



To:

Workforce Senior Leadership Group
HR Directors
Medical Directors
Nursing Directors
HAI Executive Leads
Infection Control Managers
Chief Officers (NHS Boards and Local Authorities)
Scottish Care
Care Inspectorate
Coalition of Care and Support Providers
Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

18th September

Dear Colleagues,

COVID-19: INTERIM GUIDANCE ON THE EXTENDED USE OF FACE MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS IN HOSPITALS, PRIMARY CARE, WIDER COMMUNITY CARE AND ADULT CARE HOMES

Against the backdrop of rising COVID-19 cases in the community, I am writing to make you aware of an update to the [Interim Guidance on the Extended Use of Face Masks](#). This document has been developed following the publication of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) [Guidance](#) for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings.

This guidance has been extended to cover primary care (GP practices, dentists, opticians and pharmacies) and wider community care (including adult social or community care and adult residential settings, care home settings and domiciliary care) in addition to acute hospitals (including mental health, maternity, neonatal and paediatrics) and community hospitals.

It outlines that staff engaged in direct care should wear a face mask (Fluid Resistant (Type IIR) Surgical Mask) throughout their shift which includes when they are in contact with their work colleagues. It also outlines advice about the wearing of face coverings or masks by any individuals who visit the places listed above, including children aged 5 and over.

This guidance was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and has been reviewed by the National ARHAI Service NSS. The Scottish Government will continue to keep the guidance under review and as such will continue to label this guidance 'interim'. This is particularly relevant in the context of remobilising services within health and care settings and



as further scientific evidence emerges. The Interim Guidance is consistent with other relevant guidance (including national guidance on public use of face coverings).

Key Updates

Staff

- It is now recommended that staff providing **direct care** to individuals in the following settings should wear a Fluid Resistant (Type IIR) Surgical Mask at all times throughout their shift. This includes acute hospitals (including mental health, maternity, neonatal and paediatrics), community hospitals, primary care (GP practices, dentists, opticians and pharmacies) and wider community care (including adult social or community care and adult residential settings, care home settings and domiciliary care).
- Non-clinical staff members should also wear a Fluid Resistant (Type IIR) Surgical Mask if they need to enter an area where direct care is undertaken. In hospitals, this might include porters, or other staff members who access an office through a ward or direct care area.
- In areas of health or social care where direct care is not being undertaken, but where physical distancing isn't always possible and all other controls are not possible, face masks/coverings should be worn by all staff.

Individuals receiving care

- All individuals should wear a face mask/covering (if tolerated) when attending hospitals and primary care settings. Staff working in hospitals and primary care should ensure that anyone who is not required to wear a face covering is not forced to do so and is not refused treatment – this includes women in labour and children aged under 5.
- All individuals in the medium and high-risk pathways should wear a Fluid Resistant (Type IIR) Surgical Mask if this can be tolerated and does not compromise care.
- Individuals receiving care are not required to wear a face mask/covering in their own home. However, they may choose to and this should be respected.

Visitors

- Any individual visiting or attending an acute hospital (including mental health, maternity, neonatal and paediatrics), community hospital, primary care premises (GP practices, dentists, opticians and pharmacies) or an adult care home should wear a face mask/covering.

Further detail on these key updates can be found in the [guidance](#) and in the associated [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) document](#). The FAQs document will be updated to provide further clarity, as required.

Timescales

This guidance comes into effect on Monday 21 September and responsible parties are asked to implement it by 30 September.



PROFESSOR FIONA MCQUEEN
Chief Nursing Officer