

SWL - COVID-19 Response MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

This document sets out the terms of a Mutual Aid Agreement for sharing stock in response to shortages across SWL.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the use and provision of clinical supplies medicines and services, most principally in the following ways:
- Surge of global demand of specific items (e.g. Personal Protective Equipment “PPE”).
 - Growth in general clinical activity causing increased demand for a broad range of items (e.g. cleaning wipes, IV fluids) and related services (e.g. linen and laundry).
 - Disruption to the global supply chain as countries restrict exports/imports, and staff sickness impacts on manufacturing; transportation; warehousing, delivery and replenishment.
 - Sickness absence increase of staff working for our contractors providing key services.
- 1.1.2 National and global events can have a significant impact on the healthcare supply chain, which in turn impacts on the ability to deliver healthcare services.
- 1.1.3 The disruption caused by the global Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need for robust supply chain planning, and the need for effective collaboration between NHS Trusts and other care provider organisations.
- 1.1.4 The responsibility of individual organisations is to ensure supply for their own sovereign patients. This is set against the potential need to effectively share on the basis of clinical need for the health of populations agnostic of organisational supplies.
- 1.1.5 The aim of these considerations is to ensure that – should the need arise – that the SWL Acute Hospitals and SWL STP have a clear and agreed collaborative process confirmed to ensure continuity of supply.
- 1.1.6 The Acute Hospitals in SWL have access to PPE stock and have been asked to support the wider SWL STP with mutual aid to ensure where stock is available that all organisations have a continued supply of equipment for its staff. This agreement sets out the process of how this stock may be requested and if available how this will be supplied.
- 1.1.7 The Director of Procurement (Operations) and Director of Procurement (Commercial) have been appointed as the SWL supply chain leads for the region.

1.2 Intended Audience for this Briefing

- SWL Acute Hospital Trusts
- SWL Strategic Transformation Partnership
- Local Authorities
- Care Homes
- Care Providers
- Voluntary and Communities Organisations

2 PROCESS

2.1 Trigger for Mutual Aid

- 2.1.1 A SWL based organisation identifies a stock shortage in supplies that will significantly impact delivery of patient care;
- 2.1.2 Organisation in shortage checks with clinicians for requisite approval as necessary to any proposed alternatives;
- 2.1.3 Organisation in shortage contacts NHS Supply Chain and/or its other regular suppliers to expedite delivery of existing orders and / or source required product(s) or agreed alternatives;
- 2.1.4 Organisation in shortage contacts other Distributors to source required product(s) or agreed alternatives;
- 2.1.5 Organisation in shortage contacts Suppliers to source required product(s) or agreed alternatives
- 2.1.6 If unsuccessful, identify any other departments in the organisation that use the required product(s) or agreed alternatives to determine if an internal transfer can take place;
- 2.1.7 Before triggering Mutual Aid determine the impact of lack of stock is on planned care that could be delayed
- 2.1.8 If 2.1.1 to 2.1.6 unsuccessful then the mutual aid process is triggered.

2.2 Mutual Aid Process

- 2.2.1 The organisation in shortage will access the South West London Procurement Partnership webpage <http://swlpp.uk> to access the on-line enquiry form to request mutual aid. The web page sets out the information that will be required from the requestor but typically this will include the following information:
 - 2.2.1.1 Product(s) required including any identified acceptable alternatives;
 - 2.2.1.2 Minimum quantity required;
 - 2.2.1.3 Delivery timescale requirements;
 - 2.2.1.4 Delivery Address;
 - 2.2.1.5 Clinical contact for affected item(s);
- 2.2.2 Receiving SWL Acute Provider Trusts, on receipt of the enquiry:
 - 2.2.2.1 Check ordering history of product(s) – confirm back if not ordered;
 - 2.2.2.2 If ordered, check stock availability;
 - 2.2.2.3 If agreed, stock will be picked and packed and delivered via SWLPP transport services within 48-72 hours subject to stock and transport availability.

- 2.2.2.4 If stock is required sooner this can be made available for collection by arrangement only;
- 2.2.2.5 If mutual aid not agreed, then provide a nil return so the requesting organisation is clear that stock is unavailable to meet their requirement;

2.3 Review and Feedback

- 2.3.1 Locally the SWL Procurement leads will hold daily conference calls (supported by ad-hoc calls as necessary) to share information and to identify key areas where stocks may be in danger of, or have already run out of stock and which neighbouring Trust may be able to respond to quickly.
- 2.3.2 Regionally there will be 3 calls per week between the SWL Supply Chain leads and colleagues from SWL STP to provide updates on requests and to discuss any issues.
- 2.3.3 Nationally the SWL Supply Chain leads and STP leads will represent the region on the daily call with NHS England.

2.4 General Principles

- 2.4.1 Normal supply and escalation routes should be exhausted before triggering mutual aid;
- 2.4.2 Organisations should not plan for Mutual Aid to become its regular supply route. Mutual Aid should only be used when all other supply routes have been exhausted and should be used as a 'one off' solution to address an immediate issue or concern;
- 2.4.3 In instances where Mutual Aid is provided and the receiver then receives their original order(s) they should look to replenish the central stock where reasonable and practical;
- 2.4.4 Whilst the key focus of this Mutual Aid document is on Medical Devices and Clinical Consumables, there is no reason why it could not apply equally to non-clinical items which may impact patient service e.g. equipment and maintenance spare parts etc;
- 2.4.5 Final decision to transfer stock rests with the Trust holding the stock / responding to the request unless over-ruled by the respective Trust CEO's;
- 2.4.6 Whilst not the norm, certain scenarios may arise where prior DH or Supplier agreement is required for movement/onward transfer/sale of product(s) between Trusts to mitigate shortages which need to be resolved on a case by case basis.

3 General Information

3.1 Communication

- 3.1.1 The SWL STP lead will be responsible for issuing all communications to its organisations to create awareness of this Mutual Aid Agreement.
- 3.1.2 All communications to request Mutual Aid will utilise the SWLPP helpdesk to enable requested to be monitor, tracked and trace to ensure openness and transparency.

3.2 Helpdesk

- 3.2.1 The SWLPP helpdesk <http://swlpp.uk> will be available to access 24/7. However the supporting agents will only be available during normal business hours with ad-hoc support available out of hours.
- 3.2.2 Any requests made outside of the helpdesk may not be processed so all requestors are highly recommended to use this system.

3.3 Stock Location

- 3.3.1 Stock is currently held at all SWL Acute hospitals and is subject to availability.

3.4 Transport

- 3.4.1 The SWL Acute Trusts will provide transport and logistics subject to availability. If unable to supply the requesting organisation may be asked to provide their own logistics solution to access stock.

3.5 Resource

- 3.5.1 The SWL Acute Trusts will provide the initial resource to support this agreement but this will be subject to continuous review and may require further support from the SWL STP and others. This will be discussed on the regular calls.

3.6 Finance

- 3.6.1 Any costs incurred by the SWL Acute Trusts through the delivery of this agreement will be recharged to the appropriate organisation.

3.7 SWL Trust Contacts

Trust	Contact	E-Mail	Telephone
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