



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Personal Protective Equipment

May 2020
(CB48271)

I have been contacted by a number of constituents raising a variety of interlinked points about PPE. I felt therefore that the best way of addressing them all is to report back what I know of the situation. Once you have had the opportunity to assess the information, if you feel you would like me to see if anything can be done about your particular case please contact me again.

Firstly, I must say that I am not involved in shaping the Government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, either in respect of the situation to date or to the end of the lockdown, which lies with Departments that are directly involved and ultimately with Number Ten. Where appropriate therefore I have fed your messages into the Government and asked my colleagues to give them very careful consideration.

You will be aware of the challenges that we have faced in acquiring the vast quantities of PPE that are needed every day. We are continuing to build up our domestic ability to manufacture PPE, harnessing the remarkable energy and adaptability of British industry, and also looking abroad to international suppliers. The Department for Health and Social Care, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Trade have all created new PPE teams, and they are working collaboratively to successfully source PPE from around the world. However, with every other country also trying to acquire this equipment, global demand for PPE is at unprecedented levels. This difficult situation has been made harder still, by the decision of some countries to impose PPE export bans. Maintaining a reliable supply of PPE for the UK, is crucial to tackling this virus, and it will continue to be at the heart of the government's response.

Another challenge has been to make sure that PPE gets to the tens of thousands of health and social care settings that make up the front-line. The government has already released the national influenza pandemic stockpiles and has enlisted the help of the armed forces to lead a national 24/7 PPE-distribution operation.

PPE supplies have also been delivered to Local Resilience Forums (LRF)*, to allow them to respond to local spikes in need, including those in social care and primary care settings not

linked to the NHS Supply Chain.

Since 2nd April care homes and other care and support providers have been able to approach BCP Council to request supplies of PPE when they have not been able to secure it through the national supply chain routes and they have an urgent need. The National Adult Social Care Plan published on 15th April sets out how this system of bulk supplies via LRFs will remain in place as a back-stop mechanism for the adult social care sector until the intended new Clipper system for the supply of PPE to the adult social care is fully established <https://www.ppe-dedicated-supply-channel.co.uk/>.

The council have processed 83 orders from care homes plus another 55 from homecare agencies and private care providers in the BCP area. The PPE supplied has included 23000 masks, 22000 pairs of gloves and 16000 aprons or overalls. They have also issued hand gel and goggles or visors. The PPE has been issued in line with Public Health Guidance which, you will appreciate, has changed over the last 5 weeks. On the very few occasions they have not been able to supply PPE it has been because a provider has asked for equipment that is over and above the Public Health guidance in place at that time. Providers with the greatest and most urgent need have been targeted. This has occasionally meant that some have received a smaller quantity than they asked for, and were invited to request a further quantity if their expected delivery, from their usual supplier, was delayed. At the end of this month, they will review their PPE supply arrangements given the introduction of the Clipper system. PPE that has been supplied by the LRF and Council has been provided free to care settings thus far. From week commencing 11th May the Council will charge cost prices for the PPE they provide.

The government has also made available £3.2 billion to local authorities to support their efforts to tackle COVID-19, with a clear expectation that the vast majority of this is to support adult social care providers. The Council consequently has applied a 10% enhancement on the fees they normally pay across all care providers. This enhancement is being paid to meet providers additional expenditure because of pressures and risks during the COVID-19 outbreak. The additional 10% will apply until the 31st July 2020. The Council will review the need to continue this additional funding at the beginning of July 2020, taking into account the advice and guidance of the Government at that time and the level of additional funding available.

As of 1st May 2020, PPE purchased by care homes, businesses, charities and individuals to protect against Covid-19 will be free from VAT for a three-month period. Ministers have already removed import duties from PPE.

Additional funding is being made available, as of 18th May specifically for the purpose of infection control in care homes. BCP Council area is to receive £6,063,560. It is expected that each care home should receive an amount per CQC registered bed which in the BCP Council area amounts to 4724, representing 75% of the funding. The remaining 25% must be used for infection control measures, however local authorities are able to allocate based on need. This may involve support for domiciliary care workforce measures.

With over 1 billion individual pieces of PPE already delivered to over 58,000 health and social care settings, nobody should underestimate the scale of the challenge. The government is continuing to work extensively with industry, social care providers, the NHS and NHS supply chains to maintain and improve PPE delivery even further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. B.', with a horizontal line underneath.

*The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 establishes a framework for emergency planning and response from local to national level, including the provision of temporary emergency regulations.

The aim is to reduce the risk from emergencies so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) coordinates how Dorset's emergency responders support this, by taking decisions and actions in line with objectives to:

- protect life;
- contain and mitigate the impacts of an emergency;
- create the conditions for a return to normality.

The Local Resilience Forum is the principal mechanism for multi-agency cooperation under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Dorset LRF is based on the Dorset Police boundary, which covers the Local Authority areas of Dorset Council and BCP Council.