

27 March 2020

Vaughan Gething AM
Minister for Health and Social Services
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Minister

Thank you for the opportunity to have a telephone conversation with you this morning regarding the situation with COVID-19.

As I informed you our members have been informing us of the issues they have had in accessing adequate supplies of suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). I have copied verbatim samples that have come from across Wales in all settings and sectors, of their concerns below:

- **Guidance in not clear and is causing confusion:**
 - The changes in approaches has made staff confused and not trusting of the new guidance
 - We have been advised by the guidelines to wear aprons. What about our arms? They will not be protected as we have short sleeve uniforms. The guidance isn't clear.
 - What has been extremely challenging is the constant change in advice/ guidelines, particularly in relation to PPE. When we are sending out updated advice this is causing anxiety with people, as whilst we are being totally transparent, people's confidence in the system is being eroded.

Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol y Deyrnas
Gyfunol/Royal College of
Nursing of the United Kingdom
20 Cavendish Square
Lundain/London W1G 0RN
Ffôn/Telephone

I&S

rcn.org.uk

Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol Cymru/
Royal College of Nursing Wales
Ty Maeth, Rhodfa Ddwyreiniol/
Brenin George V/King George
V Drive East, Caerdydd/Cardiff,
CF14 4XZ

Noddwr/Patron
Her Majesty the Queen
Llywydd/President
Professor Anne Marie Rafferty
CBE, FRCN

Prif Weithredwr ac
Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol/Chief
Executive & General Secretary
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Cyfarwyddwr, RCN Cymru/
Director, RCN Wales
Helen Whyley

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Royal College of Nursing
Ty Maeth
King George V Drive East
Cardiff
CF14 4XZ

Helen Whyley, RN, MA
Director, RCN Wales

Telephone **Irrelevant & Sensitive**
Email helen.whyley@rcn.org.uk

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gan hyrwyddo rhagoriaeth mewn arfer a llunio
polisiau iechyd

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BUDDSODDWR | **INVESTORS**
MEWN POBL | **IN PEOPLE**

- the latest guidance I have been given states that on general wards for Covid positive patients, it would ONLY be aprons, gloves and surgical masks. We use more than this when we isolate patients with influenza.
- Why is Public Health Wales guidance different from WHO?

- **PPE is of poor quality and unsuitable**

- The PPE is very poorly produced, is one size, so for example the visors fall off and does not instil confidence
- Staff fit test one mask and then get issued with a different type of mask so have to fit test everyone again. No one has the capacity to keep doing this.
- We fit test with one mask and then get issued with a different type of mask so have to fit test everyone again – No one has the capacity to keep doing this.
- FFP3 masks only to be used in certain procedures- Therefore only 30 masks given for a team of 30 staff! We have to wear basic fluid repellent masks.
- Basically our PPE is- Apron, short gloves, Fluid Repellent theatre masks, and Christmas cracker glasses.

- **The current status of stock levels of PPE is unclear**

- We are multidisciplinary team who receive referrals from within the community and hospitals, to prevent hospital admissions and to expedite discharges. Stocks of PPE have been difficult to acquire. Yesterday a supply was collected for our team. Visors were not available - we were given makeshift plastic glasses which are not fit for purpose. They look like they have come out of a Christmas cracker!
- We have also received out of date stock and have been told that we can use it as it has been tested. We have had no clarity on what tests, or the evidence. It is going to be very difficult to give confidence to staff that this is safe.
- Staff are issued with recommended levels of PPE for each area, and managers must ensure the guidelines are followed in their area. This concerns me greatly. One, I feel this is a concealed threat to me as a manager, if I disagree with the recommendation of general wards with positive patients to wear an apron only, not full gown. Two, I do disagree with the recommendations and feel that our staff will have exposure and they are the ones that will suffer the consequences. I truly believe it will have fatal consequences.

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