



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07701/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

4 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 9 October on behalf of the petition committee regarding the manufacturing and production of PPE locally within Wales.

We have a stable supply of PPE to meet the needs of our health and social care workforce. Since early March, we have distributed over 398 million items of PPE to health and social care in Wales. Over 196 million of these items have been issued for use in social care settings. We have over 252 million items remaining in stock with orders placed for more than 322 million further items.

Given the relative strength of the NHS Wales stock and supply position, we have been able to support the other UK nations by issuing over 14 million items of PPE through mutual aid since the onset of the pandemic.

In order to maintain a secure position over the winter period, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) have developed a strategic plan for PPE procurement to March 2021. As set out in this plan, a stockpile of critical products will be held to ensure resilience and self-sufficiency of supply for the health and social care sectors in Wales throughout the winter and to March 2021 and the PPE stockpile will be increased to 24 weeks supply by the end of November 2020.

In support of the Welsh Government's commitment to continue to provide social care settings with appropriate PPE for the duration of the pandemic, NWSSP will continue to source and distribute PPE to local authorities to meet the needs of the social care sector for the remainder of this financial year. A Service Level Agreement has been agreed between NWSSP and the WLGA to formalise current PPE provision to the social care sector to March 2021.

As well as to the NHS and social care, PPE has also been issued to GPs, optometrists, urgent dental centres and pharmacies.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

A standard service specification has been agreed for all primary care contractor services with a plan to extend the standard PPE packs currently supplied by NWSSP to dental and optometry contractors to bespoke packs over the coming months.

The vast majority of PPE issued to the health and care sectors in Wales has been directly sourced by NWSSP, through both national and international procurement routes. The winter Procurement Plan assumes self-sufficiency in sourcing PPE for Wales, rather than depending on UK-Government supply, however, we continue to work with the other UK nations, identifying opportunities to combine our procurement efforts to bring in vital new stocks and to secure better-value PPE purchases. A UK-wide PPE procurement protocol has been developed to support this.

Domestic PPE production is an important lever for the foundation economy in Wales and we are working with our partners in industry to supplement the production of PPE supplies through innovation and new manufacturing routes. The very positive response to the First Minister's call on Welsh industry to help produce extra supplies of PPE for the NHS and social care at the onset of the pandemic resulted in face masks, face coverings, visors, scrubs aprons and hand sanitiser being produced locally.

Welsh businesses have an important role to play in strengthening our resilience to further peaks of COVID-19 and the risks posed by a no-deal Brexit. The pandemic has highlighted the fragility of the global supply chain and our aim is to increase the amount of PPE manufactured in Wales. Our PPE procurement plan blends local manufacture with international supply. A number of Welsh manufacturers are already producing face masks which meet the very high safety requirements for medical-grade PPE, with others producing both disposable and reusable face-coverings for use by the wider public. This is in addition to local production channels for aprons, scrubs and gowns which have been developed since the start of the pandemic with support from both Industry Wales and the Welsh Government.

Industry Wales and their partners will be integral to informing our future engagement with business regarding future PPE requirements as well as exploring the potential to on-shore more of our other procurement requirements.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services