

Date 20 March 2020
Your Ref AMcM/TG
Our Ref COVID19/PPE

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Essential Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

There remains understandable degree of anxiety among some staff about what PPE should be used and what is available. Please be assured that the guidance on PPE has been robustly risk assessed, and you should continue to refer to the guidance issued by Health Protection Scotland on Infection Prevention & Control in Healthcare Settings.

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

In terms of the continuity of supply of essential products, such as face masks and hand gel, along with all NHS organisations we are suffering from an unprecedented demand leading to delays and shortages in availability. It has been necessary to manage our demand based on the priority of clinical need, and this means generic alternative products are being provided in place of what you order. Dependent on stock held nationally, you may also see a restriction in the quantity received.

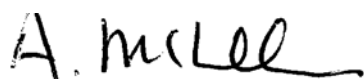
It is worth noting that NHS Boards do not operate local warehouses or stockholdings; rather our supplies needs are met from the National Distribution Centre (NDC). If national stockholdings, now impacted by global demand, encounter gaps in supply, the national team will apportion each NHS Board an equitable allocation of what is available at that particular time.

A group has been set up, chaired by the Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals, to manage and prioritise extraordinary requests for supplies, as well as create contingencies for gaps outwith our control, and we ask for your patience while we stretch what is available nationally to the best effect locally. This group membership is set to capture issues raised at daily safety huddles and other command centre groups.

As a result of this unprecedented demand the National Distribution Centre remains at least 24 hours behind normal delivery schedules despite all their efforts, and is in operation 24/7, to meet the demand. This means that you may see a change in your scheduled deliveries but be assured your needs will be met as soon as possible. You may also receive smaller amounts issued with a higher frequency of deliveries.

Just as the public are being advised against panic buying and clearing supermarket shelves of essential items, so it is with essential healthcare supplies. It is important that staff request and consume stock carefully according to what each situation demands in order to conserve stocks for the weeks and months to come.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. McMahon'.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey Gillies'.

<p>Professor Alex McMahon Executive Director Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs Executive Lead for REAS & Prison Healthcare</p>	<p>Tracey Gillies Executive Medical Director NHS Lothian</p>
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