



Information

for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS

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& OTHERS



Issue 20

PPE when carrying out aerosol generating procedures in care homes across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Dear colleague,

It is unusual for aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) to be undertaken in care homes, but some delivering complex care may do so - procedures such as open suctioning of airways when caring for residents with tracheostomies or for others who are receiving ventilator support such as CPAP or NIV BIPAP.

Current PPE guidance recommends that staff need to use the following PPE when they are involved in aerosol generating procedures:

- A filtering face piece class 3 (FFP3) respirator
- Long sleeved fluid repellent gown that covers arms and body
- A full-face shield or visor
- Disposable plastic gloves

We are sure many homes have reviewed the PHE guidance and have sourced appropriate PPE, arranged for FFP3 mask fit testing and have ensured that their staff understand how to don and doff this more specialised equipment. But circumstances vary across homes, some have FFP3 masks but have not had them fitted, some homes have only managed to source FFP2 masks or have no specialist equipment at all.

It is each home's responsibility to ensure that their staff are appropriately equipped. We recognise sourcing PPE can be difficult in the current circumstances and are contacting homes to establish how many staff are carrying out AGP's, so we can support homes (where required) with mask fit testing for a FFP3 respirator and where required, a small supply of these masks.

The resources at our disposal are limited so can only be actioned on a priority and availability basis, and would therefore advise homes that independent FFP3 mask fit testers can be found on the [fit2fit website](#). These independent FFP3 mask fit testers will charge for their service and you will of course need to source FFP3 respirators, through your normal supply network or A&C enquiry line if this fails.

In the meantime, the Health and Safety Executive has stated that FFP2 respirators also offer protection against COVID-19 and can be used if FFP3 respirators are not available.

FFP2 respirators do not need to be fit tested but fit checked. Until you can arrange fit testing for FFP3 respirators, it is recommended that FFP2 be used whenever AGP's are performed. Ensure that a fit check has been completed, please see the attached guidance on [how to put on and fit check an FFP3 respirator](#).

Long sleeved disposable fluid repellent gowns need to be used when carrying out AGP's. These gowns are in very short supply and unfortunately there are none in the Emergency stock.

[PHE guidance](#) states that the following options can be considered for AGP's if gowns are unavailable:

- Disposable, non-fluid repellent gowns/coveralls with a disposable apron with forearm washing once gown/coverall is removed.
- Re-usable (washable surgical gowns/coveralls or similar suitable clothing e.g. long-sleeved laboratory coat, long sleeved patient gown, industrial coverall) with a disposable apron with forearm washing once the gown/coverall has been removed. Clothing can be decontaminated in care home laundry if the home can comply with the management of infectious linen, as outlined in the [technical memorandum](#).

FFP3 Mask Fit Testing Support

Partners across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) have come together to offer fit testing support to homes in difficulty. Please note this support is time limited and will not be an on-going offer.

Please be aware that you may be contacted with an offer of mask fitting support. In the main, mask fit testing will be via appointment at venues around the Leicestershire and the City. We would ask that you prioritise attendance to a maximum of 8 staff. We can only exceed this in exceptional circumstances. The current sites are St Johns House, 30 East Street, Leicester, Coalville Community Resource Centre and the Training Room at the Croft Depot, Arbor Road, Croft.

When booking, please inform the administrator of your home's FFP3 status. Staff attending must bring the FFP3 masks you are using in your home, so that these can be fit tested; if you don't have any FFP3 masks, one will be provided for the test and an initial supply arranged.

Please note some staff may fail the mask fit test and should not perform any AGP until a make and model of FFP3 can be found that properly meets the mask fit test, for that staff member.

Homes with an outbreak have been prioritised and will be contacted to arrange a fit test session on site. Please be aware that the tester will require PPE provision.

This bulletin is going to all residential establishments to ensure that this offer reaches everyone and makes certain that no facility is undertaking these procedures without the necessary respirator and fit testing. Please contact the [A&C enquiry line](#) (if you haven't already) to ensure you are identified as needing support.

Guidance has been produced highlighting the personal protective equipment needed when [carrying out aerosol generating procedures in care homes or with an individual in their own home setting](#) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Once confirmed the dates of the training will be made available in a future bulletin and on [Coronavirus guidance for care providers](#) page.

Yours sincerely

The LLR AGP Support Cell