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Note that the PPE Portal was piloted in May and the first phase of the rollout involved coverage of GPs and *small* adult social care providers in June. The portal's coverage subsequently expanded to other primary care and social care providers (including *larger* adult social care providers and children's social care providers). Moreover, initial order limits available to eligible providers met a relatively small percentage of modelled demand (with the portal initially being an 'emergency top-up' system) and they have since been gradually increased with the aim of meeting the aforementioned need that has arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The percentage of modelled demand that the DHSC is meeting through the current order limits on the PPE Portal is dependent on type and size of provider. For the PPE items offered to adult residential care providers, the portal meets 100% of modelled demand for smaller providers and aims to go up to 100% of modelled demand for all providers over the next month. The Department of Health and Social Care keeps order limits under review based on the latest available public health guidance, COVID-19 demand modelling, analysis and customer feedback.

However, PPE from local resilience forums (LRFs) or Local Authorities (LAs) can be made available on the basis of clinical need, for example a demonstrable spike in local COVID-19 cases or temporary difficulties in accessing other distribution channels. This PPE will also be free of charge. All other adult social care services not supplied via the PPE Portal will be able to access PPE via their LRFs or LAs, depending on local arrangements.

7. To write to the Committee setting out instances of fraud when attempting to procure ventilators.

Information on the nature of checks and counter fraud measures undertaken is not provided in this response as it would provide significant assistance to potential fraudsters.

Claims of Access to stock

The Department was approached by organisations claiming to have access to stock, however on investigation, however they were unable to substantiate these claims to the Department's satisfaction and so orders were not progressed.

The Department considers that the majority of these instances where companies or individuals that genuinely believed that they could access stock, but were being over-optimistic about their capabilities given the unprecedented market conditions.

There were also a small number of very clear examples of attempted fraud. These include:

- suppliers claiming to have stock in a foreign country. we would then ask for the address so that staff from the relevant Embassy could inspect it, the stock would then immediately be sold before they could confirm address, or in some cases suppliers would simply put the phone down; and
- suppliers making wild or clearly unrealistic claims: for example where a recognised make would be offered at volumes significantly in excess of a year's normal production.

Often it was difficult to differentiate between over-optimism in complex supply chains and deliberate fraud. The due diligence process undertaken to test the proposed was designed to protect against both over-optimism and fraud.

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Fraudulent Documentation

In order to assess the validity of offers, the Department requested documentation from potential suppliers, this included CE certificates and letters of authorisation from manufacturers (given we knew that specific manufacturers issued these to their authorised resellers).

Whilst some of these documents could be independently verified (e.g. CE certificates) others were more challenging to verify.

There were a very small number of cases where clearly fraudulent documents were supplied: these were not taken forward.

More sophisticated fraud

The Department was also targeted by one sophisticated suspected fraud. This involved a credible UK reseller and credible overseas distributor. A contract was agreed and a significant deposit paid.

Overnight the UK reseller received a request from the overseas distributor to change the contractual chain and transfer the deposit to a previously unknown third party and bank account. The UK reseller refused to do so and flagged this to the Department. The deal was abandoned and the deposit returned.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID WILLIAMS CB
Second Permanent Secretary