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Dear colleague,

### **FFP3 RESPIRATORS: OUR COMMITMENT TO SCOTLAND'S DENTAL COMMUNITY**

NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) is committed to providing Scotland's dental community with appropriate PPE that is safe, rigorously tested and proven to be highly effective. We are equally determined to ensure that you have the reassurance that dentists and patients deserve.

To support you and your colleagues following the recent resumption of aerosol generating procedures (AGP), NSS National Procurement has distributed large quantities of FFP3 respirators free of charge.

The vast majority of these have been the 3M 1863 model. This remains the most widely distributed FFP3 respirator across the Scottish healthcare landscape and accounts for more than half the total number of respirators supplied across the NHS. Hundreds of thousands of this type of mask have been distributed to your colleagues across the NHS family and it has proven to be highly effective.

### **FFP3 RESPIRATORS: CONTINUOUS QA CHECKS**

Each month, the 1863 mask is supplied to all corners of our NHS, being used in critical areas such as emergency and acute care, and by frontline staff every day.

**The 1863 has been tried and tested, over many months, across multiple sectors, and in huge quantities. It has been used safely since March in urgent dental care settings.**

Each colleague is individually fit tested to ensure the 1863 mask provides that high degree of protection using a quantitative test regime. This is supported by the Portacount testing equipment, providing accurate filtration data to ensure the product meets these stringent requirements.

This testing has been ongoing for every user of the mask since March this year. This continuous quality assurance process provides additional reassurance that the mask continues to fully meet the required standards.

Each dental practitioner will receive this personal fit testing assurance prior to using a FFP3 respirator. Once completed this will be the mask you will continue to use.

Any change of mask will require the fit test process to be repeated to ensure continued protection.

## FFP3 RESPIRATORS: PROVEN WITHIN DENTISTRY AND ACROSS OUR NHS

Within dentistry, the Public Dental Service has and continues to use the 1863 for dental GA provision. Urgent Dental Care Centres have used these masks since March 2020 without issue.

The 1863 mask has been revalidated for use in line with the industry-standard process to extend the accredited life. All masks issued are in date for use and have fitness-for-purpose accreditation. The manufacturer has confirmed that it is a legitimate practice to extend the life of an FFP3 mask and stated, "the owner of the products may choose to have them tested for continued efficacy".

Dentists who receive products still marked as having passed their use-by/expiration dates can be assured those products have passed stringent tests that demonstrate they remain safe to use.

In addition, the 1863 is particularly suited to dental practitioners because so many of their staff have been successfully face-fitted to 1863s.

The 1863 FFP3 masks were issued from the UK's national pandemic stockpile after independent test reports confirmed that this stock has passed a series of stringent quality assurance tests. They have been endorsed for use by the Health and Safety Executive and the BMA previously, along with the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland.

More than a dozen independent face-fitting professionals have been recently recruited to accelerate the face-fitting programme and further support dentists.

Should dental practitioners consider they do not wish to use these products they can, of course, purchase their own alternatives. This will require dental practitioners to make arrangements for their own fit testing. In such circumstance the patients cannot be charged for these. It is noted that using alternatives also means the safety of patients and staff resides directly with the dental practitioner.

NSS, in partnership with Scottish Government, has recently secured a sustainable long-term Scottish supply pipeline for FFP3 masks. There will be phased transition before the end of the year.

In the meantime, we understand the concerns of dentists but we can reassure them in the strongest terms that the FFP3 respirators being supplied to allow them to continue their vital work treating patients are safe, rigorously tested and proven to be highly effective.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cushley



**Director of Dentistry  
NHS National Services Scotland**

Gordon Beattie



**Director of National Procurement  
NHS National Services Scotland**

