



**Sheffield Health
and Social Care**
NHS Foundation Trust

Research Development Unit
Research Governance Office
Centre Court
Atlas Way
Sheffield
S4 7QQ

www.shsc.nhs.uk

Telephone: 01142716731

Information for general practices on how to use the Letter of Access Assurance (LoAA) and Letter of Access (LoA)

The purpose of this guide is to provide general practice staff with guidance on the use of LoAA and LoA. It also explains how these documents can be used by external researchers to verify their right of access to a general practice to conduct research as set out in the terms and conditions stated on the letters.

Please see the website to access the LoAA and practice LoA templates for NHS and non-NHS researchers.

1. What is a research passport?

A research passport is the mechanism for non-NHS staff to obtain an Honorary Research Contract or Letter of Access (LoA) when they propose to carry out research in the NHS. It provides evidence of the pre-engagement checks undertaken on the researcher in line with NHS Employment Check Standards.

2. What is NHS-to-NHS confirmation of pre-engagement checks?

This is a letter reviewed and signed by the HR department of the NHS researchers who have a substantive NHS contract of employment or clinical academics with an honorary clinical contract with an NHS organisation, and who need an NHS-to-NHS letter of access from an NHS organisation hosting their research. The HR reviews the personnel file to confirm that existing clearances are commensurate with research activity.

3. What is a Letter of Access Assurance (LoAA)?

This is a letter that provides confirmation to a practice that the named researcher has undergone all the relevant pre-engagement checks i.e. DBS and Occupational Health checks. The checks are performed by the Research Development Unit (RDU), at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust (SHSC) after the researcher submits their non-validated research passport. Researchers can also submit validated research passports or NHS-to-NHS confirmation of pre-engagement checks to SHSC RDU governance team.

4. Who issues a LoAA?

LoAA is issued by the RDU at SHSC who are providing a research management and governance service which has been commissioned by the Integrated Care Board: Sheffield Place on behalf of general practices in Sheffield.

5. What is a LoA?

This is a corresponding letter that is issued to general practices by SHSC RDU to accompany the LoAA. It was developed by the SHSC RDU governance team to support general practices with a document that they could issue to both NHS and non-NHS researchers, who have been delegated to provide research activities at the practices related to specific research projects. The LoA is pre-populated with the researcher's details when they are issued with their LoAA and sent to the practice who will need to complete the highlighted yellow sections and issue the LoA to the researcher. The general practice LoA is normally project specific but can also be time specific for a researcher who is supporting different projects within the same primary care setting.

6. As a general practice, do I have to use the LoA issued by SHSC?

Use of the LoA template is optional and if a general practice already has their own LoA or prefer to use their own confidentiality agreement they can continue to do so.

7. Is there anything else I need to do?

In addition to the above, the researcher should also complete the relevant sections of the study's delegation log and that this is signed-off by the practice.

8. Where can I find out more about research passports and letters of access?

This guidance follows the HR Good Practice Resource Pack which can be found at:

<https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/help/hlphrgoodpractice.aspx> (accessed January 2023)

9. Who do I contact if I have further questions?

For any questions, please email: rdu@shsc.nhs.uk

LoAA and Practice LoA Process

