



Department of Health & Social Care

18/05/2020

Dear colleague,

Personal assistants (PAs) currently employed through a personal budget (PB) often deliver services with a clinical need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as such, they need access to this PPE where recommended by Public Health England. PPE guidance is frequently updated and a resource is being developed to specifically include PAs that will be published on the [PPE Hub](#). As it stands, the current recommended PPE for PAs that don't live with their employer can be found [here](#).

If a PA does live in the same accommodation as the individual they are supporting, they will only need further PPE than standard if the individual they are supporting is in the shielded group or has symptoms of COVID-19. The required PPE for these cases can be found [here](#).

This letter asks Local Authorities (LAs) to help to support employers of personal assistants to have access to the necessary PPE, through the most suitable supply chain and in line with the clinical need in the local area.

Feedback from several LAs suggests that the most useful step is for PA employers to have a direct contact at the LA who has responsibility for PPE issues relating to PAs. Other suggestions are included below and actions that were recommended for LAs through the [Direct Payment Guidance](#) should continue to be followed alongside this.

Accessing PPE

The process by which LAs should acquire PPE for PA employers who cannot access this through normal routes, or are not used to acquiring PPE, is the following, proceeding down the list if unable to acquire PPE from previous mechanisms:

1. Business as usual suppliers
2. Adult social care wholesalers
3. Local Resilience Forums
4. NSDR line

These supply chains are explained in more detail below:

1. Business as usual suppliers

If LAs have a BAU supplier/suppliers that they use to provide PPE, they should be approached first for stock that can be supplied to PA employers.

2. Adult social care wholesalers

If unable to use the previous supply option, LAs should try to acquire PPE from the list of 11 wholesalers that have received stock of PPE for onward sale to the adult social care workforce. These wholesalers can be found in the letter sent out to LAs on 01/05/20. These wholesalers have been instructed to continue to accept new clients and have been provided with stock where possible.

3. PPE via Local Resilience Forums

There have been several drops of PPE delivered to the 38 Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) to help LRFs respond to urgent local spikes in need across the adult social care system and some other front-line service. This includes personal assistants providing adult social care. These stocks of PPE are intended to support vital services which are not linked to the NHS Supply Chain, and only where service providers are unable to obtain PPE through their usual supplier and the dedicated wholesaler routes.

LAs should take the following actions to ensure appropriate PPE is available to people employing PAs, so that they have access to the supplies they need:

1. As per recommendations on the [Direct Payment Guidance](#), ensure information on how many people locally are in receipt of a PB and how many PAs (if any) they employ, is up to date (this should also include self-funders where possible).
2. As per recommendations on the [Direct Payment Guidance](#), contact all local employers of PAs to determine their immediate PPE requirement (that cannot be obtained through standard mechanisms), in line with published [clinical guidance](#) and supplementary resources published [here](#).
3. Identify if any of these care arrangements involve aerosol generating procedures, as outlined in published [clinical guidance](#), and may require additional PPE.
4. Contact the Local Resilience Forum to discuss the required allocation of PPE for local employers of PAs.
5. Make local arrangements for delivery of the required PPE to the homes of local employers of PAs (e.g. by enlisting volunteers, using local delivery drivers/council staff).
6. Ensure this process of PPE supply and delivery continues to meet the ongoing demands of local employers of PAs that cannot be met through other means.

4. PPE via the National Supply Disruption Response line

If LAs have been unable to secure stock from their LRF and have an urgent need, they can contact the National Supply Disruption Response line 24/7 on 0800 915 9964. The NSDR does not have access to the full lines of stock held at other large wholesalers or distributors but can mobilise small priority orders of critical PPE to fulfil an emergency need (e.g. where PPE is required in less than 72 hours). Any PPE that is obtained through this route should be distributed using similar mechanisms as for LRF drops. When calling the line please ensure you are able to provide the information outlined below.

Required information:

Before calling the NSDR hotline, please ensure you are able to provide the following details to the call handler:

- Name, email and telephone number of the requestor;
- Name, email and telephone number of a contact for the next 24 hours (e.g. out of hours cover if the original requestor will be unavailable);
- Delivery address, including postcode; and named contact for receiving deliveries;
- Confirmation that your organisation is able to receive the delivery outside of normal business hours;
- Number of COVID-19 patients being treated (confirmed and suspected);
- Number of beds in your organisation (if appropriate);
- How long your current PPE stock provides cover for (e.g. <24 hours; 1-2 days, or more than 2 days);
- Which products you are requesting and in what quantity.

We are aware that previous attempts to request supplies for PAs via the National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR) line may have been unsuccessful; however, we have been advised by the NSDR team that processes have been updated to ensure that LAs can raise requests on behalf of PA employers. LAs may need to prompt the call handler to record their organisation designation as 'other' to support logging of the request.

Good Practice for LAs

While LAs will ultimately have discretion over *how* the appropriate PPE is distributed to those who employ PAs, to help ensure that this process is as effective as possible we have compiled some good practices that have been implemented with positive results in some LAs. While each area is unique, these suggestions may help with the distribution of PPE to PA employers who require it.

Good practices include:

- Ensuring there is a designated PPE coordinator that can be accessed by local employers of PAs who may have questions or concerns over PPE, and who can order PPE on their behalf (from BAU supplier, LRF or NSDR line).
- Ensuring there is a designated DP coordinator (this may be the same as the PPE coordinator) who can keep in touch with those employing PAs to update them on the latest supply chains and issues regarding their PA/PAs.
- Familiarising yourself with a point of contact at the LRF who can support in acquiring the necessary PPE from LRF stocks (full list of LRF points of contact has been distributed to all LAs).
- Making regular contact with employers of PAs to ensure PPE stocks are sufficient and as per recommendations on the [Direct Payment Guidance](#), use a RAG rating system to identify most at-risk individuals (e.g. those with limited support).
- Working with local charities/groups that support employers of PAs, to help deliver stock.
- Publishing a list of FAQs on the LA website regarding PPE for PA employers.
- Considering creating a pooled budget for purchasing PPE for employers of PAs.

Yours Sincerely,

Jenny Oldroyd

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