Alliance Medical's approach to being Covid-Secure - July 2020

Introduction

Alliance Medical's top priority is to ensure the safety of our patients, staff, suppliers and visitors.

Alliance Medical have been following Public Health England (PHE) advice and guidance to ensure that we have robust measures and resources in place to maintain the highest levels of safety and care for our staff, patients and visitors. Providing a clean and safe environment for healthcare is a key priority for Alliance Medical and all healthcare providers and is part of the fundamental standards for health care provision set out in regulations under the Health and Social Care Act 2008, which recognises the role of cleaning in minimising the risk to patients from healthcare associated infections.

In response to the government's guidelines published in early May, Alliance Medical introduced a comprehensive process to make sure all our facilities were Covid-Secure. A risk based approach was followed whereby every Alliance Medical facility, clinical and non-clinical, was assessed on the basis of the following 7 themes:

1. Who should go to work
2. Social distancing at work
3. Managing your customers, visitors and contractors
4. Clean environment
5. PPE and face coverings
6. Workforce management
7. Inbound and outbound goods

The process that was followed is outlined in the process diagram below.
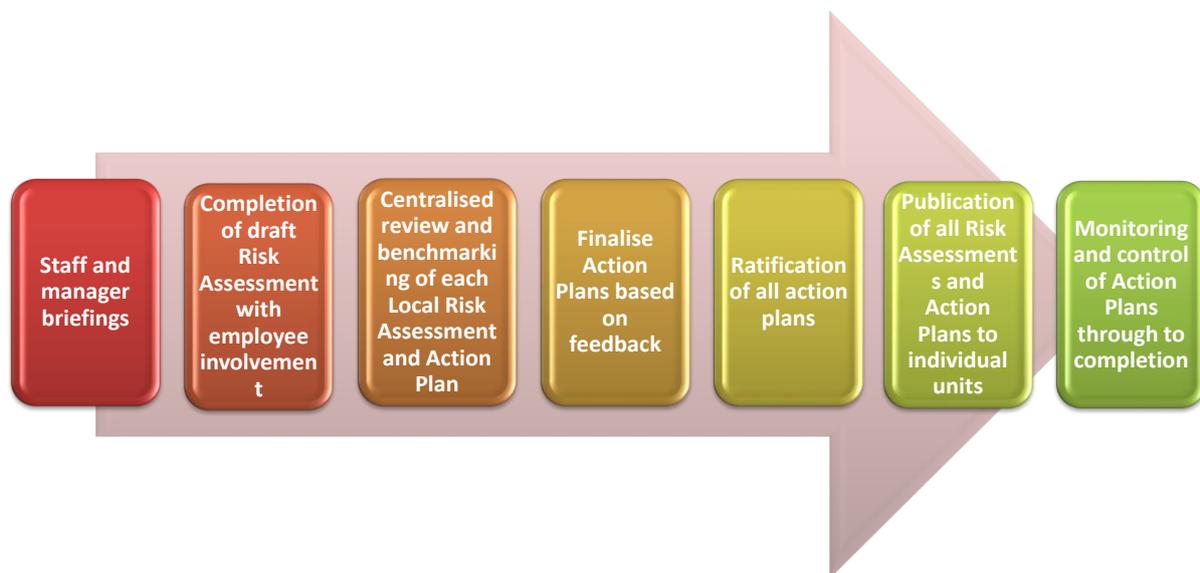
All Risk Assessments and Action Plans were formulated with appropriate employee involvement and the documents were published to the wider organisation. A Covid-Secure Certificate was issued by the Quality and Risk Directorate for public display.

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The 7 Themes

Whilst each individual unit has its own Risk Assessment and Action Plan that is specific to that location, a risk based approach was followed whereby every Alliance Medical facility, clinical and non-clinical, was assessed on the basis of the following 7 themes:

Section 1 Who Should Go to Work

Everyone should work from home, unless they cannot work from home.

	Alliance Medical's Response
1.1: That everyone should work from home, unless they cannot work from home	• All roles were reviewed and staff asked to work from home where the role allows. • Home risk assessments completed for these staff and appropriate equipment and managerial support provided.
1.2: Protecting people who are at higher risk	• Occupational Health assessments undertaken for all staff in the shielding and vulnerable categories and being managed in accordance with PHE guidance.
1.3: People who need to Self-Isolate	• Staff were advised to stay at home where they were deemed clinically vulnerable or needed to shield. • Virtual working hubs/collaboratives were created to enable remote working where possible. • Internal process introduced to track any staff members that needed to isolate because of symptoms
1.4: Equality in the Workplace	• Risk assessments completed for all BAME staff and other individual staff members with protected characteristics. • Appropriate protective measures, such as increased PPE levels introduced.

Section 2: Social distancing at work (Alliance Medical Staff)

To maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing AML sites (Staff) while in work and when travelling between sites.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, consider whether that activity needs to continue to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff, patients and others.

	Alliance Medical's Response
2.1 Coming to and Leaving the AML facility as a Patient, Worker, Visitor or Other	• Appointment times adapted to reduce patient to patient contact. • Shift patterns adapted to reduce staff contact. • Patient guidance issued to limit numbers of people arriving in the unit at the same time. • Issued PPE field kits to all roving non-clinical staff.

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	• Revised uniform changing policy introduced to limit cross-contamination between home and work environments. • Additional lockers provided for staff to support the uniform changing policy. • Staff encouraged to follow government guidelines on travelling and public transport (including use of face coverings). • Patients asked to travel alone where possible to attend appointments. • Patient, staff and visitor temperature checks on arrival introduced. • Pre-screening questions introduced to ensure patients are fit and well before they attend.
2.2 Moving around sites.	• Floor markings introduced to encourage social distancing. • Freestanding hand sanitisation units positioned at reception. • Patient advice posters and banners introduced in waiting areas. • One-way flow systems introduced. • Where applicable, new rules introduced in shared/public spaces. • Maximum occupancy levels determined for each room.
2.3: Workplaces and workstations	• Installed see through screens in all reception areas. • Reviewed positioning of workstations and repositioned where possible to enable social distancing. • Hot desks allocated to individual use.
2.4 Meetings	• All face to face meetings and training limited. • Vast majority of meetings moved to online web conferences. • Where face to face meetings/training is required, relevant social distancing measures and sanitising stations introduced. • Personal stationery introduced. • Controls introduced to limit visitor numbers to head office.
2.5 Common areas	• Protocols agreed with host NHS Trusts and landlords. • Break times staggered and outside breaks encouraged. • Number of chairs reduced in common waiting rooms. • All unnecessary items removed from reception areas.
2.6 Accidents, security and other incidents	• Covid-19 resuscitation procedure and PPE introduced. • Fire procedures considered and updated in light of Covid-19.

3. Managing your customers, visitors and contractors

To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices and to make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety.

	Alliance Medical's Response
3.1: Manage contacts	• Visitor briefings provided at reception. • All visitors have to have an appointment. • Visitors issued with PPE if they do not have their own. • Staff signing visitors in and out of the units.
3.2 Providing and explaining available guidance	• Pull up banners placed in reception. • Patient appointment pack updated with Covid briefing. • Posters placed in waiting areas. • Website updated with Covid guidance. • FAQs published on website. • Patient information video published on website. • Social media campaign launched to support Covid controls.

4. Clean Environment

To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

	Alliance Medical's Response
4.1: Keeping the workplace clean	• Increased cleaning schedule. • Revised and introduced a new cleaning schedule in between every patient. • Common areas and door handles cleaned every 3 hours. • Shared printers and copiers being cleaned after each use. • Decluttered administrative spaces. • Standard hand hygiene posters introduced in all units. • Regular weekly IPC briefings for all managers.
4.2 Hand Hygiene Handwashing, Sanitation facilities and toilets	• Floor stickers introduced to encouraged hand sanitiser usage. • Extensive hand cleaning campaign launched. • Hand washing sinks installed on all of our mobile fleet. • Hand sanitisers made available in all rooms. • Hand dryers replaced with disposable paper towels.

5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

	Alliance Medical's Response

5.1: The wearing of PPE	• Covid specific PPE policy and guidance introduced. • PPE guidance regularly reviewed to ensure there is no overuse of PPE, whilst maintaining adequate staff protection. • Individual PPE boxes introduced for roaming clinical staff.
5.2 Face coverings	• Patient masks provided on arrival. • All non-patient facing staff wearing masks when working within a clinical setting.

6. Workforce Management

The way of work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each employee has.

	Alliance Medical's Response
6.1 Shift patterns and working groups	• Mobile workers organised into regional cohorts • Shift patterns staggered.
6.2 Work-related travel	• All non-essential travel stopped. • All international travel limited to essential only.
6.2.1 Cars, accommodation and visits	• Shared vehicles cleaned between shifts. • Staff encouraged to limit public transport use and use private travel arrangements instead.
6.2.2 Deliveries to Other Sites	• New controls introduced for delivery of radiopharmaceuticals.
6.3 Communications and Training	• Weekly all staff letter from Managing Director. • All manager briefings on weekly basis. • Weekly open forums for managers across the business (now ceased as restrictions ease, but can be resurrected as the need arises). • Dedicated enquiry line established for staff. • Covid specific intranet site created to share all relevant information and guidance in one location. • Weekly local team meetings to brief colleagues on any changes.
6.3.1 Returning to Work	• Comprehensive occupational health assessments for every staff member returning from isolation. • Manager briefings on providing support for staff returning to work. • Re-acquaintance visits prior to return.
6.3.2 Ongoing communications and signage	• Trauma support service introduced. • Signposting to wellbeing resources.

AML Overarching COVID Secure Risk Assessment

Page 5 of 6

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7. Inbound and outbound goods

To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site

	Alliance Medical's Response
7.1 Controls introduced to maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site	• Inbound and outbound drop off points established. • Stopped signing for goods, unless essential. • Frequency of deliveries reduced. • Additional cleaning procedures introduced for radiopharmacy goods.

For any further information or enquiries, the taskforce can be reached on **covid19@alliance.co.uk**