



Florence

Florence Nursing Agency Operating Process Northern Ireland

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1. Introduction

Within our Operating Process, we explore the key aspects of how Florence operates as an organisation. By understanding and optimising these processes, Florence is able to work efficiently and effectively. By understanding the process and best practices of operating a healthcare agency, Florence can streamline their operations, promote safe practice, and drive sustainable growth with always adhering to the Nursing Agencies Minimum Standards.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this operating process document is to provide a comprehensive and standardised framework for the efficient and effective functioning of Florence. It aims to outline the essential procedures, guidelines, and responsibilities governing the agency's operations in Northern Ireland. By clearly defining the processes involved in managing nursing services, recruitment, client engagement, and regulatory compliance, this document seeks to ensure consistency, quality of service, and adherence to legal and industry standards. The guidelines herein are designed to facilitate seamless communication, enhance organisational transparency, and promote the delivery of exceptional nursing care, ultimately contributing to the success and reputation of Florence in Northern Ireland's healthcare landscape.

3. Scope

This process applies to all agency nurses applying to join the Florence platform and those applying to work centrally as part of the Florence Central team where they support the Northern Ireland Operation. This also applies to services that are using Florence to provide them with Agency Nurses.

4. Definitions, Roles and responsibilities

CEO (Chief Executive Officer) The CEO is ultimately responsible for the overall management and direction of the company. The CEO has the ultimate responsibility for setting the tone and culture for the organisation, ensuring that all employees understand the policy's importance, and overseeing its implementation.

Central Team – All direct employees of Florence that are not Agency Nurses but support the Northern Ireland Operation.

Agency Nurses – Any qualified nurse that works temp shifts for Florence.

Client – an organisation or service that utilises Florence’s services, for example, a care home or a hospital.

Chief Operating Officer (COO) has overall responsibility for risk management within the Company. The COO is the Responsible Person, registered with the RQIA and has overall responsibility for all matters in Northern Ireland.

Employees – everyone employed by Florence directly and indirectly, including Agency Nurses using the platform and the central team.

Head of People Operations & Governance is responsible for the oversight of the regulated activity in Florence. They will quality assure on a monthly basis.

VP of Operations is responsible for the oversight of all operational processes at Florence and organising monthly compliance reports and sharing with the Governance Team and Registered Manager.

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) – is the independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services.

Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy meets the needs of regulators in Northern Ireland.

Service User – a person who uses health and/or social care services. Sometimes known as a “patient”, “client” or “person in care”, roles form a cohesive team dedicated to the delivery of high-quality nursing services in Northern Ireland.

5. Customer Sign-Up

When a new service wishes to utilise Florence’s Agency Workers, an assessment of the customer needs is completed by the Registered Manager to ensure that Florence is able to meet their needs. We check that the service delivers regulated care in adult social care services, such as nursing or residential care homes, in line with our registration.

Once signed-up to the service, a customer needs assessment is completed which is more in-depth, considering factors such as whether a Registered Mental Health Nurse or Adult Nurse is required and then further drilling down to skills such as catheterisation, syringe driver, tracheostomy care, and Gastrostomy Tube feeding/care.

Once terms and rates have been agreed, the service is asked to sign a quote. Our terms and conditions and the Service User Guide are included within the quote that each service signs. This includes all definitions and the terms of use of the agency.

6. Recruitment Strategy

Florence is committed to recruiting the best people. Florence is dedicated to employing a high standard of Agency Nurses as well as ensuring we provide a safe service. Please refer to our full 'Recruitment Policy and Procedures' (FNI09) for further details.

7. Application Screening

Agency Nurses joining Florence must provide two valid references, showcasing their work experience and skills. Automated emails during onboarding prompt referees to complete the reference, with three reminders sent. Nurses require one year validated through references. One reference must be from the current employer, and older references require confirmation for accuracy. Alignment of references and work history is crucial, with the referee being more senior. The legitimacy of providing companies is verified, and non-compliant professionals are addressed when flagged by onboarding and compliance teams. A comprehensive, gap-free work history is essential, nurses require 12 months of nursing experience before joining Florence. Employment gaps require explanations, and professionals must align their resume with reference dates. Florence mandates a new AccessNI every three years, complemented by an annual AccessNI Self Declaration. Valid AccessNI checks are mandatory, covering protected adults and children. Professionals must obtain a new AccessNI with each employer, and without it, they will not be marked as compliant.

8. Interview and Selection

All screening and identity checks for Agency Nurses using Florence are conducted through the online platform Willo. Nurses undergo a further video/face-to-face interview with competency questions by the Registered Manager or delegate. Non-compliant. Agency Nurses must complete a comprehensive interview involving work experience, client groups, and specific questions, including manual handling. Nurses provide details on their NMC pin, qualifications, work experience, and undergo an identity check. Approval of the interview triggers the approval status in the onboarding tab.

9. Background Checks & References

9.1 References:

Agency Nurses joining the platform are required to submit two valid references showcasing their work experience, skills, and addressing potential issues. During onboarding, professionals input their referee's information, triggering an automated email requesting the necessary details. Referees receive three reminders to complete the reference before it expires. Nurses, registered with the NMC, require one year of nursing experience validated through references and work history. One reference must be from the nurse's current or most recent employer. If a reference is older than six months and states 'still working here,' confirmation is necessary to ensure accuracy. References and work history must align, with the referee being more senior than the care professional. The legitimacy of the providing company is cross-checked.

9.2 Resume/Work History:

To ensure our Agency Nurses meet Florence's experience standards, comprehensive work history is crucial, detailing their skills and previous roles. Nurses must provide an uninterrupted work history. Any employment gaps necessitate a written explanation, such as relocation or maternity leave. Additionally, professionals must complete and review the 'resume' section on their profile, ensuring alignment with reference dates for accuracy.

9.3 Access N.I.:

Florence mandates a new AccessNI every three years for Agency Nurses, complemented by an annual AccessNI Self Declaration on Florence Academy to ensure the certificate remains current. Valid AccessNI checks are essential, as individuals cannot engage in regulated work with protected groups in Northern Ireland without one. Agency Nurses must obtain a new

AccessNI with each employer, and it is imperative that the certificate covers both protected adults and children—this box must be checked when submitting an application. Without a Florence AccessNI, Agency Nurses will not be marked as compliant.

9.4 Overseas Police Checks:

Agency Nurses who have resided outside the UK for more than 6 months in the last 10 years must provide their Overseas Police Certificate (OPC). If they lack this document, Florence cannot facilitate the application; individuals must apply independently. To assist, a link (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>) guides them on obtaining the necessary OPC. Compliance marking is contingent on possessing this certificate if required. The first page of the OPC should explicitly state the absence of recorded convictions; any other information should be promptly flagged.

10. Quality Assurance

Florence's risk management and quality assurance framework align with the six pillars of clinical governance, outlining roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders to ensure service quality. Adverse incident reporting is crucial for evidence of risk management and collective learning across the organisation. The Director of Quality and Governance oversees incident management, sharing lessons learned for external regulator assurance. Duty of Candour fosters openness and transparency, acting within principles when engaging with affected parties. Complaints are locally managed, and feedback, both positive and negative, informs organisational improvements. A robust whistleblowing process, monitored by the The Director of Quality and Governance, allows confidential concerns to be raised, contributing to ongoing organisational reviews and enhancements.

The Registered Person will designate a qualified individual within the central team at Florence to oversee the quality of the service. This appointed person or delegate will conduct monthly on-site visits to the agency, generating a comprehensive monitoring report. The report will succinctly capture feedback from service users and/or their representatives regarding the service quality. Additionally, it will outline any measures undertaken by the Registered Person or the Registered Manager to ensure the nursing agency's adherence to RQIA minimum standards.

The Registered Manager will conduct monthly audits of automated systems to guarantee their proper functioning. Audits will encompass crucial aspects such as appropriately matching

Agency Nurses with suitable job postings and ensuring the validity of their training. Moreover, the Registered Manager will oversee the validity of registration with Professional Bodies, including the NMC, and confirm the active engagement of Agency Nurses with Florence, ensuring up-to-date Appraisals and Supervisions. Timely processing of ongoing incidents and communication with relevant external bodies will be closely monitored. All feedback from various sources will be systematically collected, recorded, and presented during regular Governance Team meetings, informing the continuous improvement plan.

11. Training and Compliance

During onboarding, all Agency Nurses using Florence must complete mandatory training courses, which must be CPD/CSTF accredited. If they lack the required training, they can access free courses on Florence Academy. Completed training documents are automatically saved on the workers profile, and the system places a hold if training expires. Refresher courses are mandatory upon training expiration, and Agency Nurses with expired documents cannot book shifts. Nurses in Northern Ireland must complete 14 mandatory training modules.. Additionally, all nurses and care assistants must complete a practical manual handling course, with a three-month grace period offered if the certificate is pending. Once training is completed, certificates are sent to the Florence recruitment team for approval.

Mandatory Training for Nurses
Moving and Handling
Infection Prevention and Control
First Aid
Fire Safety
Mental Capacity Act
Safeguarding Adults
Safeguarding Children
Understanding Learning Disabilities and ASD

Health and Safety
Basic Life Support
Information Governance
Medication Administration Theory
Medication Competency Assessment
Equality and Diversity

12. Skill Selection on Profile

Each service has the ability to assign specific skills to any shift that they post. At the initial needs assessment that is completed at the time of onboarding, a service will have allocated the skills that are required for their location. Skills can also be added or removed at any time.

When posting a shift on the platform, the service will also have the option to select either 'Essential' or 'Desirable' skills. When essential skills are added to a shift, only Agency Nurses that have those skills on their profile will be able to apply for that shift. When desirable shifts are added to a shift, if a Nurse does not have that skill, the service will receive a notification confirming they want to proceed with that Nurse. The process is the same for when the Florence Operations team are placing Agency Nurses into shifts directly.

When a Nurse would like to add a skill to their profile, they are able to select from our list of skills and upload any supporting documents. Agency Nurses are able to select skills from five categories, these include, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Clinical Knowledge, Clinical Skill and Management. Agency Nurses are able to submit experience based skills after answering a set of questions as well as providing any relevant documentation. Agency Nurses can also submit training based skills, given they have the correct documentation. All skills that are submitted are reviewed by our Compliance Team. They will verify that their experience is sufficient to have that skill and will ensure each certificate is valid. If the Nurse does not meet these standards, they will be declined for this skill.

13. Customer Needs Assessment

After the initial onboarding assessment of a service's needs, a customer needs assessment is then required to be completed before shifts can be posted out to Florence staff. This customer needs assessment ensures that Florence staff are aware of the needs of the service as well any requirements of the service.

Within the Customer Needs Assessment, the questions are as follows:

- How many units are within your service?
- Any nursing requirements?
- How many service users do you currently have?
- Where are your policies and emergency information kept?
- Any required qualifications?
- How many Nurses are required for your night shift?
- How many Nurses are required for your day shift?
- What type of medication system do you use?

Once the customer needs assessment is completed, all information is shown on each shift when a Registered Nurse applies to work that shift. All answers are then reviewed by the Florence Operations Team. This ensures Florence is confident that the Agency Nurses are fully prepared for what to expect on each shift as well as ensuring the Agency Nurse meets the requirements of the service. Florence will ask each service to complete a full review of their requirements annually and will be asked to complete a new customer needs assessment. However, if any changes need to be made, they can be done at any time.

14.Placement of Nurses

The service has the ability to post a shift along with any special requirements needed for that shift. The service also has the ability to accept or reject any Agency Nurse for a shift. When a Agency Nurse is applying for a shift, they will only have access to shifts that matches their skills, experience and qualifications.

Florence offers a feature to each service where they can either 'favourite' or 'block' an Agency Nurse from their location. When a Agency Nurse is a 'favourite' all shifts that are suitable for them will be sent to them first, giving them priority access to accept the shift. When a Agency

Nurse is blocked from a location, they will not have any access to any shifts posted for that service.

15. Ongoing Support

15.1 Nurse Revalidation

At Florence, we are committed to supporting our Registered Nurses and this includes supporting through the NMC Revalidation Process. Every 3 years, Registered Nurses must maintain their registration through this process to show that they have partook in continuous professional development and reflected on their practice. Part of the Revalidation Process is to have a Reflective Discussion with another Registered Nurse covering their five reflective accounts and how these relate to the NMC Code of Professional Conduct. We offer availability for these discussions and can also act as a confirmer, ensuring that the Registrant has met the Revalidation requirements. We ask that, if this support is required, that Florence are contacted with ample time before submission is due, all enquiries around revalidation are to be sent to the Governance Team, managed by the Head of Nursing and Governance. This will allow a virtual meeting to be scheduled with one of our senior registered nurses in the Governance Team. Prior to the meeting, we ask that registrants email all relevant, completed NMC Revalidation Template forms, so that the nurse conducting your discussion/confirmation, has time to review and ensure all necessary components are completed. Once the discussion has taken place, and the confirmer is confident Revalidation requirements have been met, they will sign the Confirmation Form and send this via email to the Registrant for submission. When the NMC has received this, the confirmer receives an email receipt.

15.2 Incident Management Support

When an incident is raised with Florence (e.g. clinical incident, medication errors, behaviour issues), we work with Agency Nurses and services, e.g. care homes or hospitals, to conduct a fair investigation with the aim of resolution, supporting the care professional through each stage of the process.

If a Florence Agency Worker is involved in an incident, or is a witness to an incident, the service submits an incident form to the Florence Governance Team. The Governance Team then asks

the service for further details regarding the incident and any evidence that may implicate the Florence care professional in the incident. Once this has been received and there is evidence to suggest an error or omission has been made, the care professional is contacted to provide a statement of facts and reflection. In some cases, remedial training is appropriate and the care professional will be signposted to the relevant course(s) to take on Florence Academy. Where there is no relevant remedial training, a professional discussion will be held with the care professional and a member of the Governance Team. If the care professional is found to have breached contractual obligations or their actions are that of misconduct, a disciplinary route will be followed. If the care professional is involved in similar incidents and no change in practice/conduct is seen, Florence reserves the right to remove them from the Florence Platform.

15.3 Appraisals and Supervisions

Florence is regulated by the RQIA, and as such have requirements to ensure our registered nurses are supported through means of Supervisions and Appraisals.

The Registered Manager for Northern Ireland will have a record of each registered nurse and when they were made fully compliant on the Florence Platform. Every six months, they will be alerted to who is due to attend for a Supervision session. An email will be sent to those due to attend, with the link to "Calendly". This is linked to the Registered Manager's work calendar, and they will have populated this with available dates and times for the sessions to run. The Registered Nurse can then choose from this list a date/time that is suitable and they will receive a confirmation email with a link to attend a "googlemeet" video call. Email reminders are automatically sent out 24-48 hours prior to the session. To attend the session, the link included in the confirmation email should be clicked. The session will be carried out in accordance with the Supervision Policy and Procedures Northern Ireland (FNI23). A summary document will be emailed to the participants after the session is completed. This can be used towards participatory CPD for NMC Revalidation.

As well as being alerted to who is due to attend a Supervision session, the Registered Manager will also be alerted to those who are due to attend a mandatory annual Appraisal. Much like the process for Supervision, those who are due to attend will receive an email with a link to "Calendly" and can choose a time slot suitable. A confirmation email will be received with the "googlemeet" video link, and reminder emails will be sent 24-48 hours prior to the event. This meeting will focus on the Agency Nurses personal experience working for Florence, positive feedback, suggestions for improvement and if they have any professional goals that Florence

can help achieve. A summary document will be emailed to the participant after the event and this can be used as participatory CPD for NMC Revalidation.

The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with the mandatory requirements for supervision and appraisal of Agency Nurses.

15.4 Florence Academy

During the onboarding process, prospective Florence Agency Nurses will be given access to Florence Academy. During this stage, they must complete the mandatory training (please see table above) before they will be made fully compliant and allowed to apply for and undertake shifts.

When training is due to expire, a notification will appear on the home screen of the care professional's Florence App. This allows ample time for the training to be updated. Should the training not be updated in this time period, it will expire and the care professional will not be able to book shifts until it is updated.

All Florence employees have access to all training courses available on Florence Academy, not just the mandatory courses for their employment. This can be used as a source of CPD.

16. Continuous Improvement and Monitoring

At Florence, our commitment to exceeding client and care professional expectations is ingrained in our ethos of providing quality services and continuous improvement. Central to this commitment is our Risk Management and Quality Assurance Strategy, aligning with the six pillars of clinical governance and emphasising proactive risk management.

- The process begins with the establishment of a culture of quality within our teams, fostering a commitment to delivering exceptional service. Our risk management and quality assurance approach is informed by the widely recognised six pillars of clinical governance, providing a robust framework for monitoring and assurance, similar to those utilised in the NHS.
- This strategy applies to all staff, including directly employed, agency staff, and contractors engaged in work on behalf of Florence in Northern Ireland. The leadership

team assumes responsibility for ensuring that all employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities in implementing the strategy.

- In terms of procedures, our approach is comprehensive. Adverse incidents are reported and investigated, providing valuable insights for risk reduction and service improvement. The Duty of Candour underscores a culture of openness, honesty, and transparency. Complaints and compliments are managed locally, with themes raised at organisational meetings for continuous improvement.
- Whistleblowing processes ensure confidentiality for those raising concerns. The risk management framework takes a holistic approach, integrating all aspects of risk, including clinical, non-clinical, strategic, organisational, and financial considerations. Induction training for all staff includes an introduction to the principles of the risk management strategy.
- Risk assessment involves identifying, assessing, responding, and escalating risks. A risk register categorises and prioritises risks, ensuring a consistent approach to risk decisions. The types of risks are classified into strategic and operational, each managed at different levels within the organisation.
- Regular reviews and audits form a crucial part of our process. Audits are prioritised based on themes and trends identified through adverse incidents, complaints, and external feedback. The effectiveness of policies is ensured through reviews and ratification by the Quality and Governance Director. Safety alerts are monitored, and staff is encouraged to participate in relevant research for continuous improvement.
- Monitoring and compliance involve annual reviews of strategic risk management effectiveness, audits, and external reviews by Internal Audit. The compliance team conducts an annual audit, reporting findings to the CEO and addressing any identified deficiencies. This robust process forms the backbone of our commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in service delivery at Florence.

17. Policy Changes/Version control

Date	Review of Changes
02/09/24	Registered manager name change
