



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Reminder for Care Home Staff

Providers are asked to be mindful of the difference between the wearing of a “PPE mask” at work in a care setting, compared to the general requirement to wear a “face covering” in other settings. With “face coverings” now being mandatory outside of work under certain circumstances, and the wide availability of “fashion masks/face coverings”, some care staff may look to use their own “face covering/fashion mask” as opposed to the official “PPE masks” supplied by their employer.

Care staff are required to use fluid resistant surgical masks (IIR) when undertaking their care and support role. These are the standard style of PPE mask Local Authorities are issuing to care providers.

Other face coverings (or fashion masks), such as the re-usable fabric face coverings (or clear plastic face guards used without a PPE mask) do not provide adequate protection in social care settings. Not only could this present a risk to the staff member and the service user, it could also result in the person using such a face covering and those they have cared for being classed as a ‘contact’ for the purposes of Test, Trace, Protect (TTP), and therefore require them to isolate from others.

It would be appreciated if providers could remind staff to ensure the official IIR masks are used at all times (with the exception of ‘FFP3’ masks, where it is identified that these are required).

The official Health and Safety Executive website (www.hse.gov.uk) features information about the differences between official PPE masks (which are tested to prescribed safety standards), and face coverings, which are a general aid to help reduce the spread of virus particles.

Local Authorities hold sufficient stock of the correct PPE masks. Anyone requiring additional supplies should contact:

- Swansea - mark.davies@swansea.gov.uk
- Neath Port Talbot - PPE@npt.gov.uk

