NHS England

Supporting Sustainable General Practice

A Guide to Initiating and Managing A Project For General Practice

<u>Document Version Control</u>

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Contents

Resource Development Stakeholders

This information resource has been developed in consultation with the following organisations:

- Bristol CCG
- Somerset CCG
- South Gloucestershire CCG
- NEW Devon CCG
- South Devon and Torbay CCG
- NHS Kernow CCG
- Avon LMC
- Somerset LMC
- Devon LMC
- Cornwall LMC
- South West Academic Heath Science Network
- Severn Deanery
- Sample groups of GPs and Practice/Business Managers within all seven South West CCG areas
- NHS England South (South West) Primary Care

Introduction

This document aims to provide guidance to General Practices who have decided to start up a collaborative initiative, such as merger or a network or federation. It offers guidance on initiating and managing the delivery of a collaboration project, offering advice on the step-by-step process, as well as offering examples of project management documentation. It is one of a suite of documents focused on supporting general practice in achieving and maintaining sustainability, and exploring new, innovative ways of working.

Project Start Up

There are a number of steps and tasks you might want to consider when starting up a collaborative venture project. These include:

- Producing and agreeing the Business Case
- Establishment of Project Board or Steering Group
- Designation of project management or co-ordination role
- Project Initiation
- Considering and identifying internal and external sources of subject matter expertise
- Producing and agreeing the Project Plan
- Agreeing the approach to recording and monitoring issues and risks
- Agreeing reporting and accountability methods and responsibilities
- Considering and agreeing acceptance criteria for project progress and delivery

The Business Case

A comprehensive and robust business case can serve to capture the justification for commencing an initiative or project. Its purpose is to present the **benefits**, **cost** (financial; resources; 'effort') and **impact** of any proposed venture, which in turn can serve as a control document to seek approval from the venture's stakeholders, and upon approval, can then be used to ensure that the justification remains valid as the venture is mobilised, and that the venture remains able to deliver the proposed benefits.

Key elements to consider could be:

- How would you describe the current situation of your Practice?
- How would you describe the key driver of or motivation for your proposed venture?
- How would you describe the proposed venture?
- How would you provide evidence to support the proposed venture e.g. cost vs. benefit; gap analysis (current performance or status vs. proposed performance or status); financial proofing (return on expenditure or resource allocation; cost avoidance); risks; alternate options
- What conclusions did you draw from the above?
- What recommendations could you make from your conclusions

- What will be your next steps?

The business case can serve to reassure stakeholders, and motivate them to agreeing or approving next steps.

The Project Board or Steering Group

Once approval has been given to proceed with beginning a venture or initiative, defining and composing a control group can assist with decision making, problem solving and monitoring progress and performance. The specific composition and terms of reference of the Project Board or Steering Group will depend on the nature of, and approach to delivering the venture, but you might need to consider the following:

- Who will make up the Project Board or Steering Group, and why?
- Will they need training or induction in forming and being member of a Project Board or Steering Group?
- What will be the Board or Groups role and purpose e.g. making decisions, addressing and resolving risks, issues and obstacles impacting on the progress and performance of the project, approving budgetary expenditure, and considering changes to project scope?
- Will the Board or Group need a formally documented Terms of Reference, to describe its role, responsibilities and requirements

Designation of Project Management or Co-ordination role

In addition to asking whether your venture needs of governance structure, you might to ask the following questions:

- Who will undertake day-to-day management and co-ordination of starting up and delivering the proposed venture?
- Do you need a dedicated human resource, or can an existing human resource be utilised?
- What might the impact be of adding project management duties to an existing resource's day-to-day responsibilities?
- What would be the financial investment requirement for assigning a dedicated human resource?
- What value could a dedicated human resource offer the venture?

Degrees of control and accountability could be achieved by assigning a human resource with specific responsibility to:

- Identify and agree all tasks required and dependencies attached to successfully realising the venture's objectives
- Develop and manage a Project Plan
- Identify and manage the Project stakeholders
- Manage all communications (internal and external)
- Manage the project team e.g. subject matter experts with particular responsibilities
- Manage any identified risks to delivering the project's objectives

- Manage the Project's budget, if relevant
- Manage progress and performance of the Project
- Provide a single line of accountability to the Project's Board or Steering Group

Project Initiation

Once you have decided how you want to justify, govern and manage your venture, you might want to define and document this. Issues to consider might be:

- What are the definitions, scope and composition (task areas or stages) of the Project?
- What is the definition of the Project's proposed deliverables?
- What is the approach and methodology to be employed in achieving the defined deliverables?
- What are the timescales for achieving the Project's deliverables?
- Are there any milestones which could indicate successful progress of the Project?
- How will risks and issues be identified, recorded and addressed?
- Is there a need for a Project budget, and if so, what should it be?
- What are the perceived costs of the Project?
- Are there any exclusions within the scope of the Project e.g. additional areas of collaboration for investigation at a later date?
- Is there any benefit in applying degrees of testing to evaluate outcomes and success of the Project's deliverables i.e. commencement of the collaborative or change venture?

Defining and documenting the above can ensure that there are no 'nasty surprises' one the venture project commences.

Considering and Identifying Internal and External Sources of Subject Matter Expertise

- What kind of 'subject matter expertise' might you need to ensure your venture can come into being and meet its objectives?
- Will you need expertise and advice in relation to any of the following?

  - Service redesign
  - Patient Pathway redesign
  - Organisational redesign
  - Technical and/or telecommunications
  - Establishment of new legal entities
  - HR and recruitment
  - Financial management
  - Operational management
  - Strategic and/or business development management
  - Rebranding
  - Partnership-working with other community health care providers
  - Patient and population engagement

- Do you have access to all the expertise and advice you might need?
- If not, how might you be able to access required expertise and advice?

- Are there any cost implications, and if so, how will these be met?

Producing and Agreeing the Project Plan

- Having a plan for designing, testing and launching your venture can help identify and undertake all the tasks required. It can define and present timescales for each task being completed, identify tasks dependent on other tasks, and present any milestones against which Project delivery and performance can be measured.

- Using a collaborative or consultative approach to identifying all the tasks required can contribute towards ensuring that nothing is overlooked, so you might want to consider the following:

  - Do you need project management expertise?
  - Is that resource available within the wider stakeholder group?
  - Who can contribute towards task identification?
  - Do you have access to the relevant subject matter expertise to consider and identify all tasks?
  - Are there any benefits in categorising tasks into key areas or 'work-streams'? Key areas could include:

    - Business Model design (including clinical, operational and/or managerial design)
    - Legal and Financial
    - Communications (including rebranding)
    - HR and Recruitment
    - Training
    - IT and Telecommunications
    - Testing
    - 'Go Live' or Launching the Venture

  - Is there an overarching target date for launching the venture?
  - Are you able to project delivery timescales for the range of tasks required?
  - Do you have enough resources to undertake the range of tasks identified?
  - Can specific tasks be assigned to relevant subject matter experts, and how can day-to-day work pressures be balanced with Project-specific task actions?
  - Do you need formal approval for the proposed Project Plan?

A detailed and time-scaled Project Plan can contribute towards the careful and effective monitoring and management of the delivery of your venture, and can assist with the identification and resolution of obstacles, risks and issues which may threaten that delivery.

Agreeing the Approach to Recording and Monitoring Issues and Risks

In mobilising your venture, there may be a range of key dependencies and challenges to delivering your objectives, which are identifiable at initiation. You might want to consider these during your task identification and planning phase, and address how these could be mitigated up front, or during the venture's mobilisation. However, there may also be a range of risks and issues that will only be identified during the venture's mobilisation. In order to capture and mitigate against these, you may

want to ensure that there is a robust mechanism in place to log, monitor and solve any issue which threatens the delivery of your venture. A Risks and Issues log can contribute towards:

- Defining the obstacles, threats or aspects that require attention
- Defining and agreeing how to mitigate or solve those obstacles, threats or aspects
- Defining the degree to and immediacy by which action might be required
- Capturing any risk that requires attention, action or decision by your Project's Board or Steering Group
- Capturing and defining any issues which don't threaten delivery, but which may need review and action once your venture is launched

Agreeing Reporting and Accountability Methods and Responsibilities

Your stakeholders will probably want to know how the mobilisation of the venture is progressing. They may also want to know about what is impeding progress, whether delivery timescales remain realistic, and whether initial objectives, as identified in the Business Case, remain achievable. They may also have the authority to take action and make decisions in support of successful delivery. You may therefore want to consider the following:

- Who needs to know what?
- How do they want to receive information?
- When do they need to receive information?
- Who will take responsibility for providing required information?
- Do you need an ad hoc escalation process for issues requiring action or decision?
- Who will be responsible for following this process?
- Who will have decision-making authority?

Considering and Agreeing Acceptance Criteria for Project Progress and Delivery

Key questions you and your stakeholders might want to ask are:

- How will we know that the mobilisation of our venture is progressing effectively, on target and within budget?
- How will we know that the venture can be launched successfully and that it is able to adhere to the venture's original Business Case – the reasons why the venture was initiated in the first place, and the venture's original aims and objectives
- How can we ensure that, in the long term, the venture continues to deliver its original aims and objectives, and that it continues to serve its original purpose?
- Who will be responsible for this?

How Can NHS England Help?

In addition to this guide, NHS England South West is developing a range of support mechanisms and approaches to assist General practices in considering mergers:

Facilitation

Provision of guided facilitation to enable individual, or groups of, General Practices to:

- Consider and address all of the abovementioned questions in starting up and managing a collaborative venture project

Information Packs

Provision of the following information resources for General Practice:

- General Practice Sustainability 'Health Check' Tool
- A Guide to Collaboration
- A Guide to Mergers
- A Guide to Networks and Federations
- A Guide to Provider Organisations
- A Guide to Setting Up and Managing a Project
- Examples of Innovation in General Practice

Advice and Guidance

Provision of advice and guidance for:

- Setting up and managing projects
- Project documents and templates
- Problem solving
- Enabling access to existing and on-going federative initiatives
- Sense-checking on progress and development

Who to Contact?

NHS England's GP Sustainability and Transformation initiative is part of the NHS England South (South West) Primary Care Team's work programme. Heads of Primary Care are **Marina Muirhead** (BNSSSG) and **Julia Cory** (DCIOS).

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