

**Caring Today, Planning
for Tomorrow**



Covid-19 Recovery

Update 1

FAQs

**To consistently
show compassion,
professionalism
and respect to the
patients we care for**

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The purpose of this update is to inform and engage with NIAS staff members around ongoing work in relation to COVID-19 recovery. This will be the first in a series of updates as we move through the various stages of recovery

Over the last number of months it has been necessary for us all to quickly adapt, both in our personal and working lives, to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Normal ways of working have been temporarily suspended with many staff now working from home while, at the same time, joining others in undertaking new roles and, perhaps, additional duties.

Returning to a 'new normal' will undoubtedly present further challenges for us all and we would encourage you to engage and provide feedback on your experiences, both positive and negative, as we move forward. This feedback can be provided through a dedicated email address (covidrecovery@nias.hscni.net) which will be checked regularly.

In our first update, we have decided to focus on a number of questions which have been asked about the current situation and our plans for the coming weeks and months. We hope you will find the answers both useful and reassuring.

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1. What work is ongoing in relation to COVID-19 recovery?

NIAS has established a “*Recovery Co-ordination Group*” (RCG), with representation from all Directorates and staff Trade Unions.

This work of this group has been divided into 4 key areas, for which sub groups have been established to take the work forward. The key areas to be addressed are:

Accommodation and Estates issues

Staff Safety, Health and well-being

Learning

Preparing for any future COVID-19 surge.

2. I am currently working at home. When will I be able to return to work?

Current Government advice is for workers to continue working from home, if this is possible.

You will be notified of any change in this guidance.



3. What preparations are being made to prepare the workplace for staff returning to work?

As Government advice changes we envisage more staff returning to office based work. This return will have to be managed appropriately in order to minimise risk and to ensure a safe working environment.

It is likely, in the initial stages at least, that you will be expected to continue working from home on a rotational basis, spending some days working in your office and other days working at home.



4. How is NIAS looking after staff during these difficult times?

Staff Safety and Health and Wellbeing are priorities in our process of recovery planning. The Trust has developed a guidance document which interprets government advice and also reflects national and regional best practice. This draft is currently with Trade Unions for their consideration to ensure that we have adequately identified and catered for issues relating to staff safety and mental health.

This document also encompasses the significant assessment guidance required for each of the key areas, previously identified, to manage Health and Safety and ensure compliance with Government legislation and local guidance to deliver the standards required within the current accommodation, but new, working environment.

NIAS acknowledges and understands that these are difficult times and encourages staff who feel a need for additional support to approach their line manager or to contact Peer Support or Inspire – all of whom can provide support for mental health and wellbeing issues.

5. How can NIAS learn from our response to the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic?

By utilising the toolkit available from the *Institute for Healthcare Improvement*, NIAS has developed a “Learning from COVID-19” framework document.

It is important that, as an Ambulance Service, we acknowledge and build on lessons learned from our response to the first phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic to enable:

- *Preparedness for subsequent waves or resurgence of COVID-19*
- *Learning which might influence Recovery*
- *Learning which might encourage sustainability of innovations or positive changes which started during COVID response*
- *Learning for the organisation in terms of communications and*
- *decision-making to improve staff and patient experience*

As part of this learning process, we will seek feedback from

- *staff;*
- *each of the four RCG areas*
- *directorates and local teams*

5. How can NIAS learn from our response to the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Whilst some of the survey tools have already been issued, we continue to work on the best method to collate the greatest amount of feedback from staff that we can. More information will follow about how you can become involved in this process.

Some early staff feedback has already been captured by Jean Gilmour who had been supporting NIAS as an IPC Specialist. We will publish this in future updates.

We hope you have found this first update informative and we would invite you to provide any feedback or comments by emailing: covidrecovery@nias.hscni.net