

## **Business Continuity Actions for GP Practices to consider in advance of potential staff shortages due to Covid**

This document is intended for business continuity advice for GMS; PHA will provide advice on the specifics of isolation and testing advice.

Please consider the following actions in the event of your practice facing pressure due to staff needing to self-isolate or report sick due to Covid infection or close contact:

- Notify PHA Duty Room to get public health contact tracing and infection control advice at 0300 555 0119 or by email to: [PHA.DutyRoom@hscni.net](mailto:PHA.DutyRoom@hscni.net)
- Notify the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) via your Practice Support Manager who will escalate concerns to a Medical Adviser/ Senior Board officer. Local Integrated Office contact details via link <http://primarycare.hscni.net/contact-us/>
- Speak to your buddy practice as per your Business Continuity Plan to see if they can provide temporary assistance if possible.
- If buddy practice is in same building please consider buddying up with a second practice outside of your shared building as well.
- Notify your local GP Federation to enquire re access to local locum pool or other support if available etc. and in the event of any GP being unable to complete a scheduled Covid centre shift due to illness or self-isolation.
- Notify local community pharmacies to inform them of the current situation and of any expected or possible disruption including how amendments to script collection and if in extreme circumstances emergency supplies (NB: *this will not include controlled drugs schedules 2,3 or 4 which includes benzos and Z drugs*). Please find information on attached hyperlink.

[http://primarycare.hscni.net/download/homepage\\_news/GP -  
letter\\_Emergency-supply-service\\_060420.pdf](http://primarycare.hscni.net/download/homepage_news/GP_-_letter_Emergency-supply-service_060420.pdf)

[http://primarycare.hscni.net/download/DocLibrary/uncategorised/CommunityPharmacyEmergencySupplyPandemicService\\_GeneralPractice\\_InformationSheet\\_FINAL.pdf](http://primarycare.hscni.net/download/DocLibrary/uncategorised/CommunityPharmacyEmergencySupplyPandemicService_GeneralPractice_InformationSheet_FINAL.pdf)

- Remind patients re Minor Ailments / Pharmacy First services available from local pharmacies.

- Ensure all practice staff are trained on how to; change the message on practice answer machine, easily access details on how to contact phone company, update the practice website and other social media including, Facebook, Twitter etc. that may be used by the practice to communicate with their patients.
- Notify patients of current situation in practice via these methods in addition to placing a message on telephone, placing posters on door to the GP surgery / via practice website /via social media etc. Board officers can seek help with this via Boards communications dept.
- Update message as and when required on all practice telephone lines / prescription ordering line.
- Ensure all practice staff are aware of how and where to locate keys to the practice building, car park gates, prescription paper etc including password/codes to gain access.
- GPs and other clinical staff need to know what admin duties are priorities and need to be completed in the event of all admin staff requiring to self- isolate.
  - How are prescriptions collected from the practice?
  - How to change back up tape?
  - Where are scripts stored overnight?
- Notify local Health Care Trust in relation to Trust treatment room or other services within the practice building including Trust midwifery clinics/ED/GP OOHs/Minor Injuries.
- Palliative patients if no GP available to sign Kardex for syringe driver etc.
 

Can acute care at home team or community palliative care team do this?- Buddy practice might be able to do the script after telephone conversation with GP/consultant/district nurse .Consideration to be given to increasing the number of completed KIS to help patients across the system.
- If the practice purchased additional laptops at the beginning of the pandemic please check that these are up to date and ready to use with updated Antivirus and Windows 10 and other updates as required.
- Check that laptops can access the F5 gateway by opening the link <https://gpaccess.hscni.net>

- If you have a remote access account please take time prior to testing access by logging in and connecting to a PC in the practice. If you are unable to connect or require additional accounts setup please log a call with the BSO service desk. Each user requires an individual remote access account which is linked to the IP address of a specific PC in the practice.
- The practice to consider purchasing extra mobile phones for staff to use at home if they need to self-isolate.
- If a number of admin staff needs to self-isolate contact your telephone provider to see if it is possible to forward calls from the practice phone system to a mobile or a number of mobiles via an app etc.
- Consider purchasing of further laptops to facilitate admin team members to work from home in the event of an emergency. As above contact BSO to request additional accounts or configuration of existing accounts if required.
- Should the situation occur that there are no members of staff able to enter the surgery due to isolation restrictions an alternative arrangement as to how printed prescriptions are to be lifted from the printers in the practice for signature?
- INR/Dressings that require immediate or daily attention- speak to buddy practice to see if they are in a position to attend to the patients immediate treatment needs. A prior agreement should be in place to facilitate cover of immediate services arrangement.
- Staff should continue to pay attention to social & physical distancing measures, use hand sanitisers and wear face coverings in the workplace where it is not possible to keep a distance of at least 2 metres apart from other people. Face coverings should be worn when walking around the building, on stairways, hallways etc.
- As soon as it is possible please consider prioritising the following services: childhood vaccinations; flu clinics etc.

This list is not exhaustive, most solutions will come from the hard working GP Practices who continue to provide General Medical Services to their patients during this pandemic .If your practice can share an idea(s) that helped them cope with the pressure placed upon them due to staff needing to isolate or being off sick due to Covid infection which is not on this list please e mail them to [Finola.Powell@hscni.net](mailto:Finola.Powell@hscni.net) in order for this document to be updated and shared with all GP practices in Northern Ireland.