

COVID-19 Contingency Planning



Practical ways for your contingency plan to succeed

A COVID-19 contingency plan will help you plan to maintain your service in direct response to issues presented by the pandemic.

Your COVID-19 Contingency Plan should be a live document that helps you to respond to the evolving pandemic. To ensure that the plan is shaped, shared and embraced across your service, please follow these recommendations.

Developing your COVID-19 Contingency Plan

Build on existing examples	<p>If you are creating a COVID-19 Contingency Plan for the first time, use online templates and guidance to help or request to see examples from other care services you are connected to.</p> <p>Whilst templates are helpful and can save time, you should tailor your plan to suit your particular organisation and should cover all the important themes relevant to your particular context.</p> <p>If you are a new service and do not have plans in place yet, these templates may be useful:</p> <p>COVID-19 Contingency Plans Business Continuity Plans</p>
Risk assess your service in relation to COVID-19	<p>Risk assessments are a key part of identifying what needs to be covered in your COVID-19 Contingency Plan and start to identify the mitigations needed to protect the people you support, staff and service.</p> <p>Your risk assessments take into consideration a wide range of issues related to COVID -19 including: Impact of an outbreak in your home or work environment; people and staff at higher risk; impact on supply chain shortages if lock-downs occur.</p> <p>For a basic Risk Assessment template, use these versions and examples from the Health and Safety Executive. The HSE also produce a COVID-19 specific risk assessment here and for focusing on staffing risks, GOV UK risk reduction framework is helpful.</p>

<p>Avoid duplication with your Business Continuity Plan</p>	<p>Your Business Continuity Plan will have a much broader focus than the Contingency Plan. In the development of your COVID-19 Contingency Plan, review relevant information from your Business Continuity Plan and cross-reference.</p> <p>It is likely that there will be content that overlaps between the two plans but with clear referencing, you do not need to repeat existing plans and processes.</p>
<p>Map COVID-19 specific issues</p>	<p>Clearly identify and focus on COVID specific issues. Ensure the plan covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aims and objectives of your plan ■ Information, guidance and the latest regulations ■ Clarity on COVID-19, including how to protect your service ■ People specific issues – how to keep people your support safe and maintain quality of care ■ Staff specific issues – how to keep staff safe and ensure sustainability of care ■ Outbreak management, isolation, and admissions ■ Preventative measures, including cleaning and food safety ■ Visiting procedures (residential) ■ IT, Digital technologies, data security and connectivity ■ Suppliers – including impact on medicines, food, PPE etc. ■ Financial – including associated funding streams etc. ■ Actions taken – keep a clear record of your evolving plan ■ Learn from mistakes – clearly document accidents and issues and how these were acted upon <p>Prioritise your contingency plan actions based on likelihood and impact.</p> <p>The QCS The Complete Winter Planning Toolkit can help think through associated issues.</p>
<p>Co-produce your plan</p>	<p>As with the development of anything related to your service, involving the people you support in the shaping of plans will help identify solutions that best meet their needs.</p> <p>Where possible, involve family and others in shaping your plan. Drawing on their ideas ensures buy in for different ways of working that will help keep the people you support safe.</p>
<p>Involve staff from the start</p>	<p>Involve representatives from your staff team from the beginning stages of shaping your Contingency Plan. Their experience will help strengthen all parts of the plan and especially those focused around the people you support and the workforce.</p>
<p>Draw on the expertise on others</p>	<p>Draw on the expertise from other managers. Establish links with other services, share and compare your ideas around COVID-19 Contingency Planning, helping mitigate risks together.</p>

Prioritise your actions	Give each action in your plan a deadline – high likelihood events with big impacts should be planned first. Events that are less likely to happen, or have smaller impact, can be completed later.
Be realistic of the level of information to include	<p>Your COVID-19 Contingency Plan should be a practical resource that is easily accessible.</p> <p>The length will vary depending on the service, but it is important that it is a usable tool so including signposting to more detailed processes and procedures may be a practical way of keeping the document to a manageable length.</p>
Take ownership	<p>Identify staff across your service that can act as lead or delegate for different parts of your COVID-19 Contingency Plan. Ensure that you have identified staff who can take the lead if others become ill.</p> <p>If a multi-site service where management and governance is often centralised, look to see how local management can be further empowered or responsibilities shared between locations.</p>

Sharing your COVID-19 Contingency Plan

Sharing with staff	<p>Whilst you will have involved some staff in the developing and testing of the plan, ensuring all other staff are aware and understand it is equally important.</p> <p>Depending on your size and service, you may adopt different ways to brief staff about the plan (including team meetings, virtual events, internal newsletters, 1-2-1, employee representative forums etc.)</p> <p>Provide opportunities to check their understanding and respond to staff questions about the plan. You may wish to accompany it within an FAQ or consider further revisions if parts of the plan are not easily understood.</p>
Sharing publicly	<p>Some providers choose to share their COVID-19 Contingency Plan more widely from publishing on their website to sharing with commissioners, the people they support and third parties.</p> <p>If you choose to share publicly, please ensure that the original plan does not include any sensitive data or consider producing public facing versions.</p> <p>If you have multiple stakeholders and other interested parties that would want to know about the latest changes to your plan, consider hosting a virtual stakeholder event.</p> <p>Many virtual platforms provide the opportunity to record events so you can share these with those not able to attend, alongside a version of your plan.</p>

<p>Share with people and their families</p>	<p>You may choose to share a version of your COVID-19 contingency plan that is relevant to all issues that the people you support and their families may be concerned about.</p> <p>Consider whether multiple formats of this may be required to meet people's communication needs and ensure the plan is clearly understood and alleviates fears.</p>
<p>Share with third parties</p>	<p>Local Authorities and some Clinical Commissioning Groups may expect services to share their COVID-19 Contingency Plan (and wider Business Continuity Plan). You also may wish to share your plan with others, including healthcare specialists, other care services etc.</p>
<p>Be clear how you want the plan to be acted upon</p>	<p>Regardless of the audience you are sharing your COVID-19 Contingency Plan with, be clear in your communications on how you want them to act upon it.</p> <p>Whether you are seeking confirmation of receipt, further feedback, or other actions (for example staff meeting discussions), highlight these when originally sharing.</p>
<p>Keep sharing the latest version</p>	<p>Your COVID-19 Contingency Plan is a live document and will continue to be updated. Have procedures in place to ensure the latest version is circulated.</p> <p>Where you have multiple versions of your plan, ensure any updates are applied where relevant across all and you alert others to the latest version.</p>

Revising your COVID-19 Contingency Plan

<p>Keep it under review</p>	<p>Whilst you will have involved some staff in the developing and testing of the plan, ensuring all other staff are aware and understand it is equally important.</p> <p>Depending on your size and service, you may adopt different ways to brief staff about the plan (including team meetings, virtual events, internal newsletters, 1-2-1, employee representative forums etc.)</p> <p>Provide opportunities to check their understanding and respond to staff questions about the plan. You may wish to accompany it with a FAQ or consider further revisions if parts of the plan are not easily understood.</p>
<p>Learn from mistakes</p>	<p>Accept that not everything response to the pandemic, not everything will be perfect. Record issues and keep a log of incidents and accidents to both avoid reoccurrence and strengthen future contingency planning.</p>

<p>Formal and ad-hoc review points</p>	<p>Consider which updates need to be consulted upon and widely communicated. Minor changes to your COVID-19 Contingency Plan may not require this, but significant revisions to operational issues will.</p> <p>Involving a care team of managers, staff and the people you support, representatives can help determine how changes to the plan are introduced and communicated.</p>
<p>Record the actions you take</p>	<p>Clearly documenting and dating the actions that were taken is important to evidence what changes have been introduced, particularly when updating people, staff, family, CQC, CCG and Local Authorities.</p>

Further information and advice about Contingency Planning is available from www.skillsforcare.org.uk/COVID-19webinars