

Response ID ANON-YH4U-3WVF-G

Submitted to Future pandemic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies in Scotland
Submitted on 2022-03-18 13:54:03

Part 1: Lessons learned

1.0 Effective mechanisms of collaboration and communication between the Scottish Government and stakeholders are an integral part of facilitating the supply of PPE in pandemic circumstances, and must be implemented into any future strategy.

Agree

1.1 A reformed stockpiling and buying approach for pandemic PPE is required.

Agree

1.2 Primary Care and adult Social Care require a long term and sustainable PPE supply strategy.

Agree

1.3 Cross public sector collaboration with the NHS on PPE supply issues should be considered as part of a future strategy

Agree

1.4 A surge capacity should be incorporated into the future pandemic PPE supply and stockpiling arrangements to guarantee that PPE demand is met during the volatile early stages of any future pandemic

Agree

1.5 A future strategy also needs to consider how private businesses and third sector organisations can be as prepared as possible for future pandemics to ensure that they continue to deliver essential public services.

Agree

1.6 We must build upon the progress made during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of supporting new, domestic supply chains and the development of data modelling.

Agree

2.0 Are there any other lessons learned that you think should be considered?

Yes

If 'yes', please describe (preferably no more than 300 words):.

Many social workers were left without appropriate PPE to carry out non-deferrable child and adult protection home visits at the start of the pandemic. This led to instances of social workers making their own 'DIY Protection Kits' which was an unacceptable situation to put social workers in.

Social workers work mainly for local authorities but some are employed in the third sector and others (independent social workers) are self employed. Social workers outwith the public sector, especially independent social workers who may often undertake statutory work on behalf of local authorities) faced particular difficulties in getting PPE.

A recent survey by the Social Worker's Union revealed that over half of social workers in Scotland felt they had put their own health at risk whilst working during the pandemic. Nobody should be forced into risking their health and safety when doing their job. It also puts the health and wellbeing of their loved ones and people who access services at serious risk.

Another survey by BASW found that 63.1% of respondents from Scotland agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered more ethical and moral dilemmas during the pandemic. Without adequate PPE, social workers were unfairly left to determine whether they could support individuals and families.

As well as universal access to PPE and basic hand sanitizer, information needs to be made available to social workers about where to access PPE. Clear guidance around safety for home visits also needs to be available and applied universally across different local authorities to prevent confusion and ambiguity.

Part 2: Preparing our PPE Stocks for Future Pandemics

3.0 Do you think that Scotland should have its own pandemic PPE stockpile?

Yes

Please expand your answer if you wish (preferably no more than 300 words):

It would seem sensible for Scotland to have its own PPE stockpile to allow swift and easy access to PPE supplies, especially when responding to emergency situations. PPE stock can also be managed and rotated to avoid instances of wastage.

3.1 Do you have a preference as to which organisations or sectors should be able to access the PPE pandemic stockpile?

No

If yes, please expand on your answer (preferably no more than 300 words):

Whilst we have no preference around which sectors should access PPE as a priority, we would want to see parity between social care and social work in terms of access. Social workers are also on the frontline where they carry out face-to-face work to support individuals and families who are facing challenging circumstances. Most of this work cannot be done remotely and so it is critical that social workers have good levels of protection to enable them to continue providing essential support without putting themselves or others at risk.

3.2 Do you have a view on how much the organisations or sectors that share the PPE stockpile should contribute to its costs?

Yes

If yes, please expand on your answer (preferably no more than 300 words):

In situations of public health crises and emergencies, access to PPE should not be determined by how much an organisation contributes to the costs of having a stockpile.

We have no specific view on how much organisations or sectors should pay but, in the interests of fairness, it would seem reasonable to suggest that organisations contribute proportionately to their ability to pay.

4.0 Do you think that public sector organisations working together with the NHS to buy PPE together would help support the Scottish PPE manufacturing base?

No preference

4.1 Do you think that public sector organisations working together with the NHS to buy PPE together would help Scotland to be more resilient in the event of a future pandemic?

No preference

4.2 For public sector respondents: Would your organisation be willing to participate in a collaborative buying approach for pandemic PPE with the NHS?

No preference

4.3 Please detail any other views that you have on the proposed cross public sector collaboration with the NHS on pandemic PPE supply

Please give us your views (preferably no more than 300 words):

5.0 Should the Scottish Government have a role in supporting the private businesses providing an essential public service and the third sector with their PPE supply in the event of a future pandemic?

Yes

If 'yes', please describe what role that should be (preferably no more than 300 words):

It seems sensible for the government to ensure that any organisation and public service is well supported to have access to adequate supplies of PPE. This minimises the risk of disruption to services which could, in turn, have a detrimental impact on people. For example, many third sector organisations, such as charities and social enterprises, provide invaluable support to people who may also access social work services. If these organisations are at risk of not being able to function due to inadequate PPE supplies, this has a knock-on effect on people's wellbeing and support networks which then increases pressure on social work caseloads and demand for services.

5.1 If you answered 'yes' to Question 5, do you have an opinion on how this should be funded?

No preference

If 'yes', please expand on your answer (preferably no more than 300 words):

6.0 Do you agree with the proposed pandemic PPE supply arrangements for your organisation or sector?

Yes

If no, please describe what you believe should change (preferably no more than 300 words):

The nature of social work is such that it spans across several sectors. The proposed arrangements to opt in to collaborative buying led by NSS in the various sectors covering social work would be an agreeable approach. It is important that social workers are no longer put in a position where they have to purchase or produce their own PPE and we are pleased that the proposed arrangements explicitly show a move away from this requirement for most sectors.

Supply arrangements also need to reach those who are self-employed in social services. It is not clear from the table which category independent, self-employed social workers would fit. It would not be appropriate to categorise them as 'private sector non-essential services' as they carry out an essential service.

It is noted that "Additional arrangements will be put in place for those not part of the proposed arrangements, either by choice or because they are in the private sector (providing an essential service), third sector or are individual carers." Details must be made available as to what these additional arrangements will be. There should not be disparity in supply arrangements between social workers based in local authorities and those operating as self-employed which could risk the latter not having the same access to PPE. It would not be acceptable for anyone self-employed working in social services to still be expected to purchase or produce their own PPE.

Finally, while reference is made to adult social care as being included in the proposed arrangements for local authorities and local authority services, there is no mention of children's services being included in this sector. Assurances should be given that children's services have also been considered in this sector.

7.0 Do you agree that a mechanism (or mechanisms) should be found by which the cost of pandemic PPE is appropriately split between the organisations that are using that PPE?

No preference

7.1 What payment mechanism or mechanisms would be most appropriate in your view?

Please give us your views (preferably no more than 300 words):.

No preference.

About you

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your name?

Name:
Jonny Adamson

What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW)

What is your email address?

Email:
jonny.adamson@basw.co.uk

Which category best represents the sector you work for? If you are responding as an organisation, which category best represents your organisation?

Local authorities and local authority services including adult social care settings

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent

Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Please enter comments here.: