Top tips for completing the RCSLT COVID-19 data collection spreadsheet

1: Download the data collection spreadsheet

The spreadsheet is available to download from the RCSLT COVID-19 Data Collection Tool. Ensure that the template is saved in a secure location that all colleagues can easily access.

2: Identify which of the fields in the dataset that you will collect

It is recognised that this is an extensive dataset, and it is not necessary to collect all of the suggested data fields contained in this dataset. The mandatory columns are shaded in dark blue in the template and indicated by two asterisks (**). You will need to complete these columns for every patient if you wish to submit data to the RCSLT COVID-19 Data Collection Tool. Locally, you may wish to identify which of the remaining fields are most relevant to you.

It may be helpful to 'hide' any of the columns containing 'desirable' fields (shaded green with one asterisk (*)) and 'optional' fields (shaded white) that you are not going to use. To do this, select the column, right-click and select 'hide'. <u>Please do not delete any columns in the template.</u>

3: Consider whether you need more than one copy of the spreadsheet for your team/service

This may be necessary for practical reasons, for example, where there are number of people who will need to have access to the spreadsheet at the same time.

Ensure that all colleagues are clear about how to access the copy of the spreadsheet that they should be using.

4: Check that all colleagues clear about how to input data onto the spreadsheet

- Have you agreed <u>who</u> will be using the spreadsheet? Will everyone be using it, or will specific colleagues collate the data and enter the information on to the spreadsheet (e.g. admin support staff)?
- Is everyone clear on how to fill in the spreadsheet and what information should be recorded in each column? The spreadsheet contains a number of drop-down boxes, which should assist with ensuring the right information is recorded, but it may be helpful to suggest colleagues familiarise themselves with what each column refers to before getting started. (Please note: It is important that colleagues do not remove or change any of the columns or drop-down boxes)

- Does everybody know where they can find all of the relevant information in order to complete the spreadsheet? (For example, the local patient identifier)
- Have you agreed when the spreadsheet will be filled in? Some columns may be completed as soon as the person is known to speech and language therapy, whereas others cannot be completed until discharge.

5: Consider how frequently you want to review the data that you have collected

You may wish to agree this in advance of collecting the data, especially if you are submitting your data to the RCSLT COVID-19 Data Collection Tool.

It may be helpful to agree a date by which all colleagues ensure that the spreadsheet is up-to-date (e.g. at the end of each month or quarter), or suggesting that everyone updates it on a regular basis (e.g. at least once per week/fortnight).

6: Agree the best way to manage the spreadsheets to ensure that they are accurate, complete and to avoid data entry errors.

Spreadsheets can be susceptible to data entry error and can be challenging to manage, particularly where the file is large and when multiple people are accessing the same spreadsheet. It may be helpful to decide who will be responsible for checking that the spreadsheet remains accurate and up to date, and flagging any potential errors in the spreadsheet. This could be the person who submits the data to the RCSLT COVID-19 Data Collection Tool.

Once you have decided how frequently you want to review the data (e.g. on a quarterly basis), we would suggest using the following approach at the end of each ‘review period’ or ‘cycle’ (e.g. 1 January – 31 March):

i. Create a copy of the spreadsheet containing the data collected to date and name it accordingly (e.g. COVID data 1 January – 31 March). Remove any rows in the spreadsheet containing incomplete data, thereby leaving only the patients who have been discharged and for whom the data entry is complete. This is the file that you will submit to the RCSLT COVID-19 Data Collection Tool (or use for analysis locally).
ii. Re-open the original file and remove any rows in the spreadsheet containing information about patients who have been discharged and for whom the data entry is complete. (This information is saved in the copy you have created). You will be left with the patients who have yet to be discharged (or the information has not yet been entered). Colleagues should continue to use this spreadsheet for the next quarter (i.e. 1 April – 30 June).

This approach should help to ensure that:

- the ‘working’ spreadsheet (used to record data) remains a manageable size so that it is easier to use;
- any gaps in the data are more easily identified on the spreadsheet, to help with keeping it up to date and complete; and,
- duplicate data is not submitted to the RCSLT COVID-19 Data Collection Tool (or used multiple times when analysing the data locally).