



REVISED PPE GUIDANCE FOR HOMECARE IN ENGLAND – UKHCA

Revised guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in England was published last night, Monday, 20 July 2020.

This guidance is intended to be the main point of reference for homecare settings while there is sustained transmission of coronavirus.

This e-mail alert highlights the main points in the revised guidance: [“Personal protective equipment \(PPE\) – resource for care workers delivering homecare \(domiciliary care\) during sustained COVID-19 transmission in the UK”](#), dated 20 July 2020.

Please note that this guidance covers visiting homecare and extra care housing, but excludes live-in care, or where aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are taking place.

We encourage homecare providers to read the revised guidance in full.

The main changes in the guidance

Please note that references to tables and question numbers, below, relates to the numbering in the guidance document.

The principal changes are:

- A new table (Table 3) has been added;
- New questions and answers (numbers 4 and 34-37) have been added;
- Minor amendments to some other questions.

Guidance from the previous versions of the document remain largely the same, including the ‘continuous use’ of facemasks, which is dealt with in Question 9.

Table 3

The new Table 3 attempts to take recent recommendations for the NHS about the use of face masks and apply them to social care settings.

Table 3 largely applies to work situations which include careworkers changing from delivering direct care to visiting or working in their organisation's offices or other premises. **Table 3 should be read in conjunction with Questions 34 to 37.**

Table 3 calls for the use of Type I or Type II surgical masks to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus from staff members to other people (rather than protecting the staff member wearing the mask). This is because of emerging evidence that some people infected with COVID-19 can have very mild or no symptoms (see Question 4).

Please note that Type IIR (fluid resistant surgical masks or "FRSM") could be used as an alternative to Type I and Type II masks if stocks of those are not available. This is because Type IIR masks provide a higher specification than Types I or II. Question 32 provides more information about the different types of masks.

UKHCA understands that many providers have already put arrangements in place to reduce the contact between careworkers and office-based staff. For example many employers have made arrangements for staff to collect supplies of PPE from their office without the worker needing to enter communal areas which would bring them in close proximity to other people. Other employers have made arrangements to deliver PPE to workers away from the office.

Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs)

Although the guidance does not cover AGPs, Question 25 provides links which will help providers find the applicable guidance.

Live-in homecare

Careworkers who are living with a client on an ongoing basis and are not visiting other clients are considered to be part of the same household. They should follow all applicable public guidance (e.g. on household isolation) if any person in the household develops symptoms of COVID-19.

An explanation about why this revised PPE guidance does not apply to live-in care is provided in Question 26.

The specification of facemasks

UKHCA has spent several months pressing for comprehensive guidance from Government on the correct specification of facemasks, including what to do if specified PPE is in short supply. This has required input from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Public Health England (PHE) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulation Agency (MHRA).

This information has not been incorporated into the revised guidance just published, but we understand that it is nearing completion and we continue to urge that it is made available quickly.