



10 **steps** **to health justice partnership** **at Neami**

January 2025

Contents

	3	List of terms used
	4	Introduction
	4	What is HJP?
	6	How could HJP help support Neami consumers?
	7	10 steps to building and maintaining HJPs
Step 1	8	Identify consumer legal needs and describe their current access to legal help
Step 2	9	Consider if your Neami service is ready for HJP
Step 3	10	Describe the current capability of the Neami service in relation to client legal need and how a lawyer can help
Step 4	12	Describe and build the Neami service's current partnership resources
Step 5	14	Review the types of legal assistance available in the Neami service's local community
Step 6	16	Choose a legal service(s) and begin to build the relationship and connection
Step 7	17	Establish mutual benefit and consider your and your partner's drivers, motivations and perspective on risk
Step 8	18	Consider how the partnership is best managed
Step 9	20	Agree on the activities of the health justice partnership
Step 10	22	Maintaining and sustaining your health justice partnership
	24	Appendices

List of terms used

This report includes a range of terms that may not be familiar to some people. Here we describe what we mean by these terms.

Client: The term used when referring to people who are supported by legal services and when referencing broader literature.

Consumer: The term most commonly used by Neami National to describe the population of people Neami National serves. This broad term includes other terms Neami National uses such as service user, guest and client.

Health justice partnerships: Partnerships, commonly between one or more health or wellbeing services and one or more legal assistance services, to integrate legal help into services that support people's health and wellbeing.

Legal issues/legal problems: Problems that have a legal element that a lawyer can assist with.

Legal need: The experience of having ongoing legal problems. Legal need arises when legal issues are not addressed.

Legal assistance: Assistance provided by lawyers or legal services to help people address their legal issues. This help can be in the form of general information, advice on what to do about specific problems, help such as writing letters or negotiating with people, or representation in a court or tribunal.

Legal assistance services: Community based legal services that provide help to people with their legal problems. Examples include Legal Aid Commissions (in each State and Territory), Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Centres.

Legal capability: The skills, knowledge, mindset and resources to needed to effectively identify, know what to do about and take action on legal issues.

Secondary consultation: Communication and information sharing between partnering practitioners that helps them to support their patients and clients.

Warm referral: When a practitioner in one service contacts another service on the client's behalf. In health justice partnership this could look like a practitioner making an appointment with another practitioner, or in some cases, introducing the client to another practitioner. In partnerships this may also involve writing a report or case history on the client for the legal service and/or attending the service with the client. A cold referral, by contrast, involves providing the contact details of a legal service to a client, for them to follow up independently.

Introduction



People are so deep in the struggle they have no sense of their rights whatsoever... yeah, that's most of our clientele.

– Neami staff member



People seeking support from Neami National (Neami) services commonly experience a range of issues that impact on their mental health and wellbeing. These can include legal problems around money, fines, social security, housing, family law and family violence, crime or victim of crime issues. Without specialist knowledge about these issues or connections with those who can assist, some Neami staff may not know how to help.

Since June 2021, Health Justice Australia and Neami have worked together to trial and learn from health justice partnership (HJP) in three sites. [Health justice partnerships](#) (HJPs) are collaborations to integrate legal help into services that support people's health and wellbeing.

This practical guide can help you decide whether an HJP would be a good option for your site. As well as providing foundational information about HJP, this guide outlines 10 practical steps you can take to build and maintain health justice partnerships.

For more information about legal needs in Neami services see the results of a [survey of Neami staff and legal needs assessments in 3 Neami services](#)

What is HJP?

[HJPs](#) integrate legal help into service settings that support people's health and wellbeing. HJPs are most commonly partnerships between community based legal services such as community legal centres or legal aid commissions, and health services, including hospitals and community health services. They can also occur in other settings such as housing services or social services.

HJPs provide accessible advice and assistance for legal problems that negatively impact upon people's health

and wellbeing. Examples of these legal problems include debts that feel out of control, payday loans, unpaid fines or bills, issues with tenancy, mortgage or social security, employment issues, family breakdown or family violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, involvement with child protection, discrimination or criminal law issues (as victim or accused).

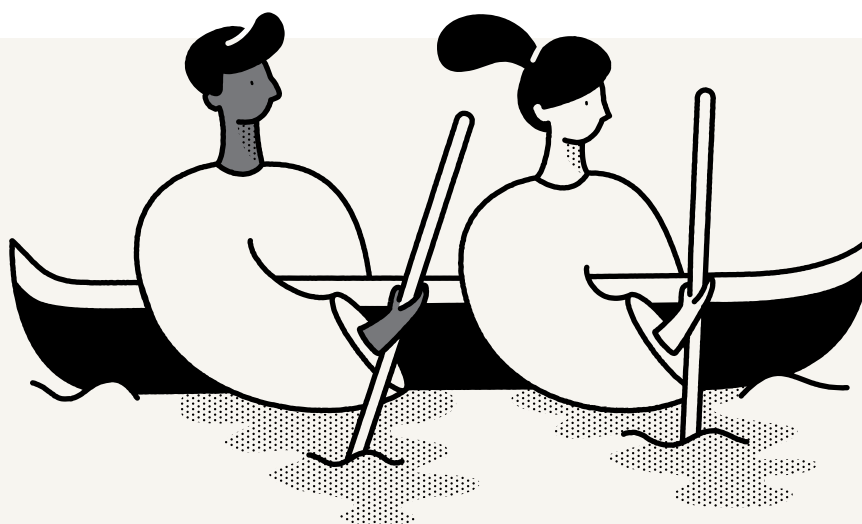
There are HJPs all over Australia, but they are each very different to one another. HJPs vary depending upon the needs of the people using the service, the

service setting, and the interest, needs, availability and resources of all the partners who are involved in the partnership. However, common features or activities of many HJPs include:

- Community legal education for service users (and staff!) about issues like fines, family violence orders or tenancy problems
- On-site legal advice and assistance to individual clients
- Training and education by the lawyers for health staff, for example about different types of legal problems clients may be facing, about local legal services, or about how the HJP lawyers can help
- Training and education by health, community or social service staff for the lawyers about person-centred practice, trauma-informed practice, specific client-related needs and challenges, health and medical knowledge, and inclusion and accessibility.
- Secondary consultation – where health practitioners can directly consult with legal professionals about problems clients are experiencing in a de-identified way
- ‘Warm’ referral pathways between the health and legal partners
- The opportunity for health and legal staff to work together to support clients with intersecting health and legal needs.

A health justice partnership between Neami's Urgent Mental Health Crisis Centre, Adelaide and Women's Legal Services SA

Neami National was interested in establishing an HJP at the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) and Aftercare service in Adelaide. The UMHCC is a 24-hour welcoming space for people experiencing mental health crisis. The aftercare service supports people who require additional support in the period following crisis. After an analysis of those supported through the service and the types of legal issues arising, HJA worked with Neami National to reach out to Women's Legal Service SA (WLS) to see if they may be interested in working in partnership to support people using the service. WLS now work in partnership with the UMHCC. UMHCC staff make referrals directly to the WLS by email, and a lawyer visits the site each fortnight. The lawyer is also able to see people at WLS at other times. WLS and members from the UMHCC team meet regularly.



The types of things that become legal problems

Legal problems come up when there are disputes between people or organisations, or when someone breaks the law. Well-known examples are being charged with a crime or being a victim of a crime or having family law problems. But lawyers can also help with a wide range of ‘stuff of life’ problems such as financial legal problems (e.g. fines or utility debts, loans, mortgage problems), Centrelink, family violence, consumer issues, tenancy and housing, employment or discrimination.

People may need help in enforcing their rights (e.g. getting repairs done on a house, getting access to entitlements, getting a family or domestic violence order), or in defending themselves or responding to legal action that someone is taking against them (e.g. a criminal matter, fines, being evicted, being chased for money).

How could HJP help support Neami consumers?

Legal issues and mental health

Research shows that people living with a disability or chronic health condition (including mental health issues), single parents and people living in unstable housing are most vulnerable to experiencing legal issues. These legal issues can in turn affect people’s mental health and wellbeing.

Common barriers to getting legal help

People living with mental health issues can face a number of barriers to accessing help with legal problems, including:

- not recognising the issue as something that a lawyer can assist with
- lack of availability or awareness of, or access to free or low-cost legal services
- the perceived cost of legal help
- previous poor experiences with the justice system and/or lawyers
- not trusting lawyers or the legal system or not believing that help is available or that it can make a difference.

The role of health professionals in addressing legal issues that affect health

People with legal issues are more likely to be in contact with workers in health and community settings, than directly with legal professionals and services.

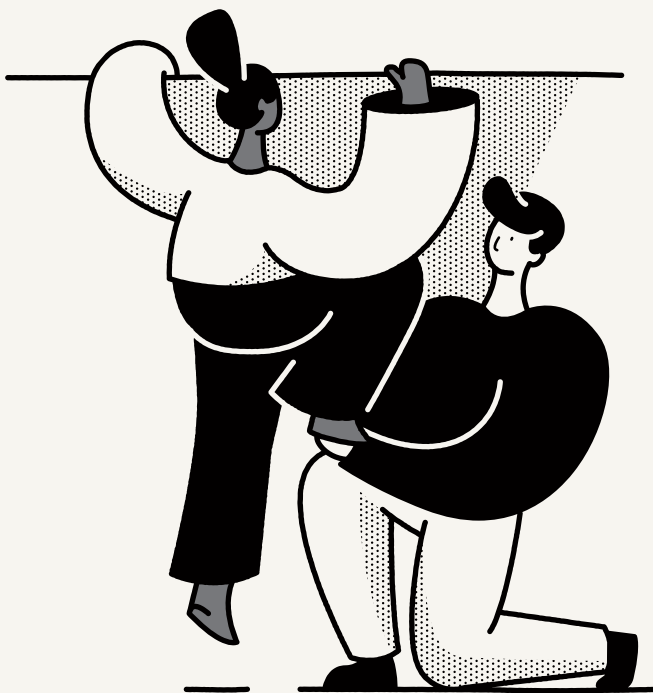
This can place Neami staff in a position where they might be seeing legal issues affecting the lives of consumers, before consumers know about or have access to any legal support. And it may be the case that staff can see something is not right, but – without connections or particular knowledge about these issues – do not know who could help with the issue or what can be done.

Health justice partnerships involve health and legal services coming together to assist shared clients who are experiencing intersecting health and legal issues. By working together, partner services each build their capacity to support clients, in ways that they cannot achieve alone. And with support such as training, tools, resources, and connections and partnerships, health staff can link consumers they are supporting with the legal help they may need.

10 steps to building and maintaining HJPs

The following 10 steps cover a range of contexts where you may be thinking about HJP. They will support you if you're at the very beginning and have just begun thinking about HJP as a possible approach to take; and they will support you if you've been implementing an HJP for a while, and you want refresh or review the partnership.

You also do not have to go in order from 1 to 10. You can look through the steps to pick and choose which step is most relevant to your current challenge or thinking. As we always say at Health Justice Australia – we'd encourage you to start where you are!



Step 1

Identify the legal needs and describe their current access to legal help

HJP is a way to bring together a broader range of services and supports for Neami consumers. So, the first question to consider is, what do people need? What legal issues are they facing? And what gets in the way when they are trying to get help for those issues? [This report describes legal need in some Neami services.](#)

Many people who have legal issues do not access community legal services that provide legal help. They may not recognise their issues as 'legal' or be aware that there are legal services that can help at no cost. People may have so much going on in their lives that they can't access yet another service location. They may fear or have low trust in lawyers or do not see the legal system as something that might work for them. And in some cases or locations, there may be no free or low-cost legal services available for the issues they are facing.

Use the following questions as agenda items for an internal discussion, which can then form a 1-2 page brief outlining the current needs of your particular service's consumers. You can use this brief with potential legal partners so they understand the types of legal help consumers may need or with current legal partners to regularly review the HJPs clients' needs.

- **Does your service support people who have legal issues that affect their mental health and/or their capability to engage in support?**
- **What types of legal issues do people have?**
 - Use the 'legal health check' in Appendix 1 to identify the range of legal issues that consumers in your service are experiencing.
- **Do they face barriers to accessing legal help directly?**

Could HJP be the right approach to address these needs?

If consumers are willing and able to access and use a local community legal assistance service directly, then your service may not need an HJP. Instead, you may like to reach out to the legal service to offer a yearly or 6 monthly meeting where you can both review if, and how, consumers are being referred between services so that it continues to work for consumers and both services.

If you have identified barriers for consumers in accessing legal support, a health justice partnership can bring the legal help to them in your service location. You can continue through the following steps to explore HJP an approach to meet consumers' needs.

Step 2

Consider if your Neami service is ready for HJP

Even where there are significant legal needs identified within a service, the service itself may not be ready to partner with a legal service in any form.

For many people – both consumers and staff – the idea of the law or a lawyer can come with a range of negative stereotypes, biases and myths. One of these is that one of the only reasons to see a lawyer is when someone is in trouble or has committed a crime. People may not have any experience of the law or lawyers working in their favour. Other people's experience is that lawyers are difficult to work with or that their approach has re-traumatised people who have already experienced trauma. It's good to be aware of this when considering HJP and that while HJP can help shift these views by using legal assistance to help resolve problems, it can take time for everyone to build this understanding and trust.

Furthermore, there may be false expectations about what working with lawyers may look like and that may be a barrier to developing types of HJP that may be very different and be most suitable to your service. For example, staff may assume a HJP requires lawyers to be on site, working directly with consumers, when this may only apply to some HJPs.

Use the following questions to consider whether your particular Neami service might be a good fit for an HJP. You can use these as agenda items for an internal discussion and scoping activity.

- **How do staff currently feel about working more closely with lawyers?**
- **Do staff have any concerns about the idea of HJP?**
- **How would legal help fit with the other services provided by Neami at this site?**
- **What do staff think a HJP might look like?**

Could your service be ready for HJP?

If staff are uncomfortable about the idea of working more closely with lawyers or do not see how this type of help fits in with the services they provide, this may not be quite the right time or place for a partnership.

You can also consider steps to build staff understanding of the range of ways community lawyers can assist

consumers and to address any assumptions or concerns about lawyers and legal help. One option is to reach out to a local legal service to come and provide an information session about the types of help they provide. From there you can consider if and how your service could connect consumers with that help.

Step 3

Describe the current capability of the Neami service in relation to client legal need and how a lawyer can help

While staff may see that consumers are dealing with life issues that may also be affecting their health, they may not necessarily realise that a lawyer could assist with these issues. If they do recognise the issue as a legal problem, they may still not know what to do about it or have the confidence (in themselves or lawyers or legal processes) to suggest what to do next. A relationship or partnership with a legal service could help address some of these issues.

HJP not only provides legal help directly to clients but can also build the capability of Neami staff across a range of areas. By working in partnership with lawyers, Neami staff can learn to identify a broader range of legal issues a consumer may have, as well as improving their confidence and ability to know how a lawyer can help.

To understand where staff's capability is at in relation to identifying their consumers' legal needs, as well as where a lawyer can help, you can use the following questions as agenda items for an internal discussion and scoping activity. You can consider whether your particular Neami service and the relevant staff may really benefit from establishing an HJP and working in partnership with a legal service.

- **What do frontline staff currently do when legal issues arise?**
- **What connections or relationships do staff currently have to legal and other support services?**
- **What issues do staff believe they need more information about?**
- **Do staff need anything more to help them identify when consumers may have legal issues and to connect them with appropriate legal help?**
 - Do they need more knowledge, skills, confidence, trust in lawyers and the value of legal help, remit within their roles, or time and resources?



Support addressing steps 1-5

If you would like support to identify the legal needs of your service's client group and your service's current capability (knowledge, skills, confidence, trust, connections) to identify legal need and refer clients, Health Justice Australia can provide support with a full legal needs assessment.

A Health Justice Australia legal needs assessment will explore the legal needs and capabilities of consumers, together with the capability needs of staff and identify which legal assistance services would be best placed to approach for partnership. The legal needs assessment reviews service data, interviews staff and identifies available legal assistance that matches those needs, and could be potential partners.

Could HJP be a way to support the capability building of Neami staff?

If staff in your service do not have existing relationships with legal services, an HJP may be the opportunity to build those relationships. An HJP can also evolve from any existing relationships to become a more intentional partnership.

We suggest starting with where your staff are at. A first step (once you have identified local legal services at step 5) may just be to invite a local legal service to present to the staff, for example at a staff training day. Topics can be based on the interests and needs you identified from the questions above. For instance, if staff feel uneasy about lawyers on site, you may ask the legal service to provide information about what they do, the types of legal issues they address and how to refer consumers to them.



Step 4

Describe and build the Neami service's current partnership resources

To participate well in any partnership takes time, energy and resources. Think about how ready the service and individual staff members are for HJP. This can guide your decision-making about whether to partner or not with a legal service.

Partnership readiness means thinking about whether your service and your staff have enough resourcing, capability, aligned strategy, and leadership buy-in to support the effective design and implementation of partnership. Sometimes people or organisations have willingness to partner, but realise they are not ready to partner because, as one example, they may not have enough resources at the time. In this case, it's okay to take your time to prepare for a partnership by starting small with an activity that is more realistic for both services (see below for some examples).

The following questions can help assess your partnership readiness. You can use them as agenda items for an internal discussion and scoping activity. As you approach the implementation of your partnership, governance will also need to be addressed also – for discussion of that, see step 8.

- **Do you have the enough resourcing for the type of partnership you're thinking about implementing? Consider:**
 - frontline and coordination staff time
 - allocation in position descriptions and work plans
 - budget
 - physical space and private meeting rooms for additional practitioners
- **Is partnership and collaboration reflected in Neami's strategic directions and your service's work plans?**
- **Is there willingness to invest in collaborative teamwork and culture as it relates to partnership?**
- **Are there staff who may be willing and have the capacity to be partnership champions/sponsors in the service's leadership team to oversee, guide, and enable strategic decision-making regarding partnership efforts?**
- **Is there clarity at your service about who is responsible for developing and maintaining the partnership (keeping in mind that developing and maintaining might be separate roles)?**

Willingness vs readiness in partnership

A Neami service was looking to partner with a community legal centre. Health Justice Australia completed a legal needs assessment and then went ahead to brief a local legal assistance service about the legal needs assessment results. This was a description of the legal needs of consumers who accessed the local Neami service. We also talked about the opportunities for partnership and how the findings of the assessment aligned with the priorities of each of the legal services. On paper there was one legal service that stood out as an obvious partner.

- ✓ They covered the diverse areas of law and legal need identified in the legal needs assessment
- ✓ They had a history of working in an outreach capacity
- ✓ They were curious about reorienting their existing outreach resources into a new partnership
- ✓ They were interested in connecting further with Neami

This was a great example of partnership **willingness**. But as time went on, it became harder for Neami to engage with this legal service. Understandably, they were facing competing service priorities, limited resourcing and staff shortages. These three factors meant it wasn't the right time for them to embark on a new partnership. They were not ready.

Could HJP be the right fit for your service?

The aspiration for partnership readiness is to have enough internal resources, high staff buy-in and capability at all levels, as well as a focus on partnership reflected in strategic and operational documentation. The reality is often a version of this aspirational goal – with some areas well covered and many others a work in progress. As stated earlier, we encourage you to accept your current level of readiness, acknowledge everyone is doing the best they can, and to start where you are.

If, as the case study illustrates, you have identified your service has abundant willingness, but you're not yet ready for partnership (developing long-term relationship and co-creating joint, mutually beneficial processes and activity, guided by shared goals and vision), you can consider whether another form of engagement or joint effort may currently suit you better. These alternative ways of working with a legal assistance service could include:

- Networking (sharing information for mutual gain)
- Cooperating (time-limited or task-focussed activity with another agency, involving the sharing of information and each agency contributing time, skills, or expertise for the benefit of staff and/or shared service users)
- Coordinating (sharing of information, skills, expertise, and resources across agencies for longer term, mutually beneficial activity)

However, if you've identified that you are ready to partner, then continue building the internal engagement and momentum for partnership and HJP. You can do that by convening an internal HJP kick-off meeting. Topics on your agenda might include gathering a brief history of the team's (and team members') partnering experience and understanding what the team would be looking for from a partnership in their current context.

Step 5

Review the types of legal assistance available in the Neami service's local community

When looking to build an HJP, it's important to take the time to learn about the legal assistance sector and which legal services are available for the consumers Neami supports. This will support you to match consumers' legal needs (see Step 1) with the best legal assistance service to address those needs.

In each state and territory, there are community-based legal services that can provide free or low-cost legal help. However, they do vary in the types of legal issues they can deal with (e.g. criminal matters, family law, housing), the level of support they can provide (e.g. advice, legal tasks like writing letters or representation) and the people they can help (e.g. some are specialist services for young people, older people, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women).

Organised by state and territory, community-based legal services include (see Appendix 2):

- Generalist community legal centres, that provide advice and assistance for a range of legal issues for people within a geographic area
- Specialist community legal services that provide help for certain issues (e.g. financial rights, welfare rights, housing and tenancy services), or certain groups (women's legal services, disability legal services, mental health legal services). These tend to be state or territory wide.
- Legal aid commissions in each state and territory that provide criminal law assistance (including duty lawyer services in courts and representation), family law and civil law
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services that provide legal assistance in a culturally safe way and understand the issues most likely to be affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Family violence prevention legal services that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisations which mainly support women and children experiencing family violence.



To consider which legal service may be a potential partner to help you achieve your goal and meet the legal needs of clients, you can use the following questions to guide a scoping activity.

You can start by asking your staff about current connections, looking on legal service websites (see links above) and then by contacting different services for more information.

- **Which legal services provide assistance in your local area? (see Appendix 2 for help)**
- **Which legal services does your service or staff in your service already have relationships with?**
- **Which legal services support your client groups or address the particular issues that your clients face?**

- **When you have identified one or more legal services that provide relevant assistance in your location, further explore:**

- What types of legal issues do they address?
- What types of legal help can they provide (for different issues)?
- Who are the people they can help (e.g. targeted services)?
- Have you noticed or heard of any constraints they may be limited by?
 - Is there means testing for different types of help?
 - How likely is it that they may not be able to work with some clients from your service due to an existing conflicts of interest?¹

Could HJP be the right fit for your service?

Remember that at this stage, your answers will not only be valid practice experience, personal experience and desk-top scoping, but may also be based on assumptions you may be making. It's essential to now fact-check what you think you know about your potential partner in HJP (and encourage them to do the same about you!).

If you have found legal services that provide legal help that meets the needs of Neami clients, building a relationship or deepening a relationship you already have with that service creates the foundation for HJP.

Conflicts of interest

1. Lawyers have ongoing duties to former clients, including the duty of confidentiality. A conflict of interest happens when a lawyer (or their law practice i.e. who they work for) has already provided legal assistance to the person on 'the opposite side' to your client. The lawyer already has confidential information about that other person so they can't represent your client against their former client (such as during a family law dispute) and they would 'declare a conflict'.

Step 6

Choose a legal service(s) and begin to build the relationship and connection

To build a relationship and connection with a legal service after you've considered Step 5, you now need to understand their resources, context, and priorities. You can use a resource mapping tool (see Appendix 3) to support this whole step in the process. The partnerships will only ever be as strong as the relationships and connections that underpin and existed before them.

Contacting a legal service or suggesting a change in relationship to move towards partnership can feel daunting. See Appendix 4 for an example meeting agenda you can use to help guide the conversation. Here are some suggestions to support you to build your relationship with a legal assistance service:

- Approach the meeting with a mindset to share what you've learnt about client need, and to hear the legal service's aspirations and priorities, rather than a goal to partner.
- Share the findings of your Neami site's legal needs assessment (see Steps 1- 4) and explore the extent to which the findings align with their own priorities.
- Decide whether another meet-and-greet meeting is a useful next step. With some legal assistance services, this is where the briefing and interaction will end – they may be interested to know more about the work your service is doing to address unmet legal need but may not see a role for themselves in that work. For others, they will be keen to talk more about their own priorities and how your work aligns with those priorities. If the latter, use this as an opportunity to schedule another meeting.
- Trial some light-touch joint activities (e.g. network meetings, organise a one-off small event, training sessions between organisations). For some communities, this light-touch activity will act as a pathway to deeper, more collaborative engagement. For others, those communities simply benefit from their workforces being better networked and equipped with a more diverse pool of relationships, referral pathways, and information, and a deeper partnership is not required.

Could this partner be the right fit for client needs and for your service?

Partnerships are rarely formed and sustained without intentional investment in time, process, and relationships. As you move through this relationship building or deepening process, you are looking to identify whether the partnership will be mutually beneficial for

Neami and for the legal assistance service. If your initial meetings indicate that it's possible you have aligned values and a shared goal, then you're ready to move to deeper conversations to explore a partnership.

Step 7

Establish mutual benefit and consider your and your partner's drivers, motivations and perspective on risk

One of the most spoken about partnership challenges is the belief that your partner is not as invested, passionate or engaged in the partnership as you are. Sometimes this is described as, 'we don't have their buy-in.' You seek to avoid this partnership challenge by talking together with the legal service to explore your own and each other's drivers, motivations, expectations and perspectives on risk. By doing this you are either:

A) establishing the mutual benefit for each partner in participating in the partnership. Getting buy-in and engagement from all partners in HJP takes this deep getting to know each other process and builds the foundation for a solid partnership

OR

B) establishing that partnership, and/or this particular partner, is not the right approach in this circumstance. Health Justice Australia has written about when partnership may not be the right approach [in this blog](#)

Exploring the following questions will help to unearth your and your potential partner's expectations and assumptions (both known and surprising!) and will support you to build the mutual benefit and buy-in needed for HJP:

- **What would each service look for and need out of a partnership? (your and your partner's expectations)**
- **What is driving each service to want to partner? What does each service think they will be able to achieve that they can't achieve alone?**
- **What internal processes and strategies support each service to partner (culture, strategic plan, operational work plans, supervision etc)?**
- **What is each service's perspective on the possible risks associated with partnering?**

Could this partner be the right fit for client needs and for your service?

By undertaking this process, if all parties are feeling heard and seen when communicating their interests and expectations this indicates a very solid foundation for an HJP. This lets you know that you not only have a space for open dialogue and the testing of ideas in the partnership, but it also enables you to let go of mindsets or assumptions you may have been holding onto don't serve the common goal of the partnership.

Ultimately, what a partnership's people think of each other, the extent to which you feel connected to a common purpose, and how you feel about your working relationship will be key determinants of the partnership's viability. The level of openness you experience in the above process will let you know if you're able to build a relationship of trust together.

Step 8

Consider how the partnership is best managed

HJPs and their partners take a range of approaches to manage and coordinate their partnerships. Resources, capacity, level of buy-in from managers and executive, and workforce capability all play a role in how each HJP is managed or governed. You will need to consider the local variables for each Neami service and develop the best coordination or governance structure to meet your local needs.

To consider whether to appoint a staff member internally or engage an independent broker to manage or coordinate the HJP, review Appendix 5 – Tasks to manage partnership development process. Keeping those tasks in mind, you can use the following questions as agenda items for an internal discussion.

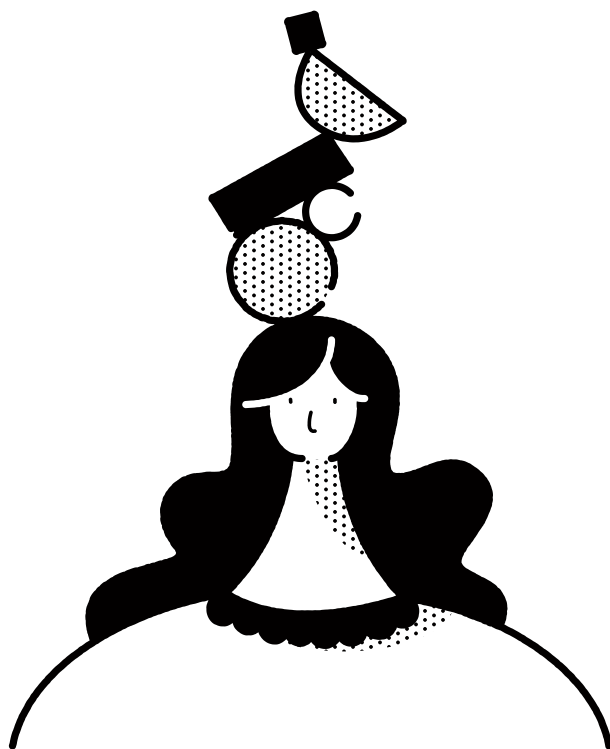
- **Is there commitment from the service for a team member to build managing the partnership into their role?**
- **Who will have the authority to change the relationship or activities of the partnership?**
- **Who will have oversight of this partnership? How will you ensure that they remain informed about the health and activities of the partnership?**
- **Are there other parties that need to be consulted regarding this partnership? How will they be involved?**
- **Do you have someone to fill the role who has the appropriate training and access to the networks they will need? If not, do you have the capability internally to support the person to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed or the resources to pay for training and development support?**
- **Is there any deep mistrust or conflict in the local context relevant to the partnership, which may be better approached by an independent, trusted broker to establish or manage the partnership?**
- **Do you have the relationships and networks you need to advance the partnering efforts, or is an independent broker with a detailed understanding of how that service system operates, the language it uses, and trusted relationships with a diverse network of agencies across the country needed?**

Should we invest in local capability or engage an independent broker?

If deep mistrust or conflict has been identified, then having a skilled, independent third party to help mediate the partnership can be beneficial. By doing so, no one agency feels as though they have to ‘chair’ or ‘host’ the partnership process or meetings – it allows everyone to show up and participate equally. An external broker may also be beneficial when those in the partner organisations identify they don’t have the resources to contribute to the managing and coordinating of the partnership (acknowledging that funding is needed to facilitate an external broker in both these circumstances).

If there is service commitment and resources available, and deep mistrust is not present, then investing in local capability to not only coordinate and oversee the partnership but to champion partnership development at Neami would be beneficial.

If you have someone in mind to oversee or coordinate the partnership, and they would benefit from coaching and mentoring, Health Justice Australia offers a partnership coaching program, as well as a partnership development program. This can be bespoke designed to equip participants with the tools and strategies needed to scope and build effective partnerships. Participants then benefit from having access to the peer network with whom they undertook the program, as well as the national network of HJP practitioners. And if you need an independent broker, Health Justice Australia’s place and role in the legal assistance sector can be useful. We have a detailed understanding of how the legal service system operates, the language it uses, and have trusted relationships with a diverse network of agencies across the country. When working with a service ecosystem outside the legal assistance sector or seeking to address challenges that do not align with a broader social determinants framework, it would be beneficial to consider what agencies hold a similar role and standing as Health Justice Australia.



Step 9

Agree on the activities of the health justice partnership

Now that you have built a strong partnership foundation for the HJP, you will be in the best position to explore and agree on the activities of the HJP – what you will do together. The client needs, practitioner capability and local context should determine what the right activities are for the individual HJP service. To give you a starting place, our research shows that the following activities are common across many HJPs:

- Referral pathways
- Interdisciplinary training
- Secondary consultation
- Shared care coordination
- Shared monitoring and evaluation
- Learning and evolving – reviewing how you are partnering

With the diversity of potential HJP activities in mind, consider the following questions to inform decisions about activities in your HJP:

- **How many consumers does your service serve?**
- **Do you think consumers would be interested in or ready for legal assistance provided in this setting? How many or what proportion?**

- **Are all Neami services provided on site or do (some) staff do outreach/support consumers to access other services?**
- **How would legal help fit with the other services provided by Neami at this site?**
- **Might consumers be worried about having lawyers on site?**

Organising a partnership meeting to begin a process of working through what you do together as a service can start with considering these questions:

- **Which activities listed above will your particular HJP implement? Are there any others that are not listed?**
- **How do you plan to explore each activity and make shared decisions about each activity?**
- **What internal (to the HJP) capabilities and resources do you have to support these activities?**
- **Do you need any extra, external support, resources or tools to support these activities?**

Do you have all you need to support the agreement and implementation of the HJP activities?

As you work through this step, and you identify all the internal capability and resources the partnership has, you can build your HJP Action Plan (see Appendix 6). Additionally, as you work through this step and identify you need more information on particular activities of HJP, Health Justice Australia has some resources that can help.

[See here for more information about secondary consultation.](#)

[See here for more information about monitoring and evaluation support.](#)

For learning and evolving see Step 10.

Health Justice Australia is here to help, with additional fee for service support such as legal needs assessment and partnership brokerage.

For more information about Health Justice Australia's tailored support, training programs and events and tutorials, [check out our website.](#)



Step 10

Maintaining and sustaining your health justice partnership

Maintaining and sustaining an effective HJP requires everyone to firstly, regularly check in and pay attention to how you work together, not just what you do, and secondly, to talk about, plan and prepare for inevitable change – changes in key staff, funding, your local community, or policies, just to name a few.

One way you can achieve these two important aspects of successful HJPs is by setting up processes from the beginning for how you plan to regularly review and talk about the way you are partnering and how you aim to manage inevitable change.

Reflecting on the way you partner in HJP can involve looking at your relationships (the connection between partners, shared clarity of roles), resources (what each partner contributes, what is needed to achieve your shared goals) and processes (your communication, how you make decisions, partnership governance structures, how you share information and how you collect data).

You can start with asking yourselves these questions as a partnership and delve deeper by using Health Justice Australia's [Reviewing the Way you Partner](#) resource:

- **To what extent do all partners feel they know each other's priorities when it comes to your shared patients/clients?**
- **To what extent is your shared problem that you identified at the start of the HJP still the same, or does it need to be revised considering the experience you have gained working in partnership together?**
- **To what extent are all partners satisfied with the partnership approach in achieving the shared goals?**
- **To what extent do all the partners believe they have the resources needed to achieve the partnership goals?**
- **To what extent have the activities you identified, and have undertaken since, helped you to achieve your shared goals?**
- **As a partnership, what are your strengths, areas for development and opportunities for alternative ways of working in partnership?**

Planning for inevitable change is essential to maintaining your HJP. Change comes in a number of forms, but can loosely be broken down into change to the partners, and change to the partnership. An example of change to the partners might include staff turnover, or change in their service model, which in turn can impact upon the partnership. Establishing good governance structures (see Step 8) will help to navigate these changes, as well as answering these questions in advance:

- **How will information about the partnership (including culture, values and agreed ways of working) be recorded for current and incoming staff to read?**
- **What succession planning is occurring in the form of mentoring, in case partnership leaders/managers/coordinators leave the role?**
- **How are you preparing for any change – increase or decrease – in funding that may occur in the near or long-term future?**
- **What government and policy relationships do you, or any of the partners, hold to remain up to date with any upcoming, relevant policy changes? And how is this information currently being communicated to the partnership?**

You can also use Health Justice Australia's [Managing Change](#) resource.

Do you have what you need to maintain and sustain the partnership?

If you use the questions listed above as talking points to help you identify strengths and areas for development in your partnership approach, and to prompt discussion about opportunities for alternative ways of working, this may be exactly what you need for your partnership. There are also a range of Health Justice Australia resources you can use to further explore what you need to maintain and sustain your HJP.

When a change happens to the partnership as a whole, for example, funding changes or referral pattern change, effective communication and planning will get you through. Developing a partnership change strategy which is right for your local context, resources and capacity is an important partnership activity. To develop this plan and prepare for change, you can ask yourselves the following questions:

- **How are you preparing for any change – increase or decrease – in funding that may occur in the near or long-term future?**
- **What government and policy relationships do you, or any of the partners, hold to remain up to date with any upcoming, relevant policy changes? And how is this information currently being communicated to the partnership?**

If at any point you're ready for a more structured review of your partnership, Health Justice Australia also has a tailored program, [Partnership Health Check](#), which offers a facilitated and in-depth process for reviewing your partnership. A bespoke 'how to manage and plan for change' session could also be provided as a fee for service offering.





Appendices

Appendix 1	Legal Health Check – types of issues lawyers can help with
Appendix 2	Guide to legal services
Appendix 3	Resource and contribution mapping tool
Appendix 4	Sample agenda for a meet and greet between organisations scoping a partnership
Appendix 5	Key tasks for staff managing a partnership
Appendix 6	HJP Action Plan

Legal Health Check – types of issues lawyers can help with

This legal health check is to help you identify legal issues that can worry people, which a community lawyer may be able to help with – tick the box if you think an area of legal need is relevant for the person you are supporting. Note that the examples listed below each heading are not a complete list of each type of issue.

Money issues

E.g., Unpaid fines or payday loans, being chased for money or having someone owe them money, trouble paying bills or receiving court documents, debt

Consumer

E.g., Being signed up for a product or service that they can't afford, not happy with the quality of the goods or services that they have paid for or being owed a refund

Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme

E.g., For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as Stolen Generations survivors. Support lodging an application or help with an application that has been rejected

Housing

E.g., Receiving a termination notice or a notice to attend a tribunal hearing, needing repairs done

Discrimination

E.g., Being treated unfairly because of a person's sex, race, age, religion, ability, family status or sexual orientation, when trying to access housing, education, work, or services

Employment

E.g., Losing a job or experiencing discrimination or harassment at work, not getting the right pay and/or conditions

Driving and traffic

E.g., Wanting to challenge a penalty, defend a matter or make submissions in court

Family

E.g., Separating or recently separated and needing advice about children, wanting to see children/grandchildren, or wanting to alter current co-parenting arrangements

Violence

E.g., Feeling afraid of someone at home or elsewhere, been a victim of a crime and needing advice about Victim Support, needing to apply for a Violence Order

Complaints

E.g., Complaint against police or a government department including health care, help accessing documents held by a government department

Guardianship and Power of Attorney

E.g., Needing help to understand a power of attorney or enduring guardianship, not being happy with a financial manager or guardian, being unsure of their responsibilities as a financial manager or guardian

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

E.g., NDIA rejecting an application to be a participant in the NDIS, appealing NDIA decisions re: funding or support required

Insurance and superannuation

E.g., Insurance claims and disputes – such as having claims rejected, getting access to superannuation

Other issues – please describe

Guide to legal services

Community-based legal services are organised by state and territory. To find more information about legal help in your area, see:

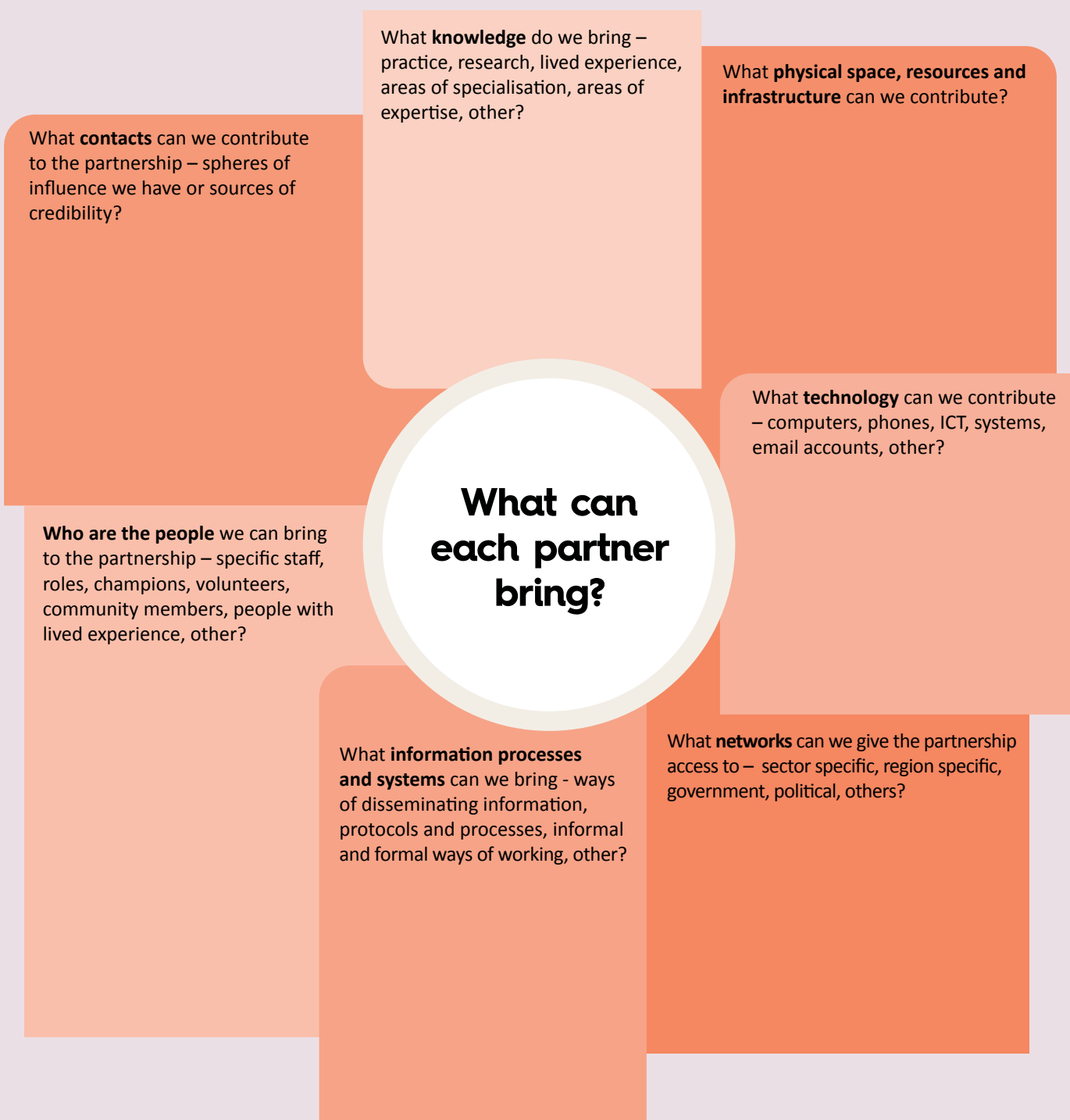
- Generalist community legal centres, that provide advice and assistance for a range of legal issues for people within a geographic area
- Specialist community legal services that provide help for certain issues (e.g. financial rights, welfare rights, housing and tenancy services), or certain groups (women's legal services, disability legal services, mental health legal services). These tend to be state or territory wide.
- Legal aid commissions in each state and territory, that provide criminal law assistance (including duty lawyer services in courts and representation), family law and civil law
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services that provide legal assistance in a culturally safe way and understand the issues most likely to be affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Family violence prevention legal services that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisations which mainly support women and children experiencing family violence.

Legal helplines in each state and territory

ACT	Legal Aid ACT 1300 654 314 Legal Advice Legal Aid ACT	NSW	Law Access NSW 1300 888 529, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excl public holidays). Home - Legal Aid NSW
NT	Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission 1800 019 343, 8:00am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday Legal Aid NT – Helpline (Chat)	QLD	Legal Aid Queensland 1300 651 188 Get legal help - Legal Aid Queensland
SA	Legal Services Commission of South Australia 1300 366 424 Legal Services Commission of South Australia	Tas	Tasmania Legal Aid Advice Service 1300 366 611, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday Home - Tasmania Legal Aid
Vic	Victoria Legal Aid 1300 792 387 (voice), 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday (excl public holidays) Legal Help Chat Victoria Legal Aid	WA	Legal Aid WA Infoline 1300 650 579 GET LEGAL HELP Legal Aid WA

Resource and contribution mapping tool

This table is designed to help you identify the unique resources that each partner can contribute.



Adapted from Tennyson, R. (2011) *The Partnering Toolbook: An essential guide to cross-sector partnering*, The Partnering Initiative, International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF).

Sample agenda for a meet and greet between organisations scoping a partnership

This sample agenda is designed to help different organisations get to know one another when they are thinking about partnering – also referred to as scoping partnership. You can amend this template and use it in whatever way you like, ensuring that all participants are given opportunity to share.

Time	Focus	Outcomes (the difference we want to make for participants)
5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Acknowledgement of Country Setting the scene – the purpose of the meeting, why are we here? 	Participants to feel welcome, connected and focussed on the purpose of the meeting.
20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions and check-in (meeting chair/host nominates first person, then that person nominates the next and so on). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name, pronouns, organisation (and site for Neami participants), and role. 1 sentence that describes “a day in the life” of participant’s role A brief statement on why participant is interested in health justice partnership or a brief statement on the most important thing the participant looks for in a partner. 	Participants gain a high-level understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each other and their roles, individual drivers for working in partnership, and what’s important to each participant when working in partnership.

20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion and question time. • If there are no questions, chair/host invites each agency to share at a high level (3 mins each): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the broad scope of their service, and • the key values and principles that underpin their services • Other participants note down any questions they have during these presentations. • Question and discussion time to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer questions arising from presentations, and • uncover what else participants want or need to know about each other. 	<p>Participants gain greater clarity about each other's scope of work, working contexts, and values that drive that work.</p>
15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap-up and close • Encourage participants to consider what they've come to know during the meeting and their appetite for building a working relationship over an agreed period of time. • Nominate a representative from each agency to be the lead/key contact – these contacts agree to reconnect at the end of the set period of time to discuss whether or not a working relationship will be progressed. 	<p>Participants are clear on what to expect will be the next steps.</p>

Key tasks for staff managing a partnership

These are suggested key tasks for the staff member managing the partnership development progress – please edit and change according to your need.

Identifying and understanding local need, and those with an interest in responding to that need.

Identifying potential partners and building local networks and relationships.

Working with external agencies to explore drivers, expectations and interests in adopting a partnership approach.

Mapping the ways in which each agency/service will resource and contribute to the partnership, and securing commitment for the partnership (for example, through the development of an MOU or other agreement).

Ongoing stakeholder engagement and maintaining relationships of trust between partnering services and practitioners.

Supporting partnering capability across our partnership, including identifying and building the necessary skills and mindsets of the people involved in the partnership; and the systems and processes that will enable effective collaboration within and across our organisations.

Engaging each service/agency in the planning of activities and outputs of the partnership (common HJP activity includes the establishment of warm referral pathways, the type of legal assistance being provided, interdisciplinary training, secondary consultation, care coordination, collaborative governance, and a shared policy or advocacy strategy).

Identifying and implementing what will be required to maintain the partnership, including establishing an evaluation framework, governance structure, communications protocols, a work plan, and reporting protocols.

HJP Action Plan

As a shared partnership activity, we encourage you to amend the below table to suit your collective needs and fill it out together.

What needs to be done (the action)?	Who is the person responsible?	When is the deadline?	Who needs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be informed?• be consulted?• participate?• decide/approve?	What are the steps required?	What resources are needed to achieve the action?
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------	---	------------------------------	--