

**From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride**



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD) 26/2020

FOR ACTION

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social
Care Board/HSC Trusts/ NIAS

GP Medical Advisers, Health & Social Care Board
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward
distribution to practice staff)

OOHs Medical Managers (for onward distribution to staff)

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST

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Our Ref: HSS(MD) 26/2020

Date: 19 April 2020

Dear Colleague

COVID-19 – PPE Guidance Update

ACTION REQUIRED

Chief Executives must ensure this information is drawn to the attention of all relevant clinical staff to enable them to respond accordingly.

The HSCB must ensure this correspondence is cascaded to all General Practitioners, Out-of-Hour Facilities, relevant Dental Services and Community Pharmacists.

The PHA must ensure this correspondence is shared with all relevant staff to enable them to respond accordingly.

RQIA must share this correspondence with all independent providers.

You will be aware that Public Health England (PHE) issued guidance on 17 April 2020 regarding the reuse of Personal Protective equipment (PPE). We want to advise you that this guidance has not been implemented in Northern Ireland at this point in time. If or when such guidance might be required locally the Department will consider the situation, taking account of the national and international scientific evidence, and will provide further advice at the appropriate time. Such consideration will be undertaken if required, and only following full engagement and in consultation with professional bodies and trade union representative organisations.

On 2 April 2020 updated UK-wide guidance on the use of PPE was issued by PHE. This guidance was agreed by the Chief Medical, Dental and Nursing Officers across the UK as well the relevant Public Health bodies, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the Royal College of Nursing. A further update to this guidance was published on 10 April 2020. This guidance sets out practical recommendations on the use of PPE as part of safe systems of working. It makes recommendations on where PPE can be used for single use or on a sessional basis, depending on the nature of work and the setting in which work is undertaken. It includes reference to sessional use of visors and goggles. Further guidance will be issued shortly through the Public Health Agency (PHA) regarding the re-use of suitable visors and goggles in Northern Ireland.

The Department is acutely aware of the challenges arising from issues associated with PPE, and we are working tirelessly to ensure that every conceivable effort is made to support staff, and indeed the broader community, to understand and make informed decisions about when and how PPE should be used.

The Department fully understand that staff on the frontline need reassurance. We believe the updated guidance, continuing to provide necessary support to staff delivering care, and securing greater quantities of PPE for Northern Ireland will play a part in allaying concerns.

The Department has established a new dedicated email contact point for all staff to raise any concerns they may have in relation to PPE. The email address is Covid-19PPE.queries@health-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer



Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer

Circulation List

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency *(for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff)*
Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board *(for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies)*
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts
Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB
Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board *(for cascade to GP Out of Hours services)*
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts *(for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads)*
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts *(for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives)*
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts
RQIA *(for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals)*
Medicines Management Pharmacists, HSC Board *(for cascade to prescribing advisers)*
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust
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Professor Colin Adair, Director of the NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development, QUB
Joe Brogan, Assistant Director of Integrated Care, HSCB
Trade Union Side
Michael Donaldson *(for distribution to all General Dental Practitioners)*

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>