The Scottish Government
Culture, Pay and Partnership
Health Workforce Directorate

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Scottish Government
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Dear Colleagues

Health and care worker preferential access to FFP3 masks

1. This guidance outlines the process line managers and staff should follow when requesting access to filtering facepiece 3 (FFP3) (respirator) masks based on personal preference.

2. This should be read in conjunction with the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) and the Care Home Infection Prevention and Control Manual (CH IPCM).

3. Please note that this DL together with the forementioned revised manuals supersedes the information contained in DL(2022)10.

Background

4. DL(2022)10 was introduced in April 2022 to facilitate wider access to FFP3 masks based on the risk of pathogens including the SARS-CoV-2 (the virus responsible for COVID-19).

5. This was in response to a conditional recommendation within the WHO updated guidance (21 December 2021) regarding FFP3 mask use based on the individual staff member's personal preference.

6. DL(2022)10 offered a process for staff to access FFP3 masks with a view to supporting their health, safety, physical and psychological wellbeing.

7. This provision was specifically for alleviating psychological distress of those individuals who were concerned about their wellbeing in environments where COVID-19 was present.

8. DL(2022)10 has been reviewed and updated to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

DL(2026)11

15 October 2026

Addressees

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, ARHAI Scotland, Public Health Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Scottish Care, CCPS, COSLA.

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Action

9. We are asking health boards and social care employers to share this letter with their teams to ensure they are familiar with this DL as well as the National Infection Prevention and Control Guidance.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Russell
Director of Health Workforce

This DL that supersedes DL(2022)10 still supports provisions of preferential access but this will be in line with the guidance set out in chapter 2 of the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) and the Care Home Infection Prevention and Control Manual (CH IPCM).

This means that where the clinical guidance does not indicate this is required but an individual wishes to access an FFP3 mask, this will be supported.

Responsibility for ensuring that staff are given access to FFP3 masks, based on their personal preference, lies with the individual line manager rather than Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) managers.

Where a staff member chooses to wear an FFP3 mask based on personal preference, they should be supported with individual circumstances being considered to enable signposting to further support if required.

Where an FFP3 mask is requested, it must be face-fit tested by a qualified fit tester to ensure the correct size is worn and face-fit checked each time it is worn. Staff requesting an FFP3 mask should be given time to attend the face-fit testing appointment.