



Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

Updated statement on transparent face masks, 29th April

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England (NHSE) have produced a technical specification for single use transparent face masks which are intended to provide comparable protection to that of a Type IIR medical mask.

The transparent face mask technical specification is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-specifications-for-personal-protective-equipment-ppe/transparent-face-mask-technical-specification>. Any mask needs to meet both this technical specification and have a CE mark before it can be procured (or tested) in the workplace.

RCSLT understand that many companies are reviewing and assessing their products against this technical specification (for example Panoramic Mio-Mask from Cambridge and Breathe Easy in Scotland). At the time of writing RCSLT is checking with NHSE/DHSC if any transparent mask has actually met both the technical specification and have a CE mark. We will update members as soon as we know more.

Once a mask has met both the technical specification and CE mark, NHSE/DHSC, NHS Wales Shared Services and NHS Scotland may do their own real world product testing before procuring. We will keep you updated.

NHS Scotland and the DHSC will be procuring transparent masks at a national level. The national procurement will include a user feedback stage, so please do share your views once you use a product.

In Wales, we are confirming the next steps with Shared Services and we will inform members if we hear any further news on this issue.

In Scotland, direction on testing and procurement will be taken by the Scotland PPE clinical and oversight groups. "Open purchase orders" are available to obtain masks once it has been proved that a mask meets the standard, and it has been approved.

In England, if you are contacted by a company with a transparent face mask outside of the national procurement, SLTs should seek support from local procurement teams to review the mask certifications and documentation.

DHSC/NHSE are currently not planning to publish a list of approved masks (that meet technical specification and CE Mark) but this will be kept under review.

RCSLT will continue to lobby for transparent masks that are of the right standard and right quality to protect speech and language therapists and those with whom we work at all times.

Please do share your experiences and feedback with RCSLT at info@rcslt.org.

Please read our full policy statement here <https://www.rcslt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RCSLT-Transparent-face-masks-Policy-Statement-April2021.docx.pdf>