

Chief Medical Officer Directorate

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To: *as per covering email*

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Dear Colleague

FFP3 RESPIRATORS: ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

We are committed to keeping all of our staff safe and ensuring we are fully engaged with all of our Services to ensure that they have the resources they need for staff, including access to appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

The global supply chain situation for PPE remains challenging, including for FFP3 respirator masks, and we are working with partners within Scotland, across the 4 UK nations and globally to ensure continued supply and distribution.

NHS National Procurement are providing a daily bulletin to keep Boards and staff fully informed about stock, supply and latest delivery information.

National Stockpile of FFP3 Respirators

We have retained 1.5 million FFP3 masks in the national stockpiles which had recently passed their marked expiration date. However, we have now received an independent test report which confirms that this stock has passed a series of stringent quality assurance tests. We have been working with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Health Protection Scotland (HPS) who, having reviewed the independent test evidence, are content with the assessment that this stock is safe and can be used by NHS staff.

Dr Miles Mack, chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland, said:

“Effective personal protective equipment is essential and we understand the difficulties around sourcing that have been encountered.

“On the basis of Health Protection Scotland agreement, we have no issue with this stock of masks being distributed for use in the NHS at this time.”

This stock will be deployed for use across NHS Scotland. Be aware that these products will still be marked as having passed their use by/expiration dates, but please be assured that products being issued have passed stringent tests that demonstrate they remain safe to use.

Notice to all Staff Who May Use These FFP3 Respirators

The Health & Safety Executive have advised that all individual users of the FFP3 respirators which have expiry dates which have passed, must visually inspect the equipment (to check integrity of foam seals, straps, valves, nose clips as applicable) and these should be fit checked by the wearer before use. **Please ensure this message is relayed to all staff who may use these respirators, along with the FAQ at the end of this letter.**

Resources around PPE Use

HPS Guidance: HPS issued revised guidance on 11 March regarding the equipment required for staff, based on clinical and scientific evidence. This and all other HPS published COVID-19 Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings is available [here](#).

The HPS [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#) (NIPCM) provides guidance to all those involved in care provision and should be adopted for infection prevention and control practices and procedures. [Appendix 16](#) of the NIPCM outlines the recommended PPE for infections spread through respiratory droplets and [Appendix 6](#) of the NIPCM provides guidance on donning/doffing PPE.

Yours sincerely

DR CATHERINE CALDERWOOD
Chief Medical Officer

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Chief Nursing Officer

FAQs on using FFP3 Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

<p>Why are the FFP3 respirators (masks) provided different to the usual ones we use?</p>	<p>Due to the sudden increase in demand to use FFP3 masks due to COVID-19, supply chain is using supplies put aside for pandemic flu. They offer the same level of protection but are a different design and model.</p>
<p>Why do the FFP3 masks have a different expiry date?</p>	<p>Some products will have out-of-date 'use by/expiration' dates. Please be assured products we are issuing have passed stringent tests that demonstrate they are safe.</p>
<p>Why do I need to be 'Fit tested' again?</p>	<p>The performance of tight-fitting facepieces depends on achieving a good contact between the wearer's skin and the face seal of the facepiece. Each model of FFP3 mask is slightly different in its fit to each individual face. The only way to ensure that it will protect you is to repeat the Fit test again with each model of mask provided. This process to fit check is required every time used.</p>
<p>If I was 'Fit tested' to the make and model in 2009, do I need to do it again?</p>	<p>Provided your face shape has not changed since 2009 (weight changes, dental/facial surgery, facial moles/growths in seal area). It is possible that it may not be necessary. Do a Fit-check retest if in doubt!</p>
<p>We work in an area that is seeing many symptomatic patients and want to wear an FFP3 mask but do not have access to them?</p>	<p>FFP3 masks are only required when managing a patient/client with possible/confirmed COVID-19 who is undergoing an Aerosol generating Procedure (AGP) and when there are COVID-19 patients in High risk unit (ICU/ITU/HDU). The masks are only protective if you have been trained and tested in the correct method of application. If you are looking after this group of patients and there is a possibility that they have COVID-19 please escalate the need for urgent training.</p>
<p>Notice to all Staff Who May Use FFP3 Respirators which are passed their expiry date but have passed quality assurance testing for use</p>	<p>The Health & Safety Executive have advised that all individual users of the FFP3 respirator stock referred to in this letter must visually inspect the equipment (to check integrity of foam seals, straps, valves, nose clips as applicable) and these should be fit checked by the wearer before use.</p>