

Service Continuity Checklist for Needle and Syringe Program Services

Contingency planning to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and BBVs and reduce demand on health services

The following strategies are provided for your information and consideration, as appropriate.

Please ensure you read and understand this checklist, and make changes as required.

Support continuity of NSP services:

- Encourage clients to consider stocking up on equipment; offer additional equipment
- Ensure adequate stock and storage of sterile injecting equipment – review order quantities and order frequency
- Regularly review contacts and referral pathways for local health services and other NSP service providers (at least weekly – pathways may change rapidly)
- Remind staff to use DirectLine to identify referral destinations for services (1800 888 236)
- Communicate with other NSP locations around directing clients there in the event that your service is disrupted
- Communicate with other NSP locations around directing clients to you in the event that their service is disrupted
- Identify potential options for sharing staffing/resources with other NSP and health service providers
- Develop messaging for people infected with COVID-19, or who are symptomatic and waiting test results, to identify options for them to continue to access NSP services
- Discuss plans and any changes to service provision with your clients, and reassure them that you are prioritising continuity of service delivery as much as possible
- Inform clients about outreach services that operate in the area
- Inform clients about SDUs in the area (see <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-treatment-services/aod-prevention-harm-reduction/needle-and-syringe-program>)
- Inform clients about how and where to access naloxone (see <https://www.penington.org.au/cope-overdose-first-aid/>)
- Make sure clients know where your disposal bin is located, as well as others in the area
- Review waste collection frequency

Strengthen infection control strategies:

- Post additional signage and offer regular reminders to ensure that guidance is provided to clients regarding infection control, such as hand washing

- Post signage for clients around drug use and COVID-19 risk (see <https://www.penington.org.au/frontline-support/resources/covid-19/>)
- Review operating times and practices in order to reduce congregation of clients
- Review self-service practices to identify ways to minimise multiple hands touching NSP consumables, data entry pens and other stationery, etc
- Consider implementing physical barriers, such as plexiglass barriers
- Remove items that are shared by clients, such as public access computer stations or phone chargers
- Maintain high attention to cleaning of facilities, particularly surfaces and SDUs, and consider cleaning more often throughout the day
- Post additional signage on SDUs around hand washing; consider advising people not to touch the machine with bare hands
- Consider offering disposable gloves or some form of implement (such as a pencil) to people for use with the SDU

Support workforce health and safety:

- Follow government COVID-19 guidelines to reduce the risk of infection (see <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-transmission-reduction-measures>)
- Ensure adequate supplies of masks and other personal protective equipment for staff, if available (see Resources for Health Professionals: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-services-and-general-practitioners-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>)
- Distribute clear, reliable information resources (e.g. <https://www.penington.org.au/frontline-support/resources/covid-19/>)
- Provide infection control training for all staff
- Plan strategies to manage staff absenteeism
- Promote staff influenza vaccination
- Provide adequate training for administrative and other staff who may be covering shifts