

Appendix 4 – Update to the H&F Emergency Rest Centre Handbook

COVID-19 Emergency Centre set up, recovery & stand down

The latest government guidance for those working in non-clinical settings and for health professionals can be found [here](#)

Emergency Centre activation and set up

Additional time may be needed to put in place suitable arrangements for emergency centres. Incident Commanders have been advised to notify local authorities as soon as the potential for evacuation and shelter is identified.

Cleaning arrangements

Duty Silver/Borough Emergency Control Room BECC will notify FM (020 8753 6000 24/7 service) that a rest centre is to be set so that a cleaner(s) is provided. A cleaner may be on site for as long as the rest centre is stood up as specific areas will be regularly cleaned.

Briefing the Rest Centre Staff

- Brief Rest Centre staff on measures to take and safe use of PPE (see Appendix 6 of the Emergency Rest Centre Handbook). Ensure staff are aware that:

During a pandemic/where there is infectious disease, all staff must wear PPE inside the rest centre.

- Staff must change their PPE every 4 hours and/or whenever it is compromised
- Staff must follow social distancing measures inside and outside of the rest centre.

Once an Emergency Centre has been opened the following should be undertaken prior to admitting evacuees:

- Ensure that the H&F CAN & Shield (Community Aid Network) are informed regarding Track & Trace.
- Create separate rooms or zones for those identified as Covid-19 positive, with as much distance from others as possible. Equally, a further separate space for those self-isolating with suspected Covid-19 should be created if possible. (These groups should be kept apart, and within these groups strict social distancing must be encouraged).
- Ensure main areas space chairs and other furniture apart to encourage social distancing.
- Where possible identify separate toilet facilities for symptomatic, non-symptomatic and vulnerable groups.
- Put in place suitable infection control measures, for example when handling the storage of luggage or other personal effects of evacuees.

- Establish reception and registration protocols in a way to maintain social distancing. This may involve establishing a queuing system prior to entry, with evacuees standing 2m apart and allowing one household at the reception desk at a time.
- The reception process MUST involve identification of individual risk information. Ask evacuees to identify if they received an NHS letter telling them to isolate, will allow the risk to be managed.
- Inform utility companies of Rest Centre locations so this can be added to their ‘sensitive customers’ list to ensure an appropriate level of support is provided in the event of a BAU service outage. Information provided in Appendix 3 of the London Resilience Partnership Contacts Directory for utility company professional partners / control room contact details.

Recovery

Use of temporary accommodation

The aim of incident commanders should be to remove most evacuees from the rest centre at the earliest safe opportunity.

- Where return to people’s homes is likely to be significantly delayed, an early decision to place people rapidly into emergency accommodation (e.g. local hotels) will be appropriate.
- Normal strategies, such as encouraging evacuees to go and stay with family or friends **should be implemented with extreme caution**. On no account should people be encouraged to do with if they may risk breaking the self-isolation of the medically vulnerable.

If specialised accommodation is required and cannot be provided via the Homelessness section, duty Silver/the BECC and the Emergency Duty Team (EDT), via the Out of Hours service, must be notified. In some cases, it may be advisable to initially accommodate the individual/household in a local hotel overnight, with the Homelessness service/EDT arranging more suitable accommodation the next day.

Exit arrangements for potential / actual Covid-19 cases

- Where a member of the public comes into a rest centre with COVID19 symptoms, they should be isolated within the centre.
- If possible, and assuming only mild to moderate symptoms, if they can return home this should be facilitated. They may need to remain in the rest centre until this can be facilitated.
- If returning home cannot be facilitated (e.g. because fire/serious building damage) use of local arrangements for provision of emergency housing should be activated through the BECC. Suitable arrangements are likely to include non-dormitory accommodation provided specifically to deal with homelessness during the pandemic.

- Considering how to address people's needs remotely, especially information and advice on where to get further support, access to food in hotels / emergency accommodation (dietary and culturally appropriate). Especially relevant if moving people into emergency accommodation quickly.

Stand-down

- Once all evacuees have left the rest centre, all areas used should be cleaned as per the guidance for non-clinical settings, paying particular care to areas where any symptomatic evacuees may have spent time.
- Duty Silver/the BECC will notify FM that the centre is being stood down so that the final deep clean can be completed.

Advise utility companies that the rest centre has been stood down.