



Implementation of Business Continuity Plan – People Strategy - Coronavirus Pandemic

Committee Personnel

Date of meeting 21 August 2020

Date of report 5 August 2020

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To advise members on the implementation of SPT's business continuity plan, specifically related to our employees, during the coronavirus pandemic.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 31st December 2019, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) China Office heard the first reports of a previously unknown virus behind a number of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in Eastern China with a population of over 11 million. What started as a pandemic mainly limited to China became a truly global pandemic.
- 2.2 The Strategy Group recognised that new measures may be put in place and implemented its business continuity plan on 16th March 2020.
- 2.3 The Prime Minister and First Minister announced new measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus, to protect the NHS and save lives. The UK moved to lockdown on 23rd March 2020 urging people to stay at home with only supermarkets, key workplaces and medical facilities remaining open.

3. Actions

- 3.1 SPT were guided by the decisions being taken by the Government. As a public service, SPT was committed to staying as operational as possible during the coronavirus pandemic, but critical to this was the protection of our staff and passengers.
- 3.2 The requirement for our services was monitored continuously with regular dialogue between SPT and Transport Scotland to review the arrangements.
- 3.3 All operational/customer-facing staff remained at work to support the continuity of public transport services for key workers across the Strathclyde Area.
- 3.4 Social distancing, hygiene and cross-contamination prevention measures were implemented at all SPT locations where staff remained at work.
- 3.5 All non-operational/customer-facing staff moved to work from home and were provided with the appropriate digital kit.

- 3.6 The Business Continuity Group met on a daily basis to provide updates on each of their functional areas and to continue to review all arrangements in relation to SPT employees and key stakeholders.
- 3.7 The Subway Operations Senior Team also met on a daily basis to provide updates on each of their functional areas and to continue to review all arrangements in relation to SPT employees and key stakeholders.
- 3.8 The Strategy Group met on a daily basis, following the Business Continuity Group meeting, to continue to review all arrangements.

4. Implementation of Business Continuity Plan – People Strategy

- 4.1 All business support functions moved to working from home and were provided with the appropriate digital kit. In addition, customer services including MyBus Contact Centre, the Travel Card Unit and Ticketing Team were relocated to home working without disruption to the services offered.
- 4.2 Managers were issued with guidance about how to support their teams and ensure their health and wellbeing while working from home.
- 4.3 Guidance was issued to all staff working from home including what they should do to stay mentally and physically active during this period including exercising regularly at home, eat healthy well-balanced meals, drink enough water, avoid smoking and alcohol, go outside into the garden and walk outdoors once a day. SPT encouraged staff to spend time reading, cooking or other indoor hobbies.
- 4.4 All operational/customer-facing staff remained at work to support the continuity of public transport services for key workers across the Strathclyde Area.
- 4.5 As part of the reinforced measures to stem the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, all operational/customer-facing staff were issued with “key worker” letters in line with Government guidance to allow them to travel to and from their place of work to allow SPT to continue to plan, co-ordinate and deliver public transport in the Strathclyde area.
- 4.6 Measures were put in place to protect our operational/customer-facing staff including:
 - The provision of additional personal protective equipment (gloves, hand sanitizer and masks, where appropriate).
 - The continuous review of shifts and working hours.
 - A reduction in working hours whilst continuing to meet our operational requirements and to ensure social distancing was adhered to.
- 4.7 Acknowledging that the coronavirus and lockdown may place heightened anxiety and stress on employee mental wellbeing and that some employees may need additional support SPT ensured that the Employee Assistance Programme - Validium remained accessible to all staff either by telephone or through their website forum VClub.
- 4.8 During the coronavirus pandemic the UK Government issued an amendment to the Working Time Regulations (1988) to include the Working Time Regulations (Coronavirus) (Amendment Regulations) (2020). This amendment allowed an employee to carry forward up to 20 days annual leave into the next two leave years 2021 and 2022 where they were unable to take annual leave due to the coronavirus pandemic and the demands of their role.

SPT identified “key workers” who continued to provide operational/customer-facing services. The Subway Operations staffs’ annual leave is rostered in spring, summer and winter blocks. The annual leave of all other groups was managed, fairly, equitably and reasonably, with all staff required to book or take a statutory proportion of their annual leave entitlement during the lockdown period in line with our terms and conditions. SPT considered that it was reasonably practical for all employees to take a period of annual leave.

SPT recognised that it was important for all staff whether in operational/customer-facing roles or working from home to take a break from delivering services. Taking annual leave was a key element in ensuring that SPT committed to its duty of care to all employees ensuring they maintained good health and wellbeing. SPT did not anticipate that there would not be a need for any staff to arrange to carry forward their annual leave into 2021 and 2022.

SPT also recognised that the management of annual leave would support a return to normal service and allow SPT to operate effectively as the lockdown was eased.

- 4.9 During the lockdown phase our staff availability remained stable with the numbers affected by the coronavirus from 13th March 2020 until implementation of Covid-19 Route Map Phase 3 on 9th July 2020 as follows:

No. of Employees	Status	Percentage of Workforce
8	Shielding – 1 April to 31 July	1.6%
105	Returned to Work	21.4%
113	Total Affected	23%

- 4.10 SPT’s sickness absence statistics prior to and during the lockdown phase from 2nd February to 20th June 2020 are compared at Appendices 1 and 2.

These statistics show that the majority of absence during Periods 13, 1 and 2 was related to Covid-19 whether self-isolating for 7 or 14 days or shielding. The initial spike in our absence rate from Period 12 to Period 1 began to fall in P2 and reduced further in P3 and P4. The statistics also evidence a reduction in the common reasons for absence such as psychological (including bereavement), cold and flu, sickness and diarrhoea and muscular skeletal as Covid-19 related absences increased. Staff working from home, perhaps working through symptoms they would normally have reported as sickness absence and following social distancing or under-reporting may be contributory factors.

- 4.11 SPT prepared restart plans with full risk assessments during June and July and kept these under review. These restart plans were shared with staff in late June together with details and examples of how offices were to be managed and what staff should expect to see when they return to work. These documents were also shared with our trade union representatives in advance to allow any comments received to be considered appropriately.

These restart plans highlighted that returning to work would include many variations depending on services, but included rotational working, staggered start and finish times to assist with travel, as well as continued homeworking.

From early August staff began returning to their normal place of work but on a phased basis, consideration was given to what services were best delivered from the office environment. This risk assessment also considered where home working was not ideal for some staff due to their personal circumstances to identify and prioritise returners.

Other restart arrangements included ensuring that all SPT services resumed full operation in terms of shift patterns as well as the implementation of the normal closure times. Again, staff were advised of the resumption to normal arrangements in advance of implementation.

SPT are factoring in lessons learned to all restart plans for any future issues or in the event of a second wave.

5. Conclusions

SPT will continue to regularly review, test and monitor the effectiveness of the business continuity plan to ensure that any recommendations through lessons learned are implemented. We will also ensure that our business continuity plan is reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice.

6. Committee action

The committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

7. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>Working arrangements and sickness absence levels are an integral part of SPT's strategy to continue to deliver effective services within a constrained budget. These were continually monitored.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Full consideration of key staff groups affected by Covid-19 including shielding, underlying health conditions, pregnant workers, over 70s and black and ethnic minority staff.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>Workplace Covid-19 risk assessments were compiled by SPT's Health & Safety function in consultation with our Trade Union Representatives.</i>

Name Valerie Davidson

Title Assistant Chief Executive

Name Gordon Maclennan

Title Chief Executive

For further information, please contact *Valerie Davidson, Assistant Chief Executive*, on 0141-333 3298.

APPENDIX 1

ABSENCE STATISTICS 02/02/2020 TO 18/07/2020 (PERIODS 12 TO 4)

Period 12 02/02/2020 to 29/02/2020	Period 13 01/03/2020 to 31/03/2020	Period 1 01/04/2020 to 25/04/2020	Period 2 26/04/2020 to 28/05/2020	Period 3 29/05/2020 to 20/06/2020	Period 4 21/06/2020 to 18/07/2020
4.1% Absence Rate	6.8% Absence Rate	6.5% Absence Rate	4.4% Absence Rate	3.9% Absence Rate	2.8% Absence Rate
1.3% Short Term 2.8% Long Term	3.4% Short Term 3.4% Long Term	3.3% Short Term 3.2% Long Term	1.6% Short Term 2.8% Long Term	1% Short Term 2.9% Long Term	0.4% Short Term 1.4% Long Term
45 Instances of Absence	84 Instances of Absence	74 Instances of Absence	41 Instances of Absence	35 Instances of Absence	25 Instances of Absence
Top 3 reasons: Psychological = 9 Cold/Flu = 7 Sickness/Diarrhoea = 5	Top 2 reasons: Covid-19 = 45 Psychological = 10	Top 2 reasons: Covid-19 = 52 Psychological = 7	Top 2 reasons: Covid-19 = 20 Psychological = 4	Top 3 reasons: Covid-19 = 14 Muscular Skeletal = 5 Psychological = 3	Top 3 reasons: Shielding = 6 Muscular Skeletal = 5 Psychological = 3

