



Service Assurance Procedure

Pandemic Preparedness Procedure

Associated Documents	
Document Reference	Document Title
Procedures	
SA/MIM/OP/001	Major Incident Management Procedure
SA/BC/OP/001	Business Continuity Procedure
-	Business Continuity Plans
Guidance	
SA/MIM/OG/001	MIM Contact Sheet and Process on a Page
SA/MIM/OG/002	Major Incident Classification Matrix
Forms	
SA/MIM/OF/001	Incident Report Form
SA/MIM/OF/002	Decisions and Actions Log
SA/MIM/OF/003	Assigned actions form

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Introduction

Pandemic is regarded as the top risk on the UK Cabinet Office National Risk Register. NHS Property Services (NHSPS) recognises the importance of this and the potential impact a pandemic can have.

NHSPS is dedicated to effectively manage a pandemic situation whilst ensuring key services are still provided through our Major Incident Management (MIM) and Business Continuity (BC) procedures, processes and assessments.

This procedure identifies the arrangement NHSPS has in place for emergency preparedness, resilience and response (EPRR) to a pandemic. Internally, it should be read alongside other key guidance documents, risk assessments, method statements, training materials and any other relevant information provided by NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I) and Public Health England (PHE).

It is NHSPS intent to work with and assist NHS E&I during a pandemic crisis.

Scope

The purpose of this document of this document is to outline the:

- Roles and responsibilities of NHSPS before, during and after a pandemic.
- Pandemic specific command and control arrangements.
- Communication routes and information flow during a pandemic.
- Processes during pandemic planning and response.

Roles and Responsibilities

MIM Gold Command Team

It is the responsibility of the MIM Gold Command team to:

- Co-ordinate the pandemic with representatives from all directorates and regions.
- Assign appropriate actions to colleagues.
- Agree communications to be distributed.
- Liaise with NHSE&I as required.
- To appoint an Accountable Emergency Officer who is responsible for establishing an Incident Management team.

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Region Leads

It is the responsibility of the Region Lead to:

- Co-ordinate pandemic arrangements for their region.
- Represent their region on command calls.
- Assign local actions to colleagues.
- Communicate to colleagues on pandemic arrangements.

All directorates will be required to tailor activities to ensure we continue to provide BAU activities for as long as possible across the NHS estate and that all efforts are directed to continue to provide critical activities as the pandemic progresses. In particular, the following directorates have specific additional responsibilities:

Communications Department

It is the responsibility of the Communications department to:

- Monitor and feed any intelligence from the government or NHSE&I into the business.
- Attend relevant pandemic meetings.
- Represent their function.
- Distribute communications to colleagues and the wider public.

Human Resources (HR) Department

It is the responsibility of the HR department to:

- Attend relevant pandemic meetings.
- Represent their function.
- Assist in arranging overtime and agency cover for colleagues as required.

Asset Management

Asset Management will coordinate activity across the business to:

- Identify and assess available accommodation across the portfolio suitable for recommissioning to boost capacity.
- Work with ICSs/STPs to prioritise recommissioning activities.
- Coordinate activities across NHSPS supporting site recommissioning.
- Coordinate and respond to ad-hoc customer requests to support their pandemic response.
- Review existing capital programme and reprioritise/amend to adapt to meet immediate needs.

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All Directorates

It is the responsibility of each directorate to:

- Maintain their individual Business Continuity and Pandemic Plans.
- Manage the colleague staffing levels.
- Prioritise functions and services in their directorates.
- Attend relevant pandemic meetings.
- Assist with required pandemic arrangements.

General Considerations

In the event a pandemic is declared, the business will consider the following:

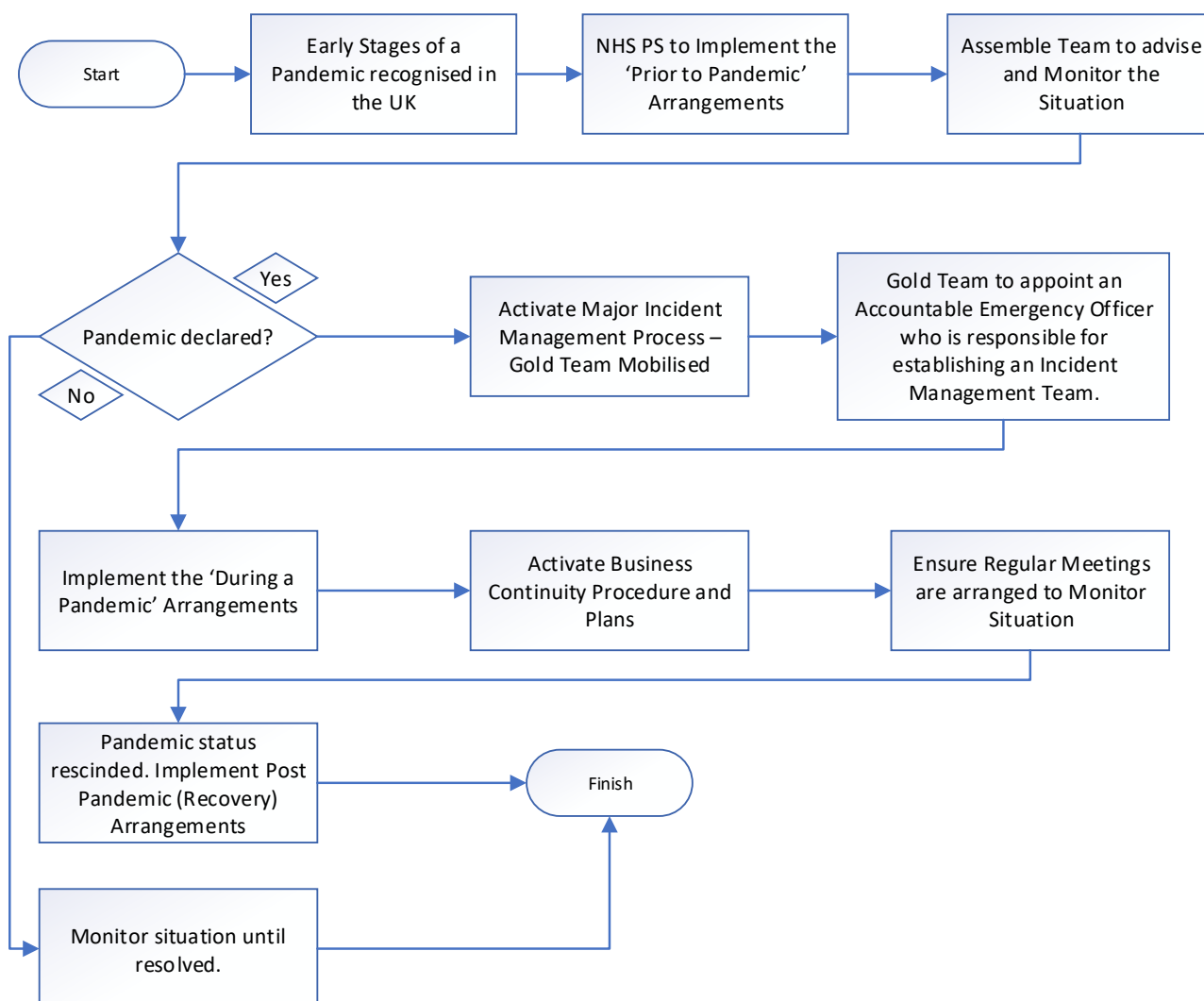
- Office based colleagues will be encouraged to work from home.
- Non-critical PPMs will be suspended to reduce potential exposure which will leave more colleagues fit and well to attend emergencies.
- Colleagues who have potentially been exposed will be required to self-isolate at home.
- Non-essential travel arrangements will be suspended.
- Colleagues will be encouraged to utilise electronic meeting resources rather than meet face to face.
- Large central events will be postponed e.g. annual conference, training events.
- Communications on personal hygiene to be distributed.
- Hygiene products e.g. hand sanitisers to be made available as long as stocks last and new supplies can be obtained. Priority will be given to clinical areas.
- Any colleagues who feel unwell should not attend work, self-isolate and inform their manager asap.
- Suspend non-essential cleaning e.g. office cleaning if insufficient colleagues are unavailable.

Major Incident Management and Business Continuity Procedures and Processes

In the event of a potential and confirmed pandemic, the below process flow should be followed in conjunction with the MIM and BC Procedures.

- SA/MIM/OP/001 - Major Incident Management Procedure
- SA/BC/OP/001 - Business Continuity Procedure

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Risk Assessments, Method Statements and Training

The appropriate risk assessments, method statements and training materials are mandatory for colleagues who are required to conduct cleaning activities. These must be read and understood to ensure competency.

The above documents should be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate for the current pandemic.

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Planning Assumptions

Pandemic planning in the UK is based on an assessment of the 'reasonable worst case' derived from experience and a mathematical analysis of seasonal and previous pandemics. The national planning assumptions are described in detail in the NHS England - UK Pandemic Preparedness Strategy, which in summary indicates that:

- Up to 50% of the population could experience symptoms of pandemic during one or more pandemic wave.
- The pandemic could last approximately 15 weeks.
- The nature and severity of the symptoms would vary from person to person depending on age and health status.

Analysis of previous pandemics suggests that we should plan for up to 2.5% of those with symptoms dying as a result of a pandemic, assuming no effective treatment was available.

Although all parts of society will be affected by a pandemic, NHSPS is likely to be particularly impacted due to an increase in demand for services coupled with a potential reduction in staffing (due to a variety of factors including personal illness and caring responsibilities) and possible supply chain disruptions.

Colleague Staffing Levels

In a pandemic crisis, the appropriate number of colleagues need to be maintained to ensure that business continuity can be achieved. In the event of high absenteeism, the following approach should be adopted:

- Colleagues will be asked to cover any absenteeism in the form of overtime.
- Colleagues will be asked to work in other functions/other locations depending on the business's requirements and if colleagues are appropriately trained.
- Services/activities will be contracted out to appointed contractors as required.
- Where this is not possible/or if additional colleagues are required, Human Resources is able to utilise 'Manpower Agency' who are able to provide a wide range of skilled individuals. Manpower is a national organisation and can accommodate all areas of the UK.
- NHSPS will adopt a risk-based approach where services and activities will be prioritised accordingly.
- To cancel any planned annual leave arrangements and instigate a temporary annual leave ban as required.

The number of colleagues required to provide each service is identified in each directorate, regional and local Business Continuity Plans.

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Segregation of Frontline Colleagues

During a pandemic, operational frontline colleagues/service teams (Domestic Assistants, Maintenance, Porters, Receptionist etc.) should be segregated as much as possible. This is to delay or avoid cross contamination/further spread of the pandemic to crucial teams required to keep services running alongside NHS clinical colleagues.

Prioritisation of Key Services and Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPMs)

During a pandemic crisis, colleague absenteeism levels are likely to rise which could potentially impact the services NHSPS provides. In the event of insufficient availability of colleagues and external contractors, non-vital/low risk services and maintenance activities should be reduced or suspended. Vital/high risk services and maintenance activities should be prioritised by:

- Statutory/legal requirements, such as PPMs and servicing of key medical equipment and clinical facilities.
- Services directly associated with patient care.
- Cleaning of clinical areas.
- The safe storage and disposal of infectious, clinical waste.

Further information on the prioritisation of key services is listed in each directorate, regional and site level Business Continuity Plans.

Business Continuity Assessments

NHSPS has conducted various Business Continuity Assessment on the services it provides. This assessment includes:

- The types of services it provides and the impact a pandemic can have on these services.
- The colleague levels required to maintain these services.
- Contingency measures required to maintain these services.
- Prioritisation of what key services must be maintained in the event of a pandemic.
- Key considerations which need to be undertaken during a pandemic.

Communication

Robust communications are an important part of the response to a pandemic. During a pandemic NHSPS will ensure that:

- Regular communications on the pandemic are distributed to keep all colleagues well informed.

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- Communicate regularly with its Customers, other trusts and NHSE&I.

Site Closure due to Pandemic

If a site has been closed due to quarantine/containment measures, then this must be reported to the helpdesk who will inform key/designated individuals in the business. Services, PPMs, deliveries etc. will then be suspended until further notice.

Stockpiling of Key Items, Personal Protective Equipment and Other Required Equipment

The below items must be stockpiled and readily available in each region. These include:

- Infectious clinical waste consumables suitable for all category class of viruses.
- Hygiene products such as hand sanitisers.
- Cleaning chemicals and equipment.
- Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, masks and coveralls.

Further information on key items and equipment is listed in each directorate, regional and site level Business Continuity Plans.

Prior to a Pandemic

NHSPS is dedicated to being adequately prepared for a pandemic crisis. The below table outlines points which should be considered at a regional and national level prior to a pandemic being declared. Pragmatic decisions should be taken to identify where, how and by whom these are delivered to ensure preparedness. This should not be seen as an exhaustive list as other requirements may be identified.

	Regional	National
Appoint an Accountable Emergency Officer who is responsible for establishing an Incident Management team.		ü
Identify a Pandemic Lead to coordinate and oversee planning arrangements	ü	
Assemble appropriate teams to monitor the situation and advise as required.	ü	ü
Agree emergency corporate governance framework		ü
Review the Major Incident Management and Business Continuity Procedures	ü	ü
Review Business Continuity Plans that are appropriate to a pandemic	ü	ü

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Monitor and evaluate risks and impacts, identifying and mitigating gaps where possible	ü	ü
Identify key services which must be covered during a pandemic crisis	ü	ü
Communicate with tenants to plan, address specific issues, ensure contingency measures are in place, and share good practice	ü	
Communicate with NHSE&I to identify any specific requirements and ensure pandemic preparedness is prepared		ü
Ensure arrangements are in place to ensure enough colleagues are available to cover key services and assist other departments, tenants and trusts	ü	ü
Monitor the national and international situation	ü	ü
Prepare and distribute regular communications to colleagues and other Trusts		ü
Communicate with local colleagues and teams	ü	ü
Ensure that all Business Continuity plans are readily available from rationalised suppliers		ü
Communicate with rationalised suppliers and identify any 'at risk' services		ü
Identify any single points of failure which could disrupt services	ü	ü
Check stockpile levels to ensure that enough items and equipment are available	ü	ü
Setup a specific telephone number for a pandemic helpline		ü

During a Pandemic

During a pandemic, one of the key aspects will be a need to understand the impact on operational capacity across the business. The below should be implemented during a pandemic crisis.

	Regional	National
Assemble the Gold (Major Incident Management) Command team with appropriate representation to lead, command, control and coordinate the situation		ü
Agree the appropriate response level to the declaration of a pandemic and communicate to colleagues and tenants		ü
Check stockpile levels to ensure that enough items and equipment are available	ü	ü
Oversee PPE stock management and distribution	ü	ü
Co-ordinate with NHSE&I and assist as required		ü
Represent NHSPS at key meetings with NHSE&I	ü	ü

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Activate all Business Continuity Plans as required	ü	ü
Continue to monitor the national and international situation	ü	ü
Monitor colleague absence/sickness levels and identify areas which are suffering from high absenteeism	ü	ü
Communicate with approved agencies and identify potential areas which will require cover	ü	ü
Advise colleagues to work from home when possible	ü	ü
Communicate with rationalised suppliers and identify any 'at risk' services		ü
Distribute regular communications to colleagues and other Trusts		ü
Activate pandemic helpline		ü
Prioritise key services as required	ü	ü

Post Pandemic (Recovery)

Alongside planning for and delivering a pandemic response, it is essential that the recovery phase is also planned and managed. This will help ensure services are restored in the most appropriate way to normalise the system. Additionally, it is essential that plans are maintained after it appears the pandemic has abated if there is a further wave of disease.

	Regional	National
Assess the impact caused by the pandemic. Consult with other relevant organisations		ü
Review staffing arrangements/levels	ü	ü
Acknowledge staff contributions and review welfare arrangements, providing support as necessary	ü	ü
In collaboration with NHSE&I, ensure a staged recovery as soon as possible		ü
Continue to prioritise key services and maintenance activities until normality can be restored	ü	ü
Review national, regional and local resources and capabilities	ü	ü
Replenish depleted stock levels of key Items, Personal Protective Equipment and other required equipment	ü	ü
Review and report on pandemic response arrangements and update to reflect lessons identified	ü	ü
Complete appropriate Business Continuity Reporting documentation		ü
Develop a lessons learned process	ü	ü
Review Business Continuity Plans	ü	ü

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