

United Kingdom Homecare Association

The professional association for homecare providers



The Department of Health and Social Care's new [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Strategy](#) for England describes how the Government has reduced dependence on overseas suppliers and built a strong domestic supply base for PPE.

The strategy says:

- DHSC are confident they have secured enough supply for this winter period and have the processes and logistics in place to distribute PPE to where it is needed.
- By getting a clearer view of demand, developing a more resilient and diverse supply chain, and building up a stockpile of PPE, the UK supply position has stabilised and is much stronger.
- UK manufacturing is able to produce all but one product category (gloves). On average, UK based supply is anticipated to meet 70% of forecasted demand in December for all categories of PPE excluding gloves.
- Detailed analysis of DHSC's supply options for each category of medical grade PPE has been conducted and approximately four months' stock of each product category will be stored in Government warehouses by November 2020.
- The people who helped manage the procurement and distribution of PPE have returned to normal roles, but could be recalled at pace if required; relevant UK manufacturing could also be re-purposed at short notice.
- The DHSC has listened to reported practical difficulties with the use of some PPE experienced by women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals, and is taking action to ensure user needs are met.
- DHSC is looking at the decontamination and reuse of PPE, and to encourage more innovation in PPE in the future.

The strategy should give providers confidence that there will be a more secure supply of PPE going into winter, but there are still unanswered questions about funding PPE and how much free PPE will be available, issues that UKHCA continues to press Government to clarify. Last week Government announced the availability of free PPE, but is not yet delivering the volumes to do so.

With regard to weekly order limits to the PPE Portal for free PPE, the strategy says these are based on provider size, and will be 'increased to higher levels using modelled demand of COVID-19 PPE needs'. UKHCA has been assured that this will happen rapidly (in a matter of weeks) to meet significantly higher volumes. At the time of writing – they are meeting around 20% of demand. We have conversations this week to assist DHSC with its planning assumptions.

The strategy mentions the changes in day to day supply of PPE that have been announced already, i.e. the use of the PPE Portal as the main emergency supply route of free PPE for providers, rather than Local Resilience Forums. We are expecting Government to provide more clarity on supply routes in the coming weeks.

[Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Strategy - Stabilise and build resilience](#) published 28 September 2020.

The strategy relates to England. DHSC works closely with the devolved nations on demand and supply; each UK nation has its own supply chain operation for PPE and its own strategy.