



Ref: QS 31

Policy and Procedure for International Health Partnership Related Activity

Date to be reviewed:	01.12.2019	No of pages:	12
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Responsible dept / director:	Executive Director of Nursing & Service Improvement		
Approved by:	Quality & Safety Committee		
Date approved:	1 st December 2016		
Effective Date (live):	1 st December 2016		
Version:	1		

Date EQIA completed:	28.10.2016
Documents to be read alongside this policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velindre NHS Trust Special Leave Policy • Velindre NHS Trust Study Leave Policy • Velindre NHS Trust Risk Assessment and Risk Register Policy
Current review changes:	N/A

Executive Summary:

This policy sets out the steps to be followed when planning, organising and undertaking activity through an international health partnership sponsored by and on behalf of Velindre NHS Trust. The policy is intended to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to enable the Trust and any staff members undertaking related activity to identify, assess and mitigate risks that may arise through participation in an international health partnership programme. The policy applies to all Trust staff (clinical and non-clinical) who travel overseas to undertake international health partnership programme activity on behalf of the Trust, including staff who have been issued with an Honorary Contract for this purpose. This policy does not apply to staff who volunteer overseas in activities and projects that are not sponsored by and on behalf of Velindre NHS Trust.

First operational:	1 st December 2016				
Previously reviewed:	Date				
Changes made yes/no:					

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

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Introduction

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out the steps to be followed when planning, organising and undertaking activity through an international health partnership programme sponsored by and on behalf of Velindre NHS Trust (the Trust).

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to enable the Trust and any staff members undertaking international health partnership programme activity, to identify, assess and mitigate risks that may arise through participation in the programme.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Trust staff (clinical and non-clinical) who travel overseas to undertake international health partnership related activity on behalf of the Trust, including staff who have been issued with an Honorary Contract for this purpose. This policy does not apply to staff who volunteer overseas in activities and projects that are not sponsored by and on behalf of Velindre NHS Trust.

The governance arrangements set out in this policy support the Trust's commitment to adhere to the Charter for International Health Partnerships in Wales (2014).

4. Aims and Objectives

When establishing and implementing an international health partnership programme the Trust has committed to adhere to the four foundations of international health partnerships and must therefore be assured that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that:

- Organisational responsibilities will be met;
- Reciprocal partnership working arrangements will be agreed;
- Good practice models will be adopted; and,
- Robust governance arrangements will be put in place.

All international health partnership activity must be underpinned by specific and agreed objectives, and include clear information about the interventions and/or services to be provided as part of the partnership programme.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility and accountability for international health partnership programmes entered into on behalf of the Trust.

5.2 Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement

The Executive Director for Nursing and Service Improvement is the Trust wide lead and champion for international health links, reporting to the Chief Executive. The Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement will ensure appropriate representation at All Wales groups and dissemination of related information.

The Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement will hold corporately copies of documentation as set out in this policy.

5.3 International Health Partnership Lead Officer

The Lead Officer for each international health partnership programme must ensure that staff members travelling overseas to undertake related activity are made aware of the provisions of this policy, and that they are adhered to at all times.

5.4 Velindre NHS Trust Staff Participants of International Health Partnership Programmes

Staff members travelling overseas as part of an International Health Partnership programme must be aware of the provisions of this policy, and have a personal and professional responsibility to ensure that the policy is adhered to at all times.

6. Absence from Work

In principle the Trust will seek to support reasonable requests from staff members to participate in international health links activity. Leave of absence is always at the discretion of the Trust and can be facilitated on a paid or unpaid basis. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis in accordance with the relevant policy.

6.1 Special Leave

The Trust will consider requests for special leave to enable a staff member to travel overseas to scope, develop or contribute to an international health link supported by the Trust. If awarded, paid Special Leave will be granted for up to one week (pro rata for part time staff) per annum specifically to support a visit to a partner organisation overseas. The application process for special leave is set out in the Velindre NHS Trust Special Leave Policy.

6.2 Study Leave

The Trust will consider requests for study leave to enable a staff member to participate in overseas travel/activity specifically related to an agreed continuing professional development objective, for example participation in the Academy Wales International Learning Opportunities Programme. The application process for study leave is set out in the Velindre NHS Trust Study Leave Policy.

7. Resources

Sufficient financial resources to support any international health partnership programme activity/visit must be secured (e.g. through Grant funding or charitable funds/fund raising activity) before travel arrangements are made.

8. Limiting and Avoiding Risk

Whilst it is accepted that no process can be totally risk free it is imperative that the expected benefits arising from participation in an international health partnership programme are balanced against the potential risks of participation. As an underpinning principle expected benefits should always outweigh potential risks.

All international health partnership activity must be underpinned by specific and agreed objectives, and include clear information about the purpose, interventions and/or services to be provided as part of the partnership arrangement.

8.1 Risk Assessment

Risk assessment forms a major part of the Trust's risk management arrangements. Organisational and individual risks need to be identified, assessed and mitigated to ensure that safe travel arrangements and working practices are in place prior to and during visits to international health partnership agencies.

The Lead Officer for the international health partnership must complete a risk assessment before any programme participant travels overseas. The process for risk assessment is set out in the Trust's Risk Assessment and Risk Register Policy. The risk assessment should consider specific health and/or safety risks, and also risks arising from travel, living, and working arrangements associated with the International Health Partnership programme activity.

8.2 Contextual Assessment

Contextual assessment involves gathering information about the political, social, economic and cultural background of the proposed partnership area and must be undertaken as part of the planning process for establishing an international health partnership.

The contextual assessment should be used to inform the risk assessment process, and should be reviewed prior to staff visiting a partner organisation overseas. The contextual assessment should be made available (for example as an information booklet) to any member of staff who travels overseas as part of the international health partnership programme.

8.3 Travel Preparation

Robust pre-visit planning is essential to minimise risks associated with the trip and to maximise the potential for successful outcomes.

It is expected that all staff who intend to travel as part of the international health partnership programme will be involved in pre visit planning discussions and receive a formal briefing about the travel arrangements.

All staff who intend to travel as part of the international health partnership programme must also keep abreast of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) information and advice relevant to personal safety and specific health risks before and during the visit.

As good practice and to mitigate risks staff travelling to the international health partner for the first time should travel with a member of staff who has visited the partner previously.

All staff who travel with the international health partnership programme should be issued with a list of key and emergency contact names and numbers.

An itinerary and emergency contact details for the group (within the partner agency and at home) must be provided to the Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement prior to travel. A checklist to assist with travel preparations is included as Appendix 1, and a sample itinerary template is included as Appendix 2.

8.4 Insurance

The Lead Officer for the international health partnership must provide details of insurance arrangements to the Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement.

It is expected that insurance will be provided by a specialist insurance broker in recognition that ordinary travel insurance, including that provided through an individual's banking arrangements, is designed for travel and tourism and is unlikely to meet the requirements of staff undertaking international health partnership programme travel and activity.

Travel insurance should be informed by the contextual and risk assessment. Consideration should be given to scope of the policy cover including potential requirement for personal accident, medical expenses, war cover, political evacuation cover and medical evacuation cover. Depending on the findings of the contextual and risk assessments kidnap and hostage insurance may be indicated.

8.5 Professional Indemnity

Staff who travel as part of an international health partnership programme must have appropriate professional indemnity arrangements in place before leaving the UK.

Registered professional staff (e.g. nurses, doctors, and pharmacists) are required to check that they have adequate indemnity cover with the relevant professional association or insurance/indemnity provider. It may be appropriate to procure indemnity insurance when arranging travel insurance.

Evidence of adequate indemnity cover must be provided to the Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement prior to travel.

8.6 Professional Registration

Depending on the activities to be carried out as part of the international health partnership programme, practitioners may be required to register with the regulatory body for the country in which the activity takes place. Advice can be obtained from UK professional regulators, who can provide practitioners with contact details for most overseas regulators.

8.7 Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Adults

All staff who travel overseas to undertake international health partnership related activity on behalf of the Trust, including staff who have been issued with an Honorary Contract for this purpose, must have an up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure which includes both Children and Adult Barred List checks.

8.8 Personal Conduct

All staff who travel to an international health partner agency overseas must comply with the laws of the host country. Most professionals will also be bound by their UK code of professional conduct even whilst overseas.

Individuals who travel as part of a Trust supported international health programme do so as employees of the Trust, and will be subject to the Trust's expected standards of conduct and behaviour at work.

9. Post Visit Reporting Requirements

As good practice it is expected that a debriefing session will be facilitated following the visit in order to identify and share learning. The debriefing should reference the original aims and objectives of the visit and consider successes and challenges associated with the visit. Where appropriate recommendations should be made that will assist in the planning of future visits.

10. Equality

The Trust is committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the way it provides services to the public and the way it treats its Employees reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate against individuals or groups.

The Trust has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment and received feedback on this policy and the way it operates. The Trust wanted to know of any possible or actual impact that this procedure may have on any groups in respect of gender (including maternity and pregnancy as well as marriage or civil partnership issues) race, disability, sexual orientation, Welsh language, religion or belief, transgender, age or other protected characteristics.

The assessment found that there was **no impact** to the equality groups mentioned. Where appropriate the Trust will make plans for the necessary actions required to

minimise any stated impact to ensure that it meets its responsibilities under the equalities and human rights legislation.

11. Training

Whilst there are no formal training programmes in place to ensure implementation of this policy it is expected that the international health partnership Lead Officer will ensure that all staff members who travel overseas to undertake international health partnership related activity will be involved in pre and post visit planning meetings/briefings, and will receive information that provides context for the visit including information about security and potential threats to safety, cultural differences, local laws, and emergency evacuation procedures.

12. Policy Conformance / Non Compliance

If any Trust employee fails to comply with this policy, the matter may be dealt with in accordance with the Trusts Disciplinary Policy. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances and will be in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedures. Under some circumstances failure to follow this policy could be considered to be gross misconduct.

13. Distribution and Policy Review

The policy will be available via the Trust Intranet Site. Where staff do not have access to the intranet their line manager must ensure that they have access to a copy of this policy.

The Assistant Director of Nursing and Service Improvement/Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement will review the operation of the policy as necessary and at least every 3 years.

14. Further Information

Further information and support is available from the Assistant Director of Nursing and Service Improvement/Executive Director of Nursing and Service Improvement, Trust Head Quarters.

15. Useful Guidance

- THET Partnerships for Global Health: Risk and Security Guidelines for UK Links, 2008
- THET International Health Links Manual 2009


Appendix 1:


Travel Preparation Checklist


1	Identify a project manager/coordinator to facilitate travel arrangements	
2	Carry out/review needs assessment	
3	Undertake/update contextual assessment	
4	Undertake risk assessment	
5	Confirm Memorandum of Understanding is in place	
6	Obtain statement of partner organisation's expectations of volunteers	
7	Confirm budget; foreseeable expenses and contingency for unexpected costs	
8	Make travel arrangements	
9	Confirm passport is valid for duration of placement	
10	Check Visa requirements	
11	Book accommodation / confirm arrangements	
12	Make arrangements for absence from work	
13	Check professional indemnity cover is adequate	
15	Check professional registration requirements for country to be visited	
16	Seek health advice from GP, check vaccinations and anti-malarials required	
17	Check practical health arrangements associated with placements (e.g. access to urgent/emergency health care services)	
18	Check levels of health insurance required (e.g. personal accident cover, medical expenses, medical evacuation cover)	
19	Develop personal security awareness	
20	Ensure personal life insurance and personal effects insurance is adequate	
21	Check levels of insurance required (e.g. war cover, political evacuation cover, kidnap and hostage cover)	
22	Check language/interpreter requirements	
23	Check mobile phone cover in destination country	
24	Confirm contact details for link person(s) in the partner agency/destination country	
25	Confirm emergency contact details in destination country including nearest doctor and hospital	
26	Confirm contact details for British Embassy in destination country	
27	Confirm contact details for link person (s) in the UK	
28	Provide Velindre NHS Trust with emergency contact details and health information for each participant	
29	Order currency/travellers cheques	
30	Check validity of credit cards	


Appendix 2: Sample Travel Itinerary


Velindre NHS Trust International Health Partnership Sample Travel Itinerary


	DEPARTING FLIGHT(S)						
Depart Date	Airport	Airline	Flight Number	Depart Time	Arrival Date/Time	Airport	Staff Travelling

	AIRPORT TRANSPORT		
Date	Time	Driver/Contact Details	Travelling to

	ACCOMODATION		
Date	Duration	Hotel Details	Contact Number

	MEETINGS/EVENTS		
Date	Time	Details	Venue

	AIRPORT TRANSPORT		
Date	Time	Driver/Contact Details	Depart from

	RETURNING FLIGHT(S)						
Depart Date	Airport	Airline	Flight Number	Depart Time	Arrival Date/Time	Airport	Staff Travelling

Appendix 3: Contact Details

Please complete the following, keep a copy yourself and give a copy to:

- **Lead volunteer /travel companion**

- *Next of kin/person to contact in an emergency*
- *Key contact in home organisation*

<i>Your contact details</i>			
Name	Address	Phone (for use aboard)	E-mail (for use aboard)
<i>Please list any health requirements</i>			

<i>Next of Kin/Contact in an Emergency</i>			
Name	Address	Phone (for use aboard)	E-mail (for use aboard)

<i>GP contact details</i>		
Name	Address	Phone (for use aboard)

<i>Lead Volunteer (for visit)</i>			
Name	Address	Phone (for use aboard)	E-mail (for use aboard)

<i>Velindre NHS Trust Key Contact</i>			
Name	Address	Phone	E-mail

<i>Link Partner Organization Key Contact</i>			
Name	Address	Phone	E-mail