Invitation to tender: delivery partner

Impact on Urban Health and NHS South East London Equity Partnership Portfolio: Re-building Trust, shifting power, & reducing health inequalities

Impact on Urban Health and NHS South East London (NHS SEL) have partnered to improve health outcomes and experiences for Black communities across maternal and mental health services in south east London (Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley); two areas where health inequalities and inequities are well-documented. At the heart of this partnership is a new way of working to build trust in the health service.

We are seeking an accomplished and collaborative delivery partner with a strong track record in impact-focused implementation and capacity building in health and community settings, who can ensure that local initiatives lead by grant-holders across the maternal and health programmes are delivered to a high-quality with tangible benefits to local communities.

You will join a multi-partnership approach working alongside Black-led and community organisations and the healthcare system to shape service improvements across these health services. You will have knowledge of anti-racist approaches and will be expected to work closely with Impact on Urban Health and NHS SEL partners to embed initiatives across the wider healthcare system.

The main areas of work include:

- **Grant management:** lead the grant management and due-diligence process across the maternal and mental health programmes, working with grant-holders to monitor and ensure compliance and reporting procedures are in place.
- **Implementation management:** support the effective delivery and strengthen the capacity of local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) grant-holders to implement new models of care, through visible leadership and operational expertise.
- **Sustainability:** strengthen grant holder delivery by supporting the transition to business-as-usual and ensure new ways of working are adopted across the south east London healthcare system.

Details of the opportunity:

We are looking for organisations that have experience of grant management and monitoring, experience of managing complex large-scale programmes, coaching, stakeholder engagement, operational and risk-management, cultural competency, and knowledge of healthcare systems.

Maximum budget available: £370,000 inc. VAT

Contract Length: March 2026 – September 2029

Partnership background and objectives

An urgent need for action has been recognised nationally to address health inequalities and improve outcomes within maternal and mental health services, with a particular focus on Black Communities. The **Re-building trust, shifting power, reducing health inequalities programme** was developed in direct response to well-documented evidence about Black women and birthing people who often experience worse maternal outcomes and unacceptable disparities and that Black people across mental health services face greater barriers to access, unacceptable treatment and often traumatic experiences.

We understand that Black people are not a monolithic group and recognise the impact of age, economic status, gender identity, and sexual orientation on health outcomes. Collaboration, engagement and co-creation are at the centre of our partnership - using lived experience insight to drive forwards meaningful change.

We achieve this by connecting with community organisations to lead the redesign of health care access and provision – supporting them to develop collective action and enhance participation in ways that centre healing and sustainable change.

Our aim is to identify and fund scalable solutions that demonstrate that more inclusive and equitable service improvement is possible, and in fact essential for addressing racial inequities and inequalities in health.

Partnership principles:

The partnership aims to reduce health inequities and inequalities for Black communities and improve outcomes and experiences by developing co-produced sustained systemic solutions. To support this approach the delivery partner will need to adhere to the core principles which are:

- **Rebuilding trust with communities:** sharing power with communities and creating more responsive services that meet their needs. Through collaboration, inclusivity, and service improvement, we intend for sustained trust leading to stronger relationships and better health outcomes for underserved groups.
- **Developing innovative new models of care:** the main output of the programmes will be localised co-created care models and service initiatives that reduce health inequities and inequalities across maternal and mental healthcare.
- **Build communities:** funded models of care will strengthen community capacity and infrastructure by fostering community-led initiatives, enhancing bonds and creating innovative approaches to community organisation.
- **Share power sustainably:** projects will share power with communities to deliver work effectively, while ensuring NHS accountability and responsible use of public funds, developing a co-creation approach that empowers communities within public service constraints.
- **Focus on sustainability and systems change:** to achieve ongoing systematic change by building on existing work, scaling interventions, addressing root causes, prioritizing prevention, and considering wider health determinants. To support this principle, funding of new models of care will be provided for at least three years.

About the partnership:

Impact on Urban Health, part of Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation, works to reduce health inequalities in Lambeth and Southwark by addressing complex health issues. Their approach is guided by five principles: starting locally, prioritising race equity, valuing lived experience, fostering collaboration, and recognising the link between climate justice and health equity.

NHS South East London oversees the work of the south east London Integrated Care System (SEL-ICS) and makes decisions on allocating resources and planning services. We drive the four purposes of the system: to improve outcomes, tackle inequalities, enhance productivity and support social and economic development. We do this through partnership, underpinned by principles of engagement, participation, subsidiarity and delegation.

Key partners		
Impact on Urban Health and NHS-SEL Partnership Leadership Team are directly responsible and accountable for the portfolio delivery and implementation.		
Learning partner: JRNY Consulting The learning partner plays a key role ensuring there is shared learning across the partnership and its programmes by embedding inclusive, evidence-informed, and participatory practices. Crossover: The learning partner will work with the delivery and evaluation partners to provide contextual project insights and will create ongoing monitoring feedback loops by liaising with grant holders and communities. They will also work with the Impact on Urban Health and NHS SEL partnership to improve partnership ways of working.	**Delivery partner** The delivery partner will strengthen the capacity of local organisations to implement and embed new models of care and strengthen overall partnership coordination. Crossover: The delivery partner will work with the evaluation and learning partners to coordinate data collection to feed into service improvements, and to coordinate light-touch monitoring with grant holders to capture learning and continually improve implementation.	**Evaluation partner** The evaluation partner will provide independent analysis, evaluation and monitoring to inform and strengthen evidence for the approach, outcomes, and sustainability. Crossover: The evaluation partner will work in coordination with the learning & delivery partner to develop and share insights into the wider impact of the innovation, and into developing sustainable models of care.

Work to date:

Our work has focused on the set-up of the partnership's governance and launch of the Black maternal health programme. It is scheduled to launch its design phase in Q4 of 2025/26.

— **Scoping phase**: Community-led research highlighted the disparities experienced by Black people when accessing maternal and mental health care and we committed to delivering programmes across Black maternal and mental health. In 2024 we worked with delivery partners to develop prototype delivery and governance models and identify how the programmes will be effectively

docked into the healthcare system across south east London. A learning partner was appointed to embed equity, co-production, and continuous learning across the partnership.

- **Planning phase:** in early 2025 the partnership recruited a project lead to embed the work. We created an equity-driven governance framework amplifying community voices and launched a Black Maternal Health Expert Reference Group (ERG) of VCSE leaders, lived-experience experts, clinicians, commissioners and academics to guide strategy and share decision-making power.
- **Design Phase:** this started with a solutions-focused workshop over eighty people including Black mothers and birthing people, VCSE leaders, NHS clinicians and commissioners, policy makers and academics. This aimed to centre Black women and birthing people's experiences in the perinatal care system, surface systemic harms and co-create solutions that advance racial justice in maternal health. The workshop generated fifteen solutions across different phases of the maternity and neonatal patient journey which were then assessed, scored and prioritised by the ERG.
- **Implementation Phase:** The maternal health funding call (up to £1.5m) was launched on 17th November 2025, where we are now inviting expressions of interest.

What we want to achieve

The delivery partner will work alongside our learning partner JRNY Consulting who are supporting the work by embedding an equity-informed culture of continuous learning and are leading on the design and implementation of the grant-making processes. We hope that by encouraging and supporting new ways to dialogue, share power, understand each other and make decisions together we will come closer to achieving health equity and nurturing trust where this is absent or fragile.

With a sharp focus on improving the lives of our communities, our approach is to ensure that the positive effects reach beyond individual participants and influences wider communities and the health systems that serve them. To achieve this, and in line with the partnership principles the delivery partner will have five key areas of focus:

- **Grant and portfolio management:** Undertake due-diligence and develop on-granting agreements with selected grant-holders. Establish formal contracting, monitoring and reporting mechanisms with grant-holders, and develop a shared understanding of budgets, deliverables, and timelines - reporting into Impact on Urban Health and NHS SEL and the programme board.
- **Grant holder capacity building:** Support grantees to build their own capacity to negotiate healthcare and commissioning eco-systems and effectively deliver on priorities and deliverables.
- **Strengthened and equitable coordination, collaboration and decision making:** Main interface between grant holders, the ERG and key partners for clarity around milestones and activity to ensure timely delivery using project management processes such as risk-management and benefits-realisation.
- **Continuous Improvement:** facilitate feedback with the ERG and work closely with the learning partner to ensure insights gathered support delivery and engagement to improve health equity and ensure better patient outcomes in these areas.
- **Embedding sustained systemic solutions:** collaborate with Impact on Urban Health and NHS SEL to support the longer-term sustainability of the grant-funded projects, ensuring work is effectively embedded into the wider healthcare system. Work with the evaluation partner to identify opportunities to continue work beyond the partnership funding lifecycle.

At the outset, we will work with the delivery partner to co-produce the final delivery and implementation plans, including activities, detailed deliverables and outputs.

Tasks and deliverables

Deliverable	Partnership requirements	Timeframe
Establish Maternal health grant holder agreements.	Responsible for carrying out due diligence on selected partners and putting in place appropriate on-granting agreements with selected partners. Responsible for ongoing grant monitoring and management.	March 2026 - ongoing
Establish Mental Health Grant-Holder agreements.	Responsible for carrying out due diligence on selected partners and putting in place appropriate on-granting agreements with selected partners. Responsible for ongoing grant monitoring and management.	September 2026 - ongoing
Establish programme management and implementation lans.	To support the grant-holders with ongoing delivery and implementation with timelines.	March 2026 – May 2026
Create a development and capacity building plan to support grantees to improve their delivery.	Identifying needs and filling gaps in capacity and capability of grantees to enhance their delivery.	April 2026 - ongoing
Maintain and develop partnership portfolio management documentation.	Working with the NHS Project Lead to audit and develop existing PMO documentation to maintain effective crosscutting portfolio management of the Black maternal health and Black mental health programmes of work.	April 2026 - ongoing

Work with grantees, the ERG, key partners and learning and evaluation partners to establish calibrated, learning-centred and psychologically safe oversight mechanisms that support the Partnership's culture of continuous learning.	Build strong relationships and work with the learning partner to establish safe spaces with grantees to ensure reflective learning is continually generated and built into ongoing delivery of work.	April 2026 - ongoing
Support the development of an engagement plan.	Collaborate with the NHS project lead to co-create a system engagement plan to support grantees and their projects to maximise their chances of success.	May - ongoing

Who we are looking for

We welcome applications from individuals using associate models, individual organisations, as well as consortia organisations. We are looking for a delivery partner who can meet the following criteria.

Award criteria	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Financial management: established knowledge, experience and processes in place of managing multiple grants.	✓	
Capacity building: knowledge of managing and supporting multiple stakeholders with diverse skills and experiences through implementation.	✓	
Anti-racist approaches: you will have expert knowledge and understanding of anti-racist approaches.	✓	
Cultural competency: you will have skills and knowledge of applying cultural competency in different settings.	✓	
Skills and Experience		
Grant management: you will have experience of managing and monitoring grants and opportunities, including of conducting due-diligence processes, and putting in place grant agreements with multiple suppliers.	✓	
Stakeholder engagement: proven ability to build and maintain successful relationships with a wide range of stakeholders across the partnership.	✓	
Adaptable approach: demonstratable skills and experience in navigating complex and politically sensitive environments, successfully engaging marginalised communities along the way.	✓	

Operational management: you will have strong organisational ability and well-developed resource management skills to manage multiple projects across programmes including; risk-management, benefits-realisation, budget-management and project and resource planning.	✓	
Quality improvement: experience of managing programmes at pace and scale with a focus on improving patient experience and outcomes.	✓	
Interpersonal and communication skills: you will be a credible and influential communicator with excellent influencing, networking and negotiating skills.	✓	
Coaching: you will have excellent leadership and coaching skills with the ability to inspire, motivate, and develop individuals and teams through reflective decision making, service improvement and implementation.	✓	
Transformation: you will have experience of leveraging data to successfully inform and implement change and performance into making improvements for project delivery.	✓	
Systems change: you will have skills of working collaboratively with systems to support the long-term sustainability of the innovative approaches we fund and will have experience in mapping processes for system-change beyond the funding provided by the partnership.		✓
Ethics and equity: Clear approach for ensuring a high standard of ethics and equity in design and practice.	✓	

How to apply

1. Submit a maximum of 3 sides of A4 outlining why you are interested in delivering these programmes and your relevant knowledge, skills, and experience - including how you'll using these to deliver the work.
2. Provide a project plan outlining how you would approach this work.
3. Provide short biographies or CVs for the team delivering the work.
4. Provide a high-level budget plan and projected costings (inclusive of VAT and expenses) max £370,000 outlining your/each team member's daily rate of pay and the number of days you/each team member will dedicate to the work.

Submissions should be shared with misha.gardner@urbanhealth.org.uk and dominic.reilly@selondonics.nhs.uk by Sunday 4 January 2026 at 00:00. Please note that we will not accept submissions later than this date.

Stage 2 (invitation only):

We will invite you for an interview with a panel comprised of representatives from Impact on Urban Health, NHS South East London and system and community stakeholders. This will be an online discussion that will

be no longer than 60 minutes where you will have the opportunity to present your ideas (30 minutes), plus space for discussion and questions. More details of this will be provided in the invitation to interview.

Shortlisting criteria	
Knowledge	
Financial management: established knowledge, experience and processes in place of managing multiple grants. Capacity building: knowledge of managing and supporting multiple stakeholders with diverse skills and experiences through implementation. Anti-racist: you will have expert knowledge and understanding of anti-racist approaches. Cultural competency: you will have skills and knowledge of applying cultural competency in your work.	40%
Skills and experience	
Grant management: you will have experience of managing and monitoring grants and opportunities, including of conducting due-diligence processes, and putting in place grant agreements with multiple suppliers. Stakeholder engagement: ability to build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders. Adaptable approach: ability to navigate complex, sensitive environments and marginalized communities. Operational management: strong operational and resource management. Quality improvement: implement programs at pace and scale with a service improvement focus. Interpersonal and communication: strong skills to influence, networking, and negotiation. Coaching: effective leadership and coaching skills to inspire motivation and develop teams. Transformation: experience of leveraging data to inform and implement change and performance. Systems change: you will have skills and experience of systems change.	50%
Budget	
Affordability and alignment of budget with level of experience and expertise offered to achieve the desired aims and deliverables.	10%

Application timings

Application stage	Indicative dates
ITT issued	19 November 2025
Deadline for clarification questions from applicants	1 December 2025
Deadline for receipt of tenders	4 January 2026
Interviews	20 January 2026