

Fraud alert

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Fraud

Pharmacies have a requirement for PPE in line with Public Health England guidance due to interaction with members of the public. There is an unprecedented, global demand for personal protective equipment as a result of this pandemic.

Public Health England and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are able to send free of charge packs of PPE, including masks, aprons, gloves and visors, to pharmacies for use by their staff, subject to certain criteria being met. CCGs are regularly receiving requests for emergency PPE stock and deliveries are made within 36 hours of the request.

Unfortunately, we have been made aware of concerns that a number of pharmacies are alleged to be selling on these PPE items from their stores to members of the public. It is therefore key that these concerns are communicated to those who might be in a position to identify risk and escalate it to the proper authority.

With an increasing demand for PPE, please be aware of these red flags:

- Pharmacies requesting disproportionately large amounts of PPE. We have seen examples where pharmacies have ordered 400 masks when they have three members of staff and have later been found to be allegedly selling these masks for a profit;
- A number of requests coming in from pharmacies within quick succession of other requests from the same provider/owner/stores;
- Advertisements in store windows publicising PPE equipment on sale..

Concerns have been raised by a range of different sources and have identified advertisements in shop windows of pharmacies, so it is key that this concern is communicated to those who might be in a position to identify concerns.

RSM have been in liaison with NHS England and NHS Improvement's Counter Fraud Team who are currently investigating concerns of this nature.

If you have any suspicions or concerns about Personal Protective Equipment being sold on or fraudulently obtained, you should report this to your CCG Counter Fraud Team, their contact details can be found over the page.

You can also report concerns of suspected fraud to the NHS Counter Fraud Authority on 0800 028 4060 or through their reporting form <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud> If there are concerns that are covered by NHS England, the NHS Counter Fraud Authority can share the information for their investigation locally.

All reports are treated in confidence and you have the option to report anonymously.

When reporting, it is important to include as much essential information as possible, including:

- Date/time of incident, and as much detail as possible regarding the place where the equipment is being sold; and
- The PPE request form.

For further information contact:

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