



23 October 2020

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

### **1. What is the PPE offer for adult social care set out in the Winter Plan?**

DHSC will provide free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for COVID-19 needs to CQC-registered care homes and domiciliary care providers via the PPE portal until the end of March 2021. Providers can register using their CQC registered email address.

DHSC will also provide free PPE to those social care providers who are not registered for PPE supply via the PPE Portal until the end of March 2021. This will be via Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), where they are continuing PPE distribution or via local authorities in the areas where LRFs are standing down regular PPE distribution. We will shortly be publishing a list of local contact details on GOV.UK.

### **2. Is there enough stock to fulfil the offer of free PPE for all adult social care providers?**

We have developed a PPE demand model to measure and understand demand from the adult social care sector, taking into account current PHE guidance and testing this with care sector colleagues and end-users. DHSC continues to collate additional information to improve the data and assumptions in the model and triangulates the model with real data on usage.

Hence we are confident that there is enough stock and incoming supply to fulfil current demand to meet the offer of free PPE for all adult social care providers.

### **3. Is there a PPE strategy?**

The PPE strategy was published on the 28<sup>th</sup> September and can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-strategy-stabilise-and-build-resilience>



## **THE PPE PORTAL**

### **4. Who can register to receive PPE through the DHSC PPE portal?**

Residential care homes and domiciliary care providers in England can register for the PPE portal. Providers will have received an invitation to register on the email address they have used to register with the CQC.

### **5. How do I sign up to the portal?**

Providers will have received an invitation to register on the email address they have used to register with the CQC. This email address can be used to register on the PPE portal here:

<https://nhs-ppe.co.uk/customer/authentication>.

Providers should be able to register on the portal without the invitation email, so long as they use the corresponding unique email address from the CQC database.

If an eligible provider has not received an email, or is having trouble with registration, they should call the customer service team on [0800 876 6802](tel:08008766802). The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week. They will be able to advise on which email address is recorded for the eligible provider on the Portal, and how to change it if required.

If you are not doing so already, please monitor our GOV.UK guidance page for updates on the PPE Portal for your sector:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment>

### **6. What if I have problems registering to or ordering from the portal?**

If an eligible provider is having problems with registering or ordering, they should call the customer service team on [0800 876 6802](tel:08008766802). The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week.

If you are not doing so already, please monitor our GOV.UK guidance page for updates on the PPE Portal for your sector:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment>



## Department of Health & Social Care

### **7. What if I'm not registered with CQC?**

Only CQC registered providers can use the Portal. If you are not registered with CQC then you can access PPE through the Local Resilience Forum or Local Authority route. Please see relevant section below for more details on this route.

### **8. Can I order PPE through the portal today?**

Those already registered with the portal can order immediately.

Eligible providers have been invited to the portal and will need to register in order to place a PPE order through the portal.

If an eligible provider has not received an email, or is having trouble with registration, they should call the customer service team on [0800 876 6802](tel:08008766802). The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week. They will be able to advise on which email address is recorded for the eligible provider on the Portal, and how to change it if required.

### **9. How much PPE will I be able to order from the Portal?**

The current order limits can be found on the GOV.UK guidance page for the PPE portal. Please continue to monitor this page on a weekly basis for updates: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment>.

These order limits have been significantly increased to enable all providers to hold at least a week's supply of PPE. The amount of PPE that can be ordered will depend on the size of the provider and the categories are detailed in the link above.

The Department will keep order limits under review to make sure these reflect the latest public health guidance, COVID-19 demand modelling and analysis as well as customer feedback.

PPE ordered through the portal is intended to meet the increased need that has arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means the PPE required over and above the amount that providers would use as 'business as usual' prior to COVID-19. Providers should not use the portal to order PPE for non-COVID-19 requirements and should obtain non-COVID-19 PPE through normal channels.



## Department of Health & Social Care

### **10. When will the portal be able to provide all of the PPE required for COVID-19 needs for providers?**

The PPE portal limits are being updated in a phased way. Order limits are based on modelling and analysis of social care providers' requirements arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is classed as the PPE that providers are using over and above Business-as-usual (BAU) use, due to COVID-19 infection control guidance or otherwise, rather than what would have been used pre-pandemic. While such PPE requirements will vary according to settings, contexts and individual circumstances, the PPE Portal's order limits can serve as an indicative approximation of such requirements (especially where providers may be in doubt).

At present the portal order limits are set to meet 100% of modelled demand for all residential care providers, and all small (0-99 clients) and medium (100-149) domiciliary care providers. We are working with large domiciliary care providers (150+) to find a suitable logistical approach to meet 100% of their modelled demand. We encourage these providers to use the portal at the current order limits in the meantime.

The current order limits can be found on the GOV.UK guidance page for the PPE portal. Please continue to monitor this page on a weekly basis for updates: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment>.

The amount of PPE that can be ordered will depend on the size and type of provider and the categories are detailed in the link above. The Department will keep order limits under review to make sure these reflect the latest public health guidance, COVID-19 demand modelling, analysis and provider feedback.

### **11. How often can PPE be ordered from the portal?**

Providers can place an order up to their order limit every seven days. We recommend ordering at the same time every week and noting the exact time of your order to avoid any issues. For example, you will not be able to place an order 6 days and 14 hours after your previous order.

### **12. Is PPE ordered through the portal free of charge?**

Yes, PPE ordered from the portal is free of charge.



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### **13. What are the delivery times for orders from the PPE Portal?**

Orders will be delivered by Royal Mail within four (4) days. Some orders will require more than one box and may be received as multiple deliveries.

### **14. If I am a large provider can I order centrally with multiple delivery points?**

Currently the PPE Portal is for individual provider sites to order PPE, which will be delivered directly to them via Royal Mail.

However, we are looking at the best way to service the largest social care providers with PPE and will work with the sector to find the best routes possible. We welcome your thoughts on how we can best engage with you on this. For this purpose, our DHSC inbox would be a good place to start for large providers or associations so that we can facilitate solution development: [ppe-portal@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:ppe-portal@dhsc.gov.uk)

For other general queries on the PPE portal, please use the PPE portal customer service on customer services on 0800 876 6802. The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week.

### **15. If I am a large provider, how can I have sight of the overall orders from each of my care settings?**

The portal functionality does not allow for a larger or overarching provider to track the multiple sites registered on the portal through one interface. At the current time, monitoring of orders remains the responsibility of the overarching provider.

### **16. How does the portal know the size of provider – is this based on CQC data?**

The provider self-selects their size when they register for the portal. We trust that providers will select the correct size. Though it should be noted that in the Portals '*terms of use*' it is stated that providers will be removed from the site if they are found to have deliberately selected a size category larger than they are.



**17. Are the size categories that providers are grouped into fixed?**

Providers self-select their size on the Portal, and these size groups determine a provider's weekly order limits. These are currently fixed, but we can change them if there are significant issues with the category sizes. Providers who are already registered would have to inform DHSC which of the new size categories they fell into and as this is a manual process switching groups may take some time. If a provider wishes to have their size or other information recorded on the portal database changed, or has any questions about using the PPE portal, please call the customer service team on 0800 876 6802. The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week, to help resolve your queries.

**18. What product range will be available through the PPE portal?**

The PPE portal has the following products available: Type II masks, Type IIR masks, aprons, gloves, hand hygiene and visors. As more products become available to order through the portal, this will be displayed on our GOV.UK guidance page: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment>

**19. Can I order FFP3s for Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs) on the portal?**

Currently the PPE Portal does not offer FFP3s. We are working on the best way of supplying respirator masks, ensuring enough variety in product type so masks can be properly fit tested. In the meantime, providers should continue to source FFP3s through their normal routes, or through their LRFs/LA.

**20. Can I order transparent facemasks on the portal?**

ClearMask is currently not available on the PPE portal. However, the PPE portal has the capability to add new products.

ClearMask is currently being piloted for the adult social care sector and is accessible via LRFs. We are assessing how useful and effective this product is for the sector. If you have used Clearmask please complete the [feedback survey](#). The feedback we receive will help inform future decisions on procurement.



## Department of Health & Social Care

### **21. How do I raise issues with quality of the products on the PPE portal?**

Product complaints should be raised at the following link: <https://www.ppe-dedicated-supply-channel.co.uk/product-issues/>

In order to address these issues, please provide as much information as you can about the product, including any packaging, following the instructions carefully.

## **LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM (LRF) OR LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) ROUTE**

### **22. Who can receive free PPE for COVID-19 needs via their local LRF or LA?**

Those providers of adult social care that are not registered for the PPE portal (for example, Personal Assistants, supported living, shared lives, day care services and local authority social care workforce) can access PPE for COVID-19 requirements through this route.

See also Question 28 below regarding the emergency buffer stock that is available via LRFs.

### **23. When will supplies start to become available?**

Providers should be able to access the supply of PPE from LRFs and LAs from the beginning of October and should contact their local authority for more information. We will shortly publish a list of the LRFs or LAs who will be distributing free PPE for COVID-19 needs to adult social care. This list will be published on GOV.UK along with relevant contact details.

Delivery methods of this PPE will depend on local arrangements.

### **24. How do I know who my LRF/LA contact is?**

This will be dependent on your location. Currently, providers should contact their local authority for more information.

We will shortly publish a list of the LRFs or LAs who will be distributing free PPE for COVID-19 needs to adult social care. This list will be published on GOV.UK along with relevant contact details.



## Department of Health & Social Care

### **25. What product range will be available through the LRF/LA route?**

The following product range will be available through the LRF/LA route: aprons, coveralls, gowns, gloves, Type IIR masks, FFP3 masks, eye protection, hand hygiene and clinical waste bags.

### **26. Can I access transparent facemasks via my LRF/LA?**

ClearMask is currently being piloted for the adult social care sector and is accessible via LRFs. We are assessing how useful and effective this product is for the sector. If you have used Clearmask please complete the [feedback survey](#). The feedback we receive will help inform future decisions on procurement.

### **27. How do I raise issues with quality of the products?**

Product complaints should be raised at the following link: <https://www.ppe-dedicated-supply-channel.co.uk/product-issues/> . Please provide as much information as you can about the product, including any packaging.

## **EMERGENCY ROUTE**

### **28. What do I do in an emergency?**

If PPE is needed within 72 hours, then the provider should contact the National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR). Providers should contact the NSDR via the 24/7 helpline: 0800 915 9964 (Freephone number in the UK), and a Direct Line from overseas: 0191 283 6543.

In the event of a wider shortage, i.e. locally, then LRFs have an emergency buffer stock. Providers of adult social care can obtain PPE via their LRF to manage temporary increases in demand due to spikes in local COVID-19 cases, winter pressures or in case of temporary difficulties accessing other distribution channels.



## Department of Health & Social Care

### WHOLESALE

#### **29. Will the social care wholesalers still be operating?**

Yes, the social care wholesalers will still be operating. The PPE portal can be used by providers to meet PPE needs arising from COVID-19. Providers should continue to use their wholesalers for 'business as usual' PPE requirements.

#### **30. Should we stop using wholesalers?**

The PPE portal can be used by providers to meet PPE needs arising from COVID-19. Providers should continue to use their wholesalers for 'business as usual' PPE.

Social care providers are free to choose whether to use their wholesale providers or the PPE portal to fulfil their COVID-19 related PPE needs. Social care providers should not use the portal for their 'business as usual' PPE needs, which should be source through providers' business as usual suppliers.

### COST OF PPE

#### **31. Is this PPE going to be free?**

Yes, free PPE is being provided until March 2021 for the additional COVID-19 needs of social care providers.

#### **32. Will I be reimbursed for PPE I have already purchased for Covid-19 needs?**

The Government has committed to providing free PPE to ASC for COVID-19 needs until March 2021 and will not be reimbursing providers for PPE that has been previously purchased. Local authorities can also use the 20% of the Infection Control Fund (running until March 2021) on other COVID-19 infection control measures, such as paying for the costs of PPE, however this does not include reimbursing costs already incurred.



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### **33. Will I be reimbursed for spending on PPE between now and when the portal is fully functioning?**

The Government has committed to providing free PPE to ASC for COVID-19 needs until March 2021 and the portal limits are being regularly updated in a phased approach to meet full COVID-19 demand. Local authorities can also use the 20% of the Infection Control Fund (running until March 2021) on other COVID-19 infection control measures, such as paying for the costs of PPE, however this does not include reimbursing costs already incurred.

### **34. How long will the temporary zero-rate of VAT on PPE last?**

The temporary zero-rate of VAT on PPE will end on the 31 October 2020. New Government policies to supply COVID-19 related PPE to frontline sectors, including care providers, means that this relief is no longer required to ensure supply of PPE is maintained, and the burden of (irrecoverable) VAT will not fall heavily on affected sectors.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

### **35. What steps should be taken if care workers and/or a local council becomes aware that an employer is not distributing the necessary levels of PPE to their staff?**

This can be reported to the CQC here <https://www.cqc.org.uk/give-feedback-on-care>.