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Joint Working Framework

Introduction and Aim

The Public Health Wales Joint Working Framework provides guidance with regard to the establishment of joint working opportunities on local, national and international levels. The Framework outlines how good governance arrangements can support effective and successful joint working, underpinned by strategic and legislative drivers.

The Framework provides the means to assess the suitability of partner organisations through a risk-based approach and sets out the governance and accountability arrangements for the development, approval and monitoring of formal joint working arrangements.

Linked Policies, Procedures and Written Control Documents

[Public Health Wales Standing Orders and Reservation and Delegation of Powers](#)

[Declarations of Interest, Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship Policy](#)

[Information Governance Policy](#)

Scope

This Framework is applicable to staff with responsibilities for working jointly with partner organisations, the development of formal joint working arrangements and the ongoing management of these arrangements.

Information Governance Note

Any notes, emails, documents or other records created as a result of the assessment diligence exercise may be disclosable under the [Freedom of Information Act \(2000\)](#)

Equality and Health Impact Assessment

Integrated Screening Tool in draft – see Annex 2

Approved by

Public Health Wales Board

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Disclaimer

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the [Corporate Governance](#).

Summary of reviews/amendments				
Version number	Date of Review	Date of Approval	Date published	Summary of Amendments
1	25 January 2021	25 January 2018	31 January 2018	PHW62 – Joint Working Framework has been developed in response to a governance need identified by the Public Health Wales Board. This is the first version of the document.

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1. Introduction

In order to achieve a healthier, happier and fairer Wales, Public Health Wales continually seeks to increase its strategic reach and develop the breadth and depth of its purposeful relationships on local, national and international levels. For Public Health Wales, working with others is about having a shared vision, priorities and concerted strategic action. Innovative joint working is directly supported and promoted by Welsh legislation. The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* identifies collaboration as one of the 'five ways of working' and actively encourages public bodies to plan for the long term, work better with each other and take a more joined-up approach to addressing problems.¹ To enable this, a multi-agency systems approach across sectors is essential. Public Health Wales needs to work with other bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.²

This commitment is recognised in the organisation's '[Well-being Statement](#)' where strengthening Public Health Wales' role locally, nationally and internationally through engagement is clear. In order to work with others effectively, it is important that Public Health Wales works with the right individuals and organisations in an appropriate way. This involves entering into and developing arrangements that are compatible with, and help enable, Public Health Wales to achieve its mission and strategic priorities, as outlined in the Integrated Medium-Term Plan and the wider public well-being agenda.

The prompt for joint working may come from a variety of sources. There will be occasions when the Welsh Government require the organisation to work with others. Public Health Wales also encourages its staff, at all levels of the organisation, to explore joint working opportunities with new or existing partner organisations. It is recognised that relationship-building may develop on a flexible, informal and iterative basis and can, if required, transition into a more formal arrangement over time. This would require the establishment of more defined, structured arrangements.

This Joint Working Framework ("the Framework") supports the establishment of informal joint working arrangements, whilst providing an enabling structure in which more formalised joint working can be identified, developed and managed. It will help to ensure that formal joint working arrangements are effective, successful and underpinned by strategic and legislative drivers.

¹ See 'Collaborating with Others' in 'Shared Purpose: Shared Future: Statutory guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – Core Guidance' (SPSF1), pp. 21-2.

² Provision for Partnership Working is also set out in the Public Health Wales Standing Orders. 5.0.1: "The Trust shall work constructively in partnership with others to plan and secure the delivery of the best possible healthcare for its citizens, in accordance with its statutory duties and any specific requirements or Directions made by the Welsh Ministers."

The Framework also provides the means to assess the suitability of partner organisations through a risk-based partner assessment. It sets out the governance and accountability arrangements for the development, approval and monitoring of formal joint working arrangements, when it is necessary to provide assurance to the Public Health Wales Board, how to ensure that risks are managed and that approaches to joint working are broadly consistent across the organisation.

2. Joint Working

Joint working is an overarching term, which can encompass many types of formal or informal collaborative arrangements between Public Health Wales and other local, national or international agencies. Joint working between two or more organisations can be established through either informal or formal means.

Due to the complexity of Public Health Wales' work, flexibility in the approach to joint working is a necessity. Therefore, the application of this Framework and its composite elements should be proportionate to the nature of the joint working arrangement and the scale and impact of the risks involved.

2.1 Our approach to working with others

Successful and effective joint working takes place between organisations with compatible values, aims and objectives. Furthermore, it is important that the respective values of each organisation are embedded within the joint working arrangements itself to develop mutual understanding and trust. In support of this Framework, four core values for effective joint working have been identified. These are:

- Equity and Respect – it is important that the value that each organisation brings to the joint working arrangement is acknowledged. Resource contributions, organisational culture and individual motivations may differ, but the power of the joint working arrangement is built on harnessing each partner organisation's key strengths.
- Shared Purpose – a clearly identified need for the joint working arrangement, underpinned by a shared vision and purpose. Aims/objectives/priorities need to be shared and there needs to be a level of strategic alignment between the partner organisations. It should be noted that objectives may not be clearly defined at the outset, but may develop as the arrangement progresses. Joint working arrangements can, and should, evolve along with the vision and mission of the partner organisations.
- Transparency – sharing information as appropriate, maintaining clear lines of communication with strong feedback loops are required.
- Genuine Commitment – high-level buy-in/ownership from management who invest the time, people and resources to manage the relationship (capacity) and ensure it is sustainable. This can include the provision of a dedicated point of contact for the relationship.

The benefits of effective joint working are numerous and include: the sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise; access to funding (through joint bids); and the development of innovative operating/delivery models.

2.2 The Form and Formality of Joint Working Arrangements

The form and formality of a Joint Working arrangement should be considered at an early stage.

In order to determine this, which may change over time, it can be useful to consider the following questions:

- What is the scale of the proposed area of work/activity?
- What is the impact that working with that partner organisation will have on Public Health Wales, its mission, vision and strategy?
- What is the level of commitment (including resources)?
- What is the level of risk to Public Health Wales?
- What is the financial commitment?
- Is there a legally binding commitment?

If it is evident that the overall impact on Public Health Wales is likely to be high and of strategic significance, and/or requires a significant commitment in terms of finance or resources, it is likely that a formal joint working agreement is required. In such cases the formal assessment and approval processes set out in this Framework will need to be followed. In some cases, the undertaking of the assessment may help to inform the decision as to whether a formal joint working arrangement is advisable and required, as opposed to an informal one.

Some of the typical types of formal joint working agreements are defined in the table below:

Types of formal joint working agreements		
Type	Definition	Example(s)
Memorandum of Understanding	A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a formal agreement between two or more parties to establish an official joint working arrangement. MoUs are not legally binding but they carry a degree of seriousness and mutual respect.	Community Housing Cymru Group MoU South Wales Police MoU NHS Wales Local Health Board MoUs
Service Level Agreement	A service level agreement (SLA) is an agreement between a service provider (either internal or external) and the end user that defines the level of service expected from the service provider. SLAs are output-based in that their purpose is specifically to define what the "customer" will receive as any	Welsh Government - Mental Health 1000 Lives Improvement Service

	penalty clauses for non delivery e.g. funds withheld until the SLA is delivered or agreement on slippage.	
Programme Level Agreement	A Programme Level Agreement (PLA) is similar to an SLA, although narrower in scope as it relates to a specific programme. Such an agreement includes milestones and outcomes.	Programme Level Agreement
Hosting Agreement	<p>A Hosting Agreement specifies arrangements for a host organisation to provide services and facilities to enable the operation of another independent body. Such agreements are characterised by a light touch, hands-off approach with no legal obligations. The host organisation is not responsible or accountable for setting the direction of the hosted body except where staff of the body hosted is seconded/employed by the host'.</p> <p>Hosting agreements are often supported by more specific Service Level Agreements, e.g. for additional financial/HR support.</p>	NHS Wales Health Collaborative: Hosting agreement
Covenant	<p>A Covenant is an agreement or written promise between organisations that constitutes a pledge to do or refrain from doing something.</p> <p>Covenants are typically based on a broad set of principles/commitments rather than detailing working arrangements.</p>	Armed Forces Covenant
Membership Pledge	Two or more organisations may agree to collaborate where they have common interests or objectives. They may deem that organisations should be "members" and make a	<p>Cymru Well Wales</p> <p>International Health Charter NHS Wales</p>

	<p>"Membership Pledge". The Membership Pledge is a commitment to work within the spirit of the groups common interests and objectives. aims and objectives. The Pledge does not constitute a legal commitment. Where the organisations commit to provide resources to achieve their common interests and objectives it may be necessary to enter into a specific agreement for that purpose, e.g. and MoU, SLA etc.</p>	
<p>International Health Partnership</p>	<p>An international health partnership, for the purposes of Public Health Wales, is one which is based in Wales in conjunction with partners based outside of Welsh borders. The partnership could include work which is taking or took place over a specific period of time or where there is no specified end date. It may be with a community, institution or organisation, it could involve but is not limited to work with research, information</p>	--

With regard to agreements that have a legally binding status, e.g. a Service Level Agreement, legal advice is essential to ensure that the specific aims and objectives of the relationship are met and that risks (and mitigations) to Public Health Wales are identified. This can be obtained from NHS Shared Services Partnership (Legal and Risk), accessed in liaison with the Board Secretary and Head of Corporate Governance and the Corporate Services Manager, Quality, Nursing and Allied Health Professionals Directorate.

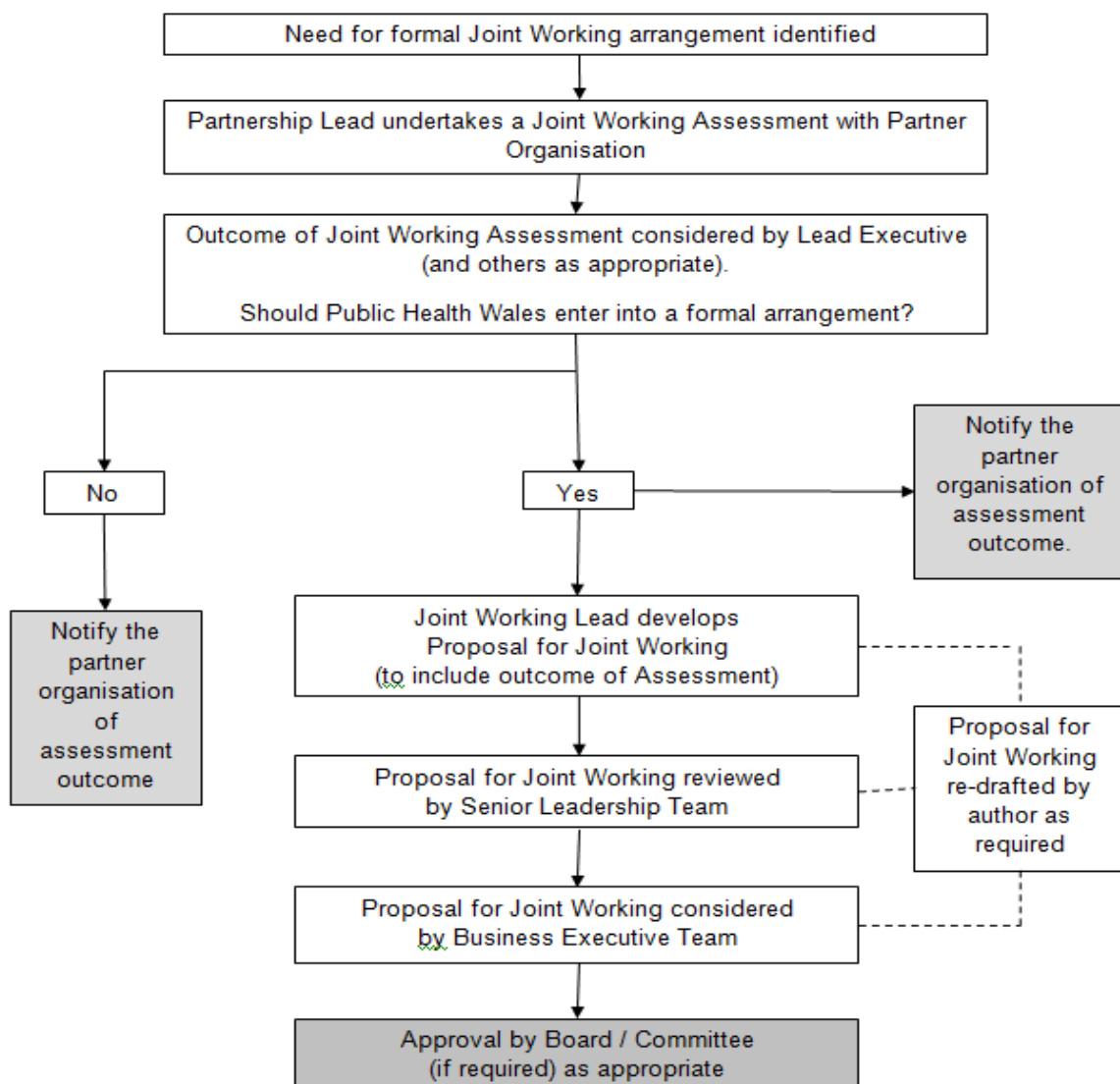
Where funding is transferred between two organisations that are currently in or plan to be in a joint working arrangement, formal arrangements **must be** established in accordance with the assessment and approval elements of the Framework followed.

3. Formal Joint Working Arrangements

All formal joint working arrangements require robust consideration and approval. This ensures that the decision to enter into such an arrangement is made at the right level, with the right authority. Such decisions should be in accordance with the Public Health Wales Scheme of Delegation and Reservation of Powers.

The process for proposing, developing and approving a formal joint working arrangement is summarised in **Figure 1** below³.

Figure 1: Development and Approval of a Formal Joint Working Arrangement



³ It should be noted that there are specific governance arrangements in place for grant writing partnerships – for task and finish groups and research proposals.

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides an overview of staff responsibilities within this Framework. The majority of these responsibilities largely apply in the case of formal joint working arrangements being proposed, developed and approved.

Joint Working Lead(s)

The Joint Working Lead(s) is a Public Health Wales employee responsible for the operational management of the joint working arrangement and acts as liaison between Public Health Wales and the partner organisation(s). The Lead also has responsibility for the development and maintenance of any formal arrangements and supporting the achievement of the agreed aims and objectives.

The Joint Working Lead(s) is designated by the Executive Lead(s) as appropriate and is responsible for drafting the Proposal for Joint Working (see 3.4) and for undertaking the Joint Working Assessment (3.3).

Executive Lead(s)

The Executive Lead(s) – a Public Health Wales Executive Director/Executive Team Member (including, as appropriate, the Director of NHS Wales Health Collaborative) – has overall responsibility for the direction and management of the joint working arrangement. This includes agreeing the aims and objectives and establishing the operational management and governance arrangements for it.

Executive Leads should discuss the required governance arrangements with the Board Secretary and Head of Corporate Governance. The Executive Lead is also responsible for providing assurance reports to the Public Health Wales Board/its committees/the Executive Team as appropriate.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for the peer review of proposals for joint working arrangements where there is a cross-cutting/organisational theme.

As a non-specialist, cross-organisational management group, the SLT are in a position to assess such proposals objectively, including the outcome of the Joint Working Assessment (see 3.2).

Executive Team

The Executive Team is collectively responsible for the approval of all Proposals for Joint Working. This is effectively a business case. This includes consideration of the outcome of the assessment. If the joint working arrangement proposed involves the commitment of resources, financial or otherwise, authorisation will

need to be sought in accordance with the Public Health Wales Scheme of Delegation.

Board Secretary and Head of Corporate Governance

The Board Secretary and Head of Corporate Governance provides advice/support during the development of agreements. They are responsible for this Framework and any associated policies, guidance and training, except where there is another designated professional, e.g. Chief Risk Officer for advice on risk assessment.

The Board Secretary, as Head of Corporate Governance, also maintains a centralised register and repository of all agreements and assessments (see 3.9).

They will also advise regarding the required scrutiny/assurance arrangements for agreements.

Chief Risk Officer

The Chief Risk Officer advises on organisational risk management within Public Health Wales. Any Joint Working Assessment should be considered by the Chief Risk Officer, who is able to provide specialist advice and guidance as required.

Public Health Wales Board

The Public Health Wales Board is responsible for the approval of strategic-level joint working arrangements that require the commitment of considerable resource or are likely to have a significant impact on the organisation, or any of its core areas of work.⁴

The Board Secretary will be able to provide advice to determine whether this is the case. The Board can delegate responsibility for the approval of other joint working arrangements to the appropriate Board sub-committee.

Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

The Audit and Corporate Governance Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of strategic-level joint working arrangements, particularly governance arrangements and progress and performance against agreed objectives. The Committee will also receive assurance on behalf of the Board.

⁴ Public Health Wales Standing Order 5.0.2: "The Chair shall ensure that the Board has identified all its key partners and other stakeholders and established clear mechanisms for engaging with and involving them in the work of the Trust through: (1) the Trust's own structures and operating arrangements, e.g., Advisory Groups; and (2) the involvement (at very local and community wide levels) in partnerships and community groups – such as Public Service Boards – of Board members and officers with delegated authority to represent the Trust and, as appropriate, take decisions on its behalf.

3.2 Joint Working Assessment

Before entering into a formal joint working arrangement that has the potential to have a significant impact on the organisation, it is important to assess the compatibility of the partner organisation to the work, vision and mission of Public Health Wales. This will not only identify potential risks to Public Health Wales, but provide valuable information to inform the decision as to whether the organisation should enter into a joint working arrangement, and if so, its potential benefits, and to what extent this should be formalised.

3.2.1 Approach

Public Health Wales takes a risk-based approach to joint working assessment. The overarching principle is that, before working with any partner organisation, Public Health Wales has a reasonable level of assurance that the partner organisation has the capability to achieve the desired objective(s) and does not pose an unreasonable level of risk to the organisation.

The Public Health Wales' approach is:

- Consistent in approach
The approach to joint working assessment will be applied consistently across Public Health Wales with regard to all formal partner organisations. This will lead to increased comparability and quality of assessments.
- Proportionate
The scope and depth of the assessment should be proportionate to the risk and resource implications of the proposal. It recognises the balance to be achieved between seeking assurance and the need to minimise unnecessary burden on potential delivery partners. Assessments should be approached on a case-by-case basis with scrutiny and resource targeted towards the areas of assessment where risks are deemed the greatest.
- Evidence-based
Joint Working Assessments should be based on the best and most current, objective and verifiable information available.
- Transparent
The individual/organisation being assessed must be notified that they are being subject to an assessment and agree to share information/data as requested. The outcome of the assessment must also be shared with the partner organisation.
- Equitable
Joint Working Assessments should be undertaken equitably and not favour one organisation above others as this may result in challenge.

Given the wide range and complex nature of Public Health Wales' work, it is sensible to recognise that any assessment must be applied on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the context and the risks involved. An assessment of the need to escalate risk or not should also be undertaken.

It should be noted that a number of statutory bodies should have adequate internal controls in place and that a Joint Working Assessment of these bodies is not required. It may however, still be necessary consider whether their values, aims and objectives are consistent with those of Public Health Wales. Any notes, emails, documents or other records created as a result of the assessment exercise may be disclosable under the [Freedom of Information Act \(2000\)](#). Therefore, consideration as to how any personal information should be used in the undertaking of an assessment exercise is essential.

3.2.2 Undertaking the Assessment

A **Joint Working Assessment** allows for the objective evaluation of a partner organisation's capacity, systems, policies and processes – to gain a much better understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and risks in working with that organisation. This assessment should only be required when formal arrangements are being made, particularly in the case of making arrangements with private/third sector organisations.

Public Health Wales will work with the partner organisation to facilitate the assessment and request reasonable access to information as required. Reciprocally, Public Health Wales must also consider reasonable requests from the partner organisation.

The Joint Working Lead is responsible for undertaking the assessment. Any interests of those undertaking the assessment should be declared prior to the beginning of the process in accordance with the appropriate provisions set out in the [Declarations of Interest, Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship Policy](#). The assessment looks to:

- identify potential key risks presented by the joint working arrangements.
- establish the ethics (and approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion) of the partner organisation and identify potential conflicts of interest.
- enable an assessment of strategic alignment (compatibility) with Public Health Wales' vision, mission and strategic objectives.
- enable the identification of opportunities that could be realised during the course of the joint working arrangements.

In undertaking an assessment, it is important that a comprehensive profile of the partner organisation is determined, namely; how the organisation is

governed and controlled, its ability to deliver the objectives of the joint working arrangement, its financial health and its existing joint working arrangements. It is suggested that the following **four assessment areas** are considered:

Governance and Control	Ability to Deliver	Financial Health	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Strategy and Objectives • Fraud, Bribery and Corruption • Internal Controls • Risk Management • Ethics • Reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Operational Activity • Legal Frameworks and Legislative Capabilities • Staff Capacity and Capability • Programme Management • Procurement and Logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Viability • Financial Management • Strength of audit • Value for Money • Policies, Procedures and Systems • Ability to commit resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due Dilligence • Management Framework/ Contracts • Monitoring and Management • Fraud, Bribery and Corruption • Conflicts of Interest

- **Governance and Control:** This area focuses on an overarching understanding of the profile of the partner organisation – specifically how it is governed and controlled - with a particular focus on: legal and control structures; strategy and objectives; legal status; management structures; internal control systems; risk management; fraud, bribery and corruption; ethics; reputation.
- **Ability to Deliver:** This area provides an understanding and assessment of the organisation’s ability to deliver and focuses on the strength of: the various systems, staff capacity and capability; performance, operational (business) activity and systems; legal frameworks and legislative capabilities; staff capacity and capability; programme management; procurement and logistical systems; Welsh language provision; evidence-based approach/method to work.
- **Financial Health:** This area gives assurance on an organisation’s financial stability. This assessment examines published accounts, source and stability of funding and the management’s ability to properly account for the organisation’s monies in an open and transparent way. This includes: Financial viability; management; strength of audit; policies; procedures and systems. With regard to public sector organisations, an assessment of the ability to commit ongoing resource may be more suitable.

- **Key relationships, partnerships and collaborations** This area assesses the relationships that the organisation has and the existence of any conflicts of interest. This part of the assessment will seek assurance that partner organisations have proper and sufficient assurance systems to monitor partner organisation activity. This may include contracts management and monitoring.

Risk-based judgement will also need to be applied in identifying which areas of the assessment require deeper scrutiny. For example, if planning to work with a well-established partner organisation in a new area of activity (for that partner) the weight of the assessment may be more focussed on the Ability to Deliver area rather than the Governance and Control area.

Gathering information for the assessment is largely a “desk-based” exercise, with evidence sourced directly through publically available electronic resources e.g. partner organisation’s website, public records, accounts and reports etc. It may be necessary to source information through a direct approach to the partner organisation. With the agreement of the partner organisation, it may be appropriate to collect responses directly; by means of a questionnaire for example.

The findings of the assessment should be shared with the Executive Lead, to inform whether or not the proposed joint working arrangement presents an acceptable level of risk to the organisation and can progress. It is important that the outcome of the assessment is shared with the partner organisation.

Previous experience of any directorate or area that has worked with the partner organisation should also be taken into consideration. Consultation with core corporate functions – e.g. Corporate Governance, People and Organisational Development, Finance and Planning – is recommended if specialist advice and expertise is required.

The Board Secretary and Head of Corporate Governance will provide advice regarding suitable assessment tools.

An Agreements Register (see 3.9.2) is also maintained to enable Joint Working Leads to draw on information already gathered on potential partner organisations.

If the assessment has determined that there is nothing to prevent joint working going ahead, a Proposal for Joint Working must be developed. This must include an overview of the assessment findings and any risks identified during the assessment process.

3.3 Considerations before entering into a formal Joint Working Arrangement

3.3.1 Governance and Accountability

Accountability in formal joint working arrangements is a key factor for long-term success. Defined governance arrangements help to ensure that partner organisations individually deliver on the agreed shared objectives. Mechanisms to monitor progress, evaluate partner organisation actions and enable accountability help to make sure the joint working arrangement is achieving its goals.

The formality and structure of arrangements should be proportionate to the formality of the undertaking and the expected requirements of any such agreement.

Governance considerations which need to be taken into account include (but are not limited to):

- Decision-making – this can either be done within each respective organisation's existing governance structures exclusively or through a joint governing forum, specifically set up to enable the joint working arrangements and ensure decision-making is made jointly. This will very much depend on the nature of the joint working arrangement. Where a joint governing forum exists with decision-making powers, appropriate delegation arrangements must be in place to enable this to happen.
- Roles and Responsibilities – if appropriate, the joint working arrangement should provide clarity around the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- Reporting arrangements – how the progress/governance of the joint working arrangement is reported through each partner organisation's respective organisation.
- Escalation arrangements – how issues regarding the joint working arrangement can be escalated if objectives are not being reached or in the event of difficulties in making decisions.
- Risk – how shared risks are captured and transferred to the risk registers of contributing organisations.
- Evaluation of the joint working arrangements – how the effectiveness and success of the joint working arrangement, and its agreed objectives, will be measured.

It should be noted that the Public Health Wales Standing Orders include specific provisions with regard to joint working arrangements with Community Health Councils.⁵ Escalation arrangements also exist between health bodies.

⁵ Public Health Wales Standing Order 5.1 – Community Health Councils.

3.3.2 Strategic and Legislative Drivers and Values

Joint working should support the enabling of the organisation's strategy and/or be driven by the need to fulfil a legislative requirement. It should also be in accordance with the Public Health Wales and NHS Wales values and the prudent healthcare principles.

Any joint working arrangements should be informed by the strategic vision and mission of Public Health Wales and be linked to its strategic priorities as set out in its Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP).

3.3.3 Evaluation and Learning

An important part of Public Health Wales' approach to joint working is the ability to learn from joint working experiences and identify how and where these could be improved. At the outset a joint working arrangement should identify how it will be evaluated/ assessed to identify whether the aims and objectives are being delivered, as well as identify lessons learned in keeping with the principles of continuous improvement.

Evaluation can include:

- measurement of achievement/progress against the agreed aims and objectives;
- financial performance;
- the consistency and strength of communications;
- the effectiveness of leadership and governance structures;
- how data and information was used to inform decision-making;
- an assessment of how the joint working arrangements' structure and membership has changed over time.

Learning from joint working will enable Public Health Wales to support the future development, and success, of joint working arrangements.

3.4 Proposal for Joint Working

A Proposal for Joint Working is required to set out the business case for the scrutiny of the Executive Team. The proposal should include the:

- rationale for the joint working arrangement – the issue(s) it seeks to address and its aims and objectives/key deliverables (if known).
- an overview of the key drivers – strategic and legislative
- proposed governance arrangements – assurance reports, accountability
- details of operational management – how will the practical outcomes of the joint working arrangements be undertaken, who will manage and monitor progress etc.

- resources and commitment requirement – what does Public Health Wales need to commit to ensure that the aims and objectives of the joint working arrangements are effective impact on resources
- outcome of the Joint Working Assessment - an identification of the key risks and opportunities that the joint working arrangement could present.

The Proposal should be presented by the Joint Working Lead (via sponsorship of Executive Director) to the Executive Team.

Before any strategic or higher level decisions or recommendations are made Impact Assessments should be completed in support of the proposal. These are used to support the scrutiny process, by identifying the impacts of key areas of potential action. It is recognised that certain proposals or decisions will require a wider consideration of potential impacts, particularly those relating to service change or potential major investment. All proposals must be supported by an Equality and Health impact Assessment.

3.5 Development of Joint Working Arrangements

When it has been agreed that formal agreement between Public Health Wales and another organisation(s) is required the agreement should outline how each organisation discharges its obligations in relation to the joint working.

When drawing up the agreement it should include the following:

- Defined scope and objectives – set out a clear vision of objectives and understanding of mutual benefit (reciprocity).
- Roles and Responsibilities of each organisation – define working arrangements with details of individuals as appropriate.
- Reporting and assurance mechanisms – outline how the work of the joint working arrangement will be monitored and reported to each organisation. Any new governance fora or mechanisms for the joint working framework – e.g. a Partnership Board, will need to take into account the governance structures of each organisation.
- Financial and resource arrangements – outline what each organisation has committed to in terms of resource, how finances will be managed and funding transfers between partner organisations. Include details regarding partner liabilities for any loss, cost, expenses or claims.
- Data and Information – consider how information and data will be shared and clarify intellectual property rights, in accordance with Public Health Wales policies. Specialist advice from the Information Governance team should be sought with regard to any information/data arrangements.
- Review period/ termination – determine an appropriate process and time at which the arrangements can be reviewed, and disengaged from (see

3.8), as appropriate. This should include any notice period required or exceptions. Periodic reviews allow for the joint evaluation of the effectiveness of the joint working arrangement. A process for disengaging from formal joint working arrangements

- Equality, Diversity and Welsh Language – indications how the agreement fits in with equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and Public Health Wales' organisational values. Consideration should also be given to the Welsh Language.

In developing the agreement, the key risks and mitigations will be identified and agreed. Provisions in the event of any dispute or difference between the partner organisations should also be stipulated.

When an agreement is developed, it is important that due consideration is given to the [NHS Wales Governance Framework](#) and the provisions made in the [Public Health Wales Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation and Reservation of Powers](#). Any arrangements must also be in accordance with organisational policies and procedures.

Legal advice will need to be sought on any formal agreements. Any agreement will give consideration to how anti-bribery and counter-fraud arrangements are included.

The Policy, Research and International Development directorate can provide advice if an agreement is sought with a Higher Education Institution (HEI) or any other type of research organisations. It is also good practice to share copies of such agreements with the Research and Development division within the directorate to support/foster research across the organisation.

Consideration should be given as to whether any agreements should be made available in alternative formats, e.g. Easy Read.

3.6 Approval Process

Once the case for joint working has been produced, the Joint Working Lead is responsible for seeking the approval of the Executive Lead to progress the Proposal for Joint Working.

Proposals will be peer reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), where there is a cross-cutting/organisational theme. As an inter-disciplinary group, the SLT will be able to provide comments from an operational business perspective, based on the information provided. The SLT will then consider whether the proposal should be recommended for approval by the Executive Team.

All proposals will then be presented to the Executive Team for consideration and approval.

If it is determined that a formal joint working arrangement is likely to have a significant organisational impact, the Executive Lead and Board Secretary and Head of Corporate Governance will assess whether it needs to be presented to the Board or an appropriate Committee. Certain high-level or strategically important agreements may require consultation with Welsh Government and other NHS Wales bodies.

3.7 Monitoring and Implementation

3.7.1 Reporting and Governance

Reporting arrangements for formalised joint working should be established in any agreement. Assurance reports on the activity of high-level strategic joint working arrangements may be required at Board and Board Committees (see **Roles and Responsibilities** above).

Governance arrangements for the management of joint working arrangements should be subject to periodic review. Wales Audit Office and NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership Internal Audit Services may also undertake audits.

3.7.2 The Joint Working 'Health Check'

A Joint Working 'Health Check' should be undertaken to ensure that members of the joint working arrangement are able to review the functionality of the joint working arrangement, and in turn provide the opportunity to refine its working processes, making any necessary amendments to arrangements, processes and focus. The Joint Working Lead is responsible for such an assessment.

In the case of an open-ended arrangement, the frequency of such reviews should be established at the outset, or if there are any material changes to the scope of the joint working arrangements. It is recommended that these are completed annually by members of the joint working arrangements and to consider any recommendations that would benefit the functionality of the joint working arrangement. From such evaluations lessons learned can be derived and focus on these will enable future success.

The Health Check should provide a level of quality assurance to Public Health Wales and its partners regarding the effectiveness of the joint working arrangement. The outcome of the Check should include with governance reporting.

3.8 Disengaging from a formal Jointing Working Arrangement or other joint working arrangement

Some joint working arrangements will be time limited, for example, where they are linked to a grant provided for a specific purpose. Where this not the case it is recognised that there may be a number of reasons why either Public Health Wales or a partner would consider leaving an existing joint working arrangement.

Such a decision should be considered when:

- the aims of the joint working arrangement are no longer consistent with the organisation's strategic aims and priorities, or the joint working arrangement is not effective in delivering against these.
- the joint working arrangement has achieved its aims or that it was time limited.
- there is duplication across joint working arrangements where amalgamation or revised remits should be considered.
- amendments to external funding sources or legislative framework.
- risks of continuing the joint working arrangements are adverse.

A process for disengaging from joint working should be included within any agreement.

3.9 Record-keeping

3.9.1 Joint Working Assessment Register

A centralised register and repository of assessments will be maintained by the Corporate Governance Directorate. Assessments will remain valid for three years unless material changes have taken place within that timeframe.

3.9.2 Agreements Register

A centralised register and repository of agreements is maintained by Corporate Governance Directorate.

3.9.3 Other related documents

Any other documents such as minutes of meetings should be maintained locally by the Joint Working Lead(s) in accordance with Public Health Wales Guidance on Records Management and Retention.