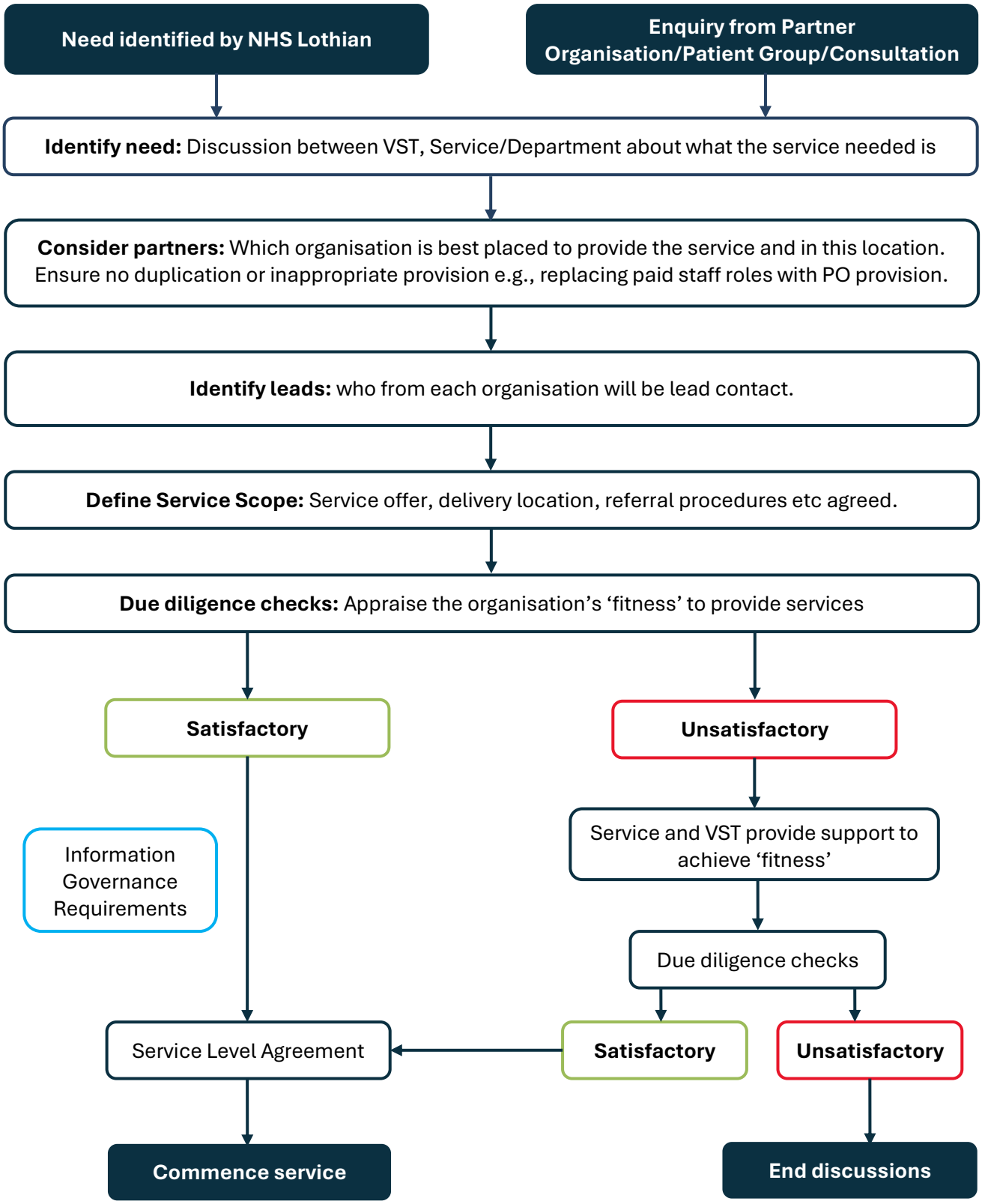
It is up to the relevant NHS Lothian staff as detailed above to ensure these checks are carried out routinely.

Voluntary Services will maintain the central register of approved partnerships and ensure review dates for due diligence and agreements are monitored.

Expired due diligence documentation, insurance or governance approvals should trigger review and, where necessary, suspension of activity until requirements are met.

A significant change in service scope, location, workforce model, referral arrangements or risk profile should trigger an immediate review of the SLA and governance arrangements.

4.1. Procedure Summary Flowchart



5.0 Example Scenarios

Scenario 1

A ward in Midlothian Community Hospital has applied to the NHS Lothian Charity for a grant of £25,000 to have a local charity deliver a volunteer led patient activity project in the hospital for patients.

What's required?

NHS Lothian Charity should carry out due diligence checks with the proposed grant recipient before funding is awarded. An SLA should be drafted and signed alongside the grant award being made.

Funding should not be awarded if due diligence does not meet satisfactory standards. If this is the case, the organisation will receive feedback on the areas which do not meet the necessary standards and will be encouraged to reapply once these are met. If issues can be rectified quickly, the funding decision may be reversed without a further application being needed.

NHS Lothian Charity should make the Voluntary Services team aware at the point of application and share the relevant SLA and due diligence checks once these are completed so the organisation can be registered.

If NHS Lothian rather than NHS Lothian Charity were funding or commissioning the activity, advice from the Procurement Team must be sought to determine whether a procurement exercise was required.

Scenario 2

A local charity has approached the art psychotherapy team at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) about delivering a series of art psychotherapy sessions for children aged 8-12 in CAMHS.

What's required?

The relevant Service Manager within Art Psychotherapy, the RHCYP and CAMHS will work in partnership to determine the scope of the service offered, the suitability of the service, the identified need and if deemed appropriate will carry out the relevant due diligence checks for this service.

The relevant Service Manager will draft the appropriate paperwork ensuring that clinical standards to be adhered to are documented. The Director and Voluntary services should be notified and involved in final sign off of the activity.

Scenario 3

The maternity team at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE) have identified a need for parents affected by still birth/baby loss to access support and care after they are discharged. There is a local charity that provides this in central Edinburgh. There is no requirement for the service to be delivered on an NHS Lothian site, but the staff need to make active referrals to the charity and require follow up information on how the referred families are getting on.

What's required?

NHS Lothian maternity team should discuss this with their Service Manager in the first instance. If agreed, information governance should then be contacted to discuss what is required from an information governance perspective.

The service should carry out the appropriate due diligence checks such as ensuring the organisation has appropriate insurance and protocols in place around safeguarding etc. Information Governance should determine whether a Data Sharing Agreement, Data Processing Agreement or other information governance controls are required. Once this is in place, an SLA should be drafted to document, ongoing monitoring of the relationship and the impact of the service for patients referred.

Scenario 4

The local carers centre in East Lothian has an office base in the East Lothian Community Hospital (ELCH), there are currently 4 staff based on site and they would like to begin to introduce volunteers on site to support their activities.

What's required?

Agreement should be sought from the relevant Service Managers within ELCH. NHS Lothian Voluntary Services can work with the team review the existing SLA and due diligence in place and work with the service to identify what else is required to involve volunteers. Volunteer role descriptions, risk assessments etc are drafted and due diligence and SLAs are updated to reflect the now current practice.

The Voluntary Services team can provide templates and examples as a guide to support this process. Volunteers are onboarded once the SLA is completed and this is reviewed after an initial 12 months.

Scenario 5

The Medicine of the Elderly wards at the Western General Hospital would like to involve volunteers in gathering patient feedback around activities to be developed and delivered within wards.

What's required?

The Medicine of the Elderly team should reach out to their onsite Voluntary Services Manager for an initial discussion about the idea. Discussions will review the identified need, what the scope of the role would be, the tasks to be included/not included and what the desired outcome would be. A role description will be drafted along with a role risk assessment, which are then passed to HR and Partnership for review to assess suitability of volunteer role. If deemed suitable the voluntary services team will promote and recruit to the new role. If the role is not deemed suitable for a volunteer, this will be discussed with the medicine of the elderly team to consider alternative volunteer roles or how staff can take forward the proposed idea.

Scenario 6

A CMHT wishes to provide patients with information about a wellbeing programme delivered by a local charity. The programme already exists, is open to the public and patients self-refer through the organisation's standard process.

What's required?

No SLA or due diligence process is required under this procedure. Staff may signpost patients to the service in the same way they would other community resources.

If the CMHT and Charity later agree reserved places for CMHT patients, establish a dedicated referral pathway or begin sharing information about patient outcomes, the arrangement should be reviewed under this procedure.

6.0 Associated materials

Volunteering in NHS Lothian Policy

Volunteer Role Procedure

Volunteer Recruitment Procedure

Volunteer Performance Management Procedure

Volunteer Role Description Template

NHS Lothian Volunteering Strategic Plan: Fit for the Future 2023-2028

Volunteer Induction Training Materials