

Case Study

A swift and agile approach to Covid-19



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In early 2020, ERS Medical defined its COVID-19 Strategy with a view that this would rapidly adapt, grow and develop to reflect the changing nature of the virus and fluidity of the national guidance. It very quickly became apparent that COVID-19 required the focus of the entire business and central co-ordination was needed to manage all aspects of our response.

Immediate actions taken by ERS Medical included: Convening a 'COVID-19 Committee' to oversee related business continuity/EPRR; declared 'COVID19 Business Continuity' as the 'Main Effort'; set strict adherence to PHE & NHSE/I guidance as the central pillar that shaped our strategy; prioritised the procurement and management of PPE and IPC related products; stress-tested the business against several scenarios and started tracking key indicators such as COVID-19 related absence, activity levels and additional COVID-19 related costs.

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Tactical elements of the strategy involved and continue to include:

• Robust and clear internal communications:

We recognised that **robust and open communication** was an essential tool in managing our response to the unfolding situation. Staff concerns had to be addressed early and rapidly changing guidance had to be clearly cascaded. The ERS Medical Senior Leadership Team (SLT) set

up a series of Microsoft 'Teams' virtual site meetings to share information and answer questions directly. Meetings were arranged for 21 sites over 4 distinct operational regions from Fife in Scotland to Eastleigh in the south of England. This was supplemented with weekly communications to

all staff from the Managing Director, Clinical memos, toolbox talks to relevant staff, internal newsletters and messages through TV screens on sites. Staff feedback and reaction to disseminating information this way has been extremely positive.



• Launching a free NEPTS digital planning tool:

We designed a **patient transport planning tool** that helped commissioners and procurement managers understand patient transport requirements and the impact of COVID-19 measures.

This tool considers the size, type and geography of the service and then generates an estimated number of extra drivers and ambulances required to accommodate social distancing measures.

This allowed commissioners to plan resource and additional funding in good time, mitigating any interruption to patient flow.

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• Speeding up the vehicle decontamination process:

We tested existing vehicle decontamination processes (for Infection Prevention and Control on ERS Medical vehicles) against the national prescribed

guidance of using Chlorine to kill COVID-19. We sent our existing cleaning products to an independent lab to test it for the kill-rate specifically against

COVID-19, which was confirmed. This enabled us to **speed up our decontamination processes** and capacity.

“Thanks to Anthony, Paul and the team at ERS Medical for their support in delivering the Covid-19 vaccines across Greater Manchester. Over the past three months, we have completed over 100 movements meaning 100,000 people have received timely vaccinations, preventing the need for cancellations, and averting any wastage of this precious life-saving vaccine. Personally, I can't thank the team enough for their responsiveness, courtesy and performance in carrying out this task.”

Neil Jenkinson

The Greater Manchester Covid-19 Vaccine Programme

• Supporting the national vaccine roll-out:

We are proud to support Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership and Cheshire CCG in their roll out of over 100,000 AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccine doses to help with the national fight against Covid-19. Being distributed from ERS Medical's Liverpool site, the vaccines are transported

in special cool bags and in temperature-controlled vehicles to maintain the integrity of the cold-chain. The request to support with the vaccine roll out was made in December 2020 and utilises our local knowledge and established presence in the North West region.



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• Collaborating and bolstering services:

When the first and subsequent waves of the pandemic hit the NHS, ERS Medical provided **mutual aid** to NHS Ambulance Trusts to help transport patients suspected of or positive with COVID-19. In two regions, when local Ambulance Trusts

put out a call for support, ERS Medical stepped up without hesitance. This partnership working is one such example of how the healthcare sector, Ambulance Trusts and Independent Trusts immediately came together, communicated

and supported each other to respond appropriately and efficiently to rapid changes in demand. This altruistic approach from the sector truly put patients first and helped overcome serious, unprecedented challenges.

“I would formally like to express our sincere thanks for your help during this period – we put out a call and ERS stepped up without reservation. This truly was partnership working and removed boundaries. Additionally, I would like to extend our thanks to your crews who stepped up and transported these patients – I would like them to know that their assistance has not been taken for granted.

As it transpired this ‘wave’ was, thankfully, not as severe as predicted but I have no doubt that should we experience a second, we will be able to easily resume our partnership.”

Business Development Manager

Norfolk & Waveney, East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust



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