

## **How IPS services can continue to support service users during the current coronavirus climate.**

IPS Grow Covid-19 response: FAQs | 23 March 2020

*This is the first in a series of FAQs and operational advice from IPS Grow for commissioners, NHS Trusts, and IPS providers on how IPS services can adapt to and support the response to Covid-19. It will be supplemented by a resource page on the IPS Grow website from 23 March.*

### **How can IPS services contribute to the Covid-19 response in their local area?**

Covid-19 will have a significant impact on not only the mental and physical health of your service users, but potentially their employment status and/or prospects too. Services have an immediate role in providing reassurance to clients and employers, supporting people with their mental health, helping people to sustain and retain their jobs wherever possible and continuing to help clients find paid work in industries with high demand for workers, such as healthcare, grocery retail, technology, cleaning, and warehousing and delivery.

IPS teams are champions of wellbeing and resilience. Their clients will depend on them now more than ever. Employment specialists can act as a beacon of hope for their clients and a “voice of reason” for employers and clients. This can not only keep people in jobs, it can keep them mentally well, reducing pressure on clinical teams. IPS clients have faced major personal challenges before and shown great resilience. They can be a major asset to their companies, with support from their IPS employment specialists.

It’s worth considering that later this year, IPS services will be instrumental in supporting a return to normality through economic and mental health recovery. Many thousands will be out of work and will need support to find work. Their work status will be a major risk factor to their mental health. Without IPS services operating, there will be a heightened risk of individuals falling into crisis, putting significant strain on clinical teams.

### **What core functions should we focus on as an IPS service?**

IPS services can continue to function as many teams have already moved to remote working. Services can receive referrals electronically and make contact with clients through mobile devices. Vocational profiling, online job search, and employer engagement (through phone or email) can continue to be carried out effectively. New technologies can be deployed to support online or video interviews and assessments. Although unemployment is rising, there are sectors that are recruiting heavily to cope with unexpected demand. Some services have *already* succeeded in securing job outcomes for clients in the past few days.