

Newcross "Swine Flu" Company Information

Staff Continuity

We realise that in the event of recent outbreaks that the deployment of additional healthcare staff will be vital in ensuring that Care Homes, Healthcare Establishments and Services can best meet the challenges that they will be faced with.

We have therefore the following strategies in place.

Office Staff

We have the ability to operate our services centrally from any of our branch network. We have in place at present 17 business offices, two of which are 24-hour call centres, one in Torquay and one in Bristol, where our call teams handle all out of hours telephone calls and can easily be amended to take calls during the day. However we feel that we would need to avoid large groups of people. So utilising our VOIP telephone system we can direct calls made to one office to any of the others; therefore if one office is affected by Swine Flu some or all calls can be taken by another office.

Our Montero web based staff allocation system allows our teams (subject to password and authenticated IP clearance) to view bookings from around the country.

This we believe would allow us to operate with a 40% reduction of office staff.

We have also planned that, in the event of a serious outbreak (where there is a quarantine or it is simply not prudent for office staff to leave home), we have a contingency plan where all key workers can log in at home (we have their internet details). 90% of our team has access to the internet at home, and provision would be made to give them secured access to enable them to work from home. In this instance, we would provide you with a direct "bat line", the number of which only you would have to ensure you always got through.

Agency staff

All agency staff have been issued with a comprehensive "Swine Flu" information and guidance document. – including HPA advice on how to recognise symptoms and ensure best practice with Infection Control. All our staff under go, yearly Infection control training. They are being updated on a regular basis by text and through our staff extranet.

Where ever possible we will provide staff, who have previously worked in the establishment (we will liaise with you). We can also ring fence staff to certain areas and block staff, who have known infections or have been in a high risk environment, from working in certain places. (The bookings staff will simply not be able to book staff identified as a risk onto a booking via the Montero booking system)

Working with other agencies

We have the ability to manage all other bookings from other agencies utilising our Montero booking system. This will stop duplication, maintain control of movement of staff and allow you to have a full picture of your current needs and help the staff planning process.

As a preventative measure against infection:

We are advising our clients to assist us in reducing the risk of cross infection by limiting exposure. For this reason – the Health Protection Agency Guidelines advise that staff are segregated in areas where an outbreak occurs. We are requesting that for one off placements – Agency staff are placed with non infected service users. If there is a requirement for a continuous run of days / more permanent cover – then we would advise our agency staff could in this instance be placed with those displaying symptoms. We would also expect that staff working with infected service users / patients are provided with adequate on site supply of protective equipment such as aprons/ gloves and masks.

We also request that you notify us as soon as any confirmed or suspected cases arise in your establishment – so that we may ensure any staff who could be pregnant or with underlying risk – can be advised before accepting the shift.

All agency and office staff who are displaying symptoms of Swine Flu – will be asked to remain at home, contact the national flu helpline (England) for a diagnosis and treatment, and not come to the office or work until clear. We will no longer be advising the Health Protection Agency of any cases where our staff have recently worked in a Care Home or Healthcare Establishment, but will do all we can to ensure you are informed of any subsequent cases from staff who have worked in your establishment. Staff in Scotland are currently being advised to contact NHS24 and follow the Scottish Executive Guidelines and Protocols.

The following protocols have been distributed to all staff to be implemented until further notice:

All branches have a supply of disposable tissues and a container of antibacterial spray, and Hand Gel for each work station in use.

At close of business each day staff instructed to use the antibacterial wipes to clean their work station. Wipe their key board, telephone key pad, handset and headset with the antibacterial wipes provided. If they change work station at any time they clean the work station they are vacating.

- Limit hand to hand contact. Post contact: sanitise hands with hand gel.
- All door handles to be cleaned daily at the close of business with antibacterial spray.
- If anyone sneezes or coughs you must put a clean disposable tissue to your mouth/nose.
- Dispose of dirty tissues immediately and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards and sanitize with the hand gel. This applies to all visitors to the office.
- Ensure that the office is well ventilated by opening a window.

Access to our local offices has been restricted to emergency requirements and interviews only. Staff have been advised to post or deliver timesheets through letterboxes to reduce any potential risk of spreading the infection.

Domiciliary Care

In addition to the above precautions – our Homecare Staff have all been issued with Kit Bags – which contain Gloves, Aprons, Antibacterial Hand Gel, Alarm and Circuit Breakers. Should it be necessary to provide them with masks we will also ensure a supply is available. In addition to this, Masks will be provided as necessary for any homecare or 1 to 1 clients we supply a service to. Service Users will be given a needs banding – so that in the event of serious service disruption, the most critical support can be delivered and prioritised.

All our service users, care homes, and healthcare establishments we supply are being contacted by letter with advice on our strategy and business plans during the Swine flu outbreak.

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