

Dear Colleagues,

**Health and social care worker access to FFP3 masks, based on staff preference during the transition period.**

This guidance outlines the process line managers and staff should follow when requesting access to FFP3 (respirator) masks in place of Type IIR (surgical) masks, based on personal preference. This follows publication of the de-escalation of COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures in Health and Social Care Settings to alleviate System Pressures (DL 2022 (07)).

On 21 December 2021 WHO updated recommendations on the use of FFP2/FFP3 masks by health and care workers in light of the increased transmission of Omicron variant.

The UK IPC cell reviewed the WHO recommendations on mask use by health and care workers, in light of the Omicron variant of concern statement and agreed that no changes were required to the extant UK guidance for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for seasonal respiratory infections in health and care settings (including SARS-CoV-2). Therefore this letter does not reflect a change in the IPC guidance, but rather is in response to a conditional recommendation within the WHO updated guidance (21 December) based on the individual staff member's personal preference.

With this in mind, Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) managers do not have a role in the process to allow staff access to an FFP3 mask, if it is being done on the basis of their own personal choice. Rather, an individual risk assessment should be carried out by the line manager, in line with current guidance and with consideration of the staff member's overall health, safety, physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as personal views/concerns about risks.

This guidance also clarifies the process and risk assessments for FFP3 masks for health and social care staff in the following circumstances:

**DL (2022) 10**

**19 April 2022**

**Addresses**

For action

Chief Executives NHS Boards and Local Authorities,  
NHS Chairs,  
Human Resource Directors,  
NHS Nurse Directors,  
NHS Medical Directors,  
Registered care home providers (adults and older people),  
Registered care at home providers,  
Supported housing providers.

For information

Infection Control Managers,  
Public Health Directors,  
Employee Directors,  
Workforce Senior Leadership Group,  
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships,  
Chief Social Work Officers,  
ARHA Scotland,  
Public Health Scotland,  
Care Inspectorate,  
Scottish Care,  
CCPS,  
COSLA.

**Enquiries to:**

Scottish Government  
Directorate for Health Workforce  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

E-mail