



6.5.20

JOINT STATEMENT FROM NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL, NORTH LANARKSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP, GMB, UNISON AND UNITE

On Friday 10 April, North Lanarkshire Council, North Lanarkshire Health and Care Partnership, GMB, Unison and Unite issued a joint statement making clear that social and home care workers could wear a fluid resistant face mask along with other appropriate PPE where the person they were visiting or otherwise attending to was neither confirmed nor suspected of having COVID-19, if they consider doing so necessary to their own and the individual's safety.

This advice has now been updated on the recommendation of the Director of Public Health for NHS Lanarkshire.

The wearing of a fluid resistant face mask is no longer at the discretion of individual home support workers but must be worn on all occasions when performing duties where a two-metre distance cannot be kept. This advice will be extended to all of the council's framework providers of home support.

The reason for this change in guidance is that community testing for COVID-19 has shown a sustained community transmission, with some individuals testing positive, but showing no signs of having the virus. Adopting this strengthening of the use of PPE is for the protection of staff and service users.

This strengthening of the use of PPE is referred to as 'table 4' in the national guidance, which summarises recommendations for all settings where COVID-19 transmission is sustained. This also includes a home support worker's discretion to use protective eyewear when they are liable to be working closely with a person where droplets from a cough or sneeze could be transferred.

North Lanarkshire Council, the North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership and local representatives of the trades unions have met and fully endorse this position.

The council has secured a more sustained delivery of fluid resistant masks to ensure an appropriate supply for every home support worker carrying out their duties. It must still be recognised that there is a continued worldwide demand for these masks, so fluid resistant masks (known as Type IIR masks) should only be used for personal care and other tasks performed within the two-metre social distancing of the service user. They should not be used for any other activities.

The supply of appropriate fluid resistant eye protection is also available for every worker. This equipment must be cleaned using the supplied materials and instructions between every session, i.e. after every visit. If this equipment is damaged in any way it should be replaced before a new visit.

We continue to recognise the efforts that social and home care workers are making during the coronavirus pandemic. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to all these workers – and others providing critical services – during these unprecedented times. They have our full support.