THE THIS SERVICE DESK and IT support service

Background

The Prime Minister's announcement on 23 March 2020 directed our entire population to stay at home and in relation to work only go outside if you cannot do that work from home and it is essential. As a result, across the NHS new ways of working have developed between NHS 111, primary care, community services and secondary care.

Similarly, there was a need to develop accordingly for the provision of the THIS IT services. As with all NHS services the Covid-19 issue means there is much pressure on the IT teams, with both staff availability and extraordinary demands.

The service has to strike the right balance, in this COVID-19 climate, between providing a continued level of service to meet the clinical priority and the wellbeing and health and safety of the delivery staff.

This issue although affecting all areas of service is being acutely felt in the **2nd line service (technical resources on the ground)** where the challenge is in terms of;

- The availability of staff.
- The logistics of separation of staff and daily rotas
- The health and safety of technicians, which is paramount.

As a consequence, there are effects on service delivery processes and timelines and subsequently a new way of working has been imposed.

***Technicians on site*:**

In relation to THIS staff who usually undertake much of their work on-site in primary care premises then new **Standard operating procedures** will apply.

These procedures will include;

- The primary basis for any fix will be via a remote method
- All non-essential work will cease or is likely to be significantly delayed.
- The technicians will now be prioritised to attend sites on a COVID-19 / business critical basis/priority 1 issues and then only support the agreed action when on-site (reasons for the visit).

Urgency	Description
Critical	**Priority 1** whole site affected or key business area affected, and no 'work around' possible

- In all cases when they do attend on-site they will expect appropriate and essential access and egress procedures to be applied, these should include;

    o The practice appoints a lead contact that will oversee the visit and ensure any access issues and on-site movements are appropriately managed.

o   The availability of appropriate infection control precautions. These should be maintained by all, in all care settings, at all times to ensure the safety of patients, staff and visitors. Hand hygiene is an essential practice in reducing the transmission of infectious agents and staff should ensure strict adherence.

In support of this the THIS will co-ordinate personal protective equipment (PPE) for their staff and will have, in order to protect the workforce, risk assessed their staff to identify those at increased risk from COVID-19 and not put into potentially vulnerable situations
*Where Third party engineers are required their organisational procedures will apply

The table below provides guidance on what practices should consider and the process they should follow when requesting an IT service and potential on-site visit– technical support**.**

PLEASE NOTE Technicians are not allowed to visit staff homes under any circumstances or support home devices.

1. **Practices should first consider if the request meets the prioritisation criteria**
2. **Practices should then consider – what is the essential nature of the request and what any suitable workarounds are manageable or can we do without this at present.**
3. **First point of call should be the service desk – who will advise if the request can be resolved remotely**
4. **If not – Practices should consider if the request can be supported by their own staff with guidance from the Service desk/Technical support remotely. Items such as Internal moves of IT kit may fall into this category**
5. **Only as a last resort in these present circumstances – should practices expect and arrange an on-site visit.**

Practices are also asked to consider a secure, safe and appropriate way to receive IT deliveries where technicians can deliver a device/kit without having to enter the premises.

Additionally, other THIS services are affected by the current climate which are affecting services – as a result the following applies

Service Desk: Our Service Desk are operating in both on-premise separated rota arrangements and wherever possible in an off-site remote environment. Please only escalate issues if they are of a critical basis.

Registration Authority: the RA team are operating in off-site remotely, site attendance and on-site appointments at THIS site have stopped. The team are now working through a print and post system.

Professional services/training: The service is able to offer other remote methods of training if required utilising Microsoft teams/ WebEx. Any on-site planned professional services or training planned has stopped and the end users communicated to.

Server/networks: The team are still available for support based upon business priority basis. This team is working under separated rotas and remotely, where possible. There is an element of work that may require an onsite visit. In these instances the guidelines/processes to follow will be applicable.

 Many thanks in anticipation of your patience, support and understanding