FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE FOUNDATION

Letter of Commitment: Executive Perinatal Leadership Programme 2027

To: Professor Greta Westwood, CEO The Florence Nightingale Foundation

As Chief Executive and Chair of [**NHS Trust/Health Board**], we confirm our support for [**Name**], [Director of Midwifery / equivalent], and [**Name**], [Chief Nurse / Executive Director of Nursing], to join the 2027 Executive Perinatal Leadership Programme as a pair.

Recent maternity safety and culture reports from all four UK nations have again highlighted that the perinatal voice is not reaching the board clearly, and that safety information and advocacy for safe services can be filtered or diminished. We recognise that addressing this requires more than releasing two senior leaders to attend a development programme. It requires our board to make time to listen, strengthen joint accountability for perinatal safety, and support professional parity between midwifery and nursing leadership at board level.

We commit to:

1. **Protected time.** Releasing both members of the pair to participate in the full programme, including two residentials (in Scotland and London), virtual learning days, individual and pair coaching, and reverse mentoring.
2. **Nominal investment.** Covering travel costs for the residentials. The remainder of the programme is fully funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing.
3. **Sponsoring the Systems Transformation Lab project.** Providing visible executive sponsorship for the pair's chosen project, which will focus on advancing health equity and align with our existing perinatal improvement work. We will also help address barriers to its progress.
4. **Board time for pair learning and progress review.** Scheduling a board agenda item by November 2027 for the pair to present their progress, learning and recommendations. We will also consider how their joint advocacy is heard at board level during and beyond the programme.
5. **Fostering the pair relationship and professional parity.** Working to ensure that the Director of Midwifery (or equivalent) has a direct, unfiltered route to the board on maternity and neonatal safety. We will support the pair to develop a shared voice and to approach disagreement or conflict with courage when needed. We recognise that the programme will also support the Director of Midwifery's relationship with the Clinical Director, and the Chief Nurse / Executive Director of Nursing's relationship with the Medical Director/CMO, in their roles as joint SROs to the board for maternity safety. We recognise that the programme will examine power and system dynamics honestly, and we are open to what this may reveal about how our organisation works.
6. **Taking part in a 360-style survey, before and after the programme.** Participating ourselves as Chief Executive and Chair, and enabling participation by Non-Executive Directors, our board-level maternity safety champion(s), our Matrons,

and our Maternity and MNVP leads or equivalent service user representatives. Each rater will be asked to complete a 15-minute online questionnaire at two points:

- **Baseline:** during onboarding, between November 2026 and January 2027
- **Post-programme:** in November 2027, at the close of the programme

We understand that this feedback will explore:

1. how effectively advocacy for perinatal services reaches and influences the board
2. the quality and effectiveness of the relationship between the Chief Nurse / Executive Director of Nursing and the Director of Midwifery (or equivalent)
3. the pair's strengths and development needs, as seen by colleagues across the organisation and by the families we serve

We understand that the 360 feedback is developmental and forms part of the programme evaluation. It is not a performance management tool. We will respect the confidentiality arrangements set by the Florence Nightingale Foundation.

7. **Supporting evaluation and shared learning.** Contributing, where appropriate, to programme evaluation and shared learning, and to the development of a replicable model for executive pairs across the UK.
8. **Equity.** Supporting the programme's commitment to equity for both the families who use our services and our staff. This includes actively supporting leaders from Global Majority backgrounds to thrive at board level.

We will name a board-level contact who will be the Foundation's point of liaison for the duration of the programme: [**Name, role, email**].

Signed:

[**Name**], Chief Executive, [……NHS Trust/Health Board]
Date:

[**Name**], Chair, [……NHS Trust/Health Board]
Date: