**Updates for Section 3. Information and guidance for staff and partners - ‘Primary Care – Face coverings and masks – CCG support toolkit’ webpage - 111120**

**Introduction:**

Please replace the opening paragraph with the following:

The Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System partners have made a collective decision to request that patients and visitors to general practice settings wear a surgical face mask to help protect patients, public and maintain business continuity of primary care services. This is in line with national NHS guidance as a surgical face mask provides greater protection than cloth-based or homemade face covering.

**Sharing information locally (section)**

Second paragraph: “This information has been agreed for consistency across all CCGs and general practice services in Lancashire and South Cumbria,” please amend to read as follows:

This information has been agreed for consistency across all health settings in Lancashire and South Cumbria, including CCGs and general practice services, in accordance with national NHS guidance.

**Narrative (section)**

Paragraphs 3 and 4: “Across Lancashire and South Cumbria, the NHS has agreed a position to require the use of face masks or face coverings in general practice settings. This is a local decision to help protect public and staff and is not national PHE guidance.

Visitors and patients coming to general practice services will need to wear face coverings to further reduce risk. Face coverings can be made of cloth and be reusable in line with government guidance. If patients and visitors do not have a face covering, they will be provided with a face mask.” **Please amend as follows**:

Across Lancashire and South Cumbria, the NHS has agreed a position to require the use of surgical face masks in general practice settings wherever possible. This is to align general practice with the national NHS guidance.

Visitors and patients coming to general practice services will need to wear surgical face masks to further reduce risk. Visitors and patients wearing a cloth-based or homemade face covering will be required to change to a surgical face mask on entry to the practice. Face coverings may be worn in other environments outside of hospital or healthcare settings and can be made of cloth and be reusable in line with [government guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering).

**Key messages (of this section)**

Second bullet-point: “Help us help you stay safe – When you come to general practice settings as a patient or visitor, you will need to wear a face covering.” – **please change face covering to surgical face mask.**

**Staff information**

Key messages for staff, first bullet-point “Type IIR masks must be worn by staff in general practice settings which are not assessed as COVID secure or where you cannot be socially distanced.”

**Please amend to read**:

Type IIR masks must be worn by staff at all times in general practice settings which are not assessed as COVID secure and in COVID secure areas when not wearing PPE. This applies to all staff, both clinical and non-clinical.

Information for patients

Second paragraph – **please amend from** “Patients and visitors are asked to wear a face mask or face covering. Face coverings are different to face masks in that they can be homemade, made of cloth, and be reusable after being washed. If a patient or visitor does not have a face covering or face mask when they come to a service, they will be provided with a face mask on arrival,” **to the following**:

Patients and visitors are asked to wear a surgical face mask. Visitors and patients wearing a cloth-based or homemade face covering will be required to change to a surgical mask on entry to the practice. Face coverings are different to face masks in that they can be homemade, made of cloth, are reusable after being washed and may be worn in other environments outside of the general practice, or other healthcare settings. If a patient or visitor does not have a surgical face mask when they come to a service, they will be provided with a face mask on arrival.

**Patient information**

**First line change to read**: “The use of surgical face masks when coming to general practice.”

Second paragraph **change from** “In line with recent recommendations from the World Health Organisation, we are introducing new measures in general practice services across Lancashire and South Cumbria to keep visitors, patients and staff safe,” **to read as follows**:

In line with national NHS guidance on the wearing of surgical face masks in healthcare settings, we are introducing new measures in general practice services across Lancashire and South Cumbria to keep visitors, patients and staff safe.

Third paragraph **amend from** “From XXXX you will need to wear a face covering when you come to your GP surgery” **to read as follows**:

From XXXX you will need to wear a surgical face mask when you come to your GP surgery. If you are wearing a cloth-based or homemade face covering you will be required to change to a surgical mask on entry to the practice.

**What does this mean for me?**

First paragraph, third line, please change ‘face covering at all times’ to ‘surgical face mask at all times.’

Remove the second paragraph beginning “Face coverings can be cloth….”

Third and fourth paragraphs please combine into one paragraph as follows:

If you are unable to provide your own surgical face mask when you come to a service, you will be provided with a face mask on arrival. If you are currently shielding and have been provided with a surgical face mask for your appointments, please continue to use this.

Next paragraph beginning “For some people, wearing a face covering…” please amend to read “For some people, wearing a surgical mask or face covering…”

Last paragraph beginning “All visitors will be expected…” please change ‘face coverings in the second line to ‘face masks’.

**Template facility poster – patients and visitors**

Please remove this section. The templates for patients and visitors on the Campaign Resource Centre has not been updated to reflect the new guidance.

**Patient Groups – CCG letter to patient forums/patient participation groups**

First paragraph **change from** “Following recent announcements by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding wearing face coverings in hospitals, NHS organisations in Lancashire and South Cumbria have agreed to implement new measures on the use of face masks and coverings in general practice services in order to help protect patients and members of the public,” **to the following**:

Following recent national NHS guidance regarding wearing surgical face masks in hospitals, NHS organisations in Lancashire and South Cumbria have agreed to implement new measures on the use of face masks in general practice services in order to help protect patients and members of the public.

Second paragraph, second line change “face coverings” to “surgical face masks”.

Delete the third paragraph.

Paragraph four change first sentence to read: “People will be provided with a surgical face mask on arrival.”

Fifth paragraph first sentence change to read: “Wearing a surgical face mask may be difficult….”

**Social Media**

Example social media post:

Please amend second sentence from “Please remember you must wear a face covering” to “Please remember you must wear a surgical face mask.”

Please amend “Learn how to wear and make a cloth covering here:” to “Learn how to wear and make a cloth covering for non-healthcare environments here:”

**FAQs**

Please change “Why are we asking visitors/patients visiting the site to wear face coverings” to “Why are we asking visitors/patients visiting the site to wear surgical face masks?”

Please **amend the first paragraph** from “Patients and visitors coming to general practice services in Lancashire and South Cumbria will need to wear face coverings to reduce the risk of transmitting coronavirus to others. Evidence has shown that those infected with COVID-19 can have very mild or no respiratory symptoms (asymptomatic) and potentially transmit the virus to others without being aware of it,” **to the following**:

Patients and visitors coming to general practice services in Lancashire and South Cumbria will need to wear surgical face masks to reduce the risk of transmitting coronavirus to others. Evidence has shown that those infected with COVID-19 can have very mild or no respiratory symptoms (asymptomatic) and potentially transmit the virus to others without being aware of it. Surgical face masks provide higher levels of protection than face coverings and this helps to protect practice staff, who may be exposed to coronavirus daily, and vulnerable patients, from the risk of transmission.

Remove the next paragraph “Patients and visitors are advised to bring a face covering ahead of coming to appointments in general practice.”

**Amend** “The use of face coverings in GP practices is a local decision to help protect public and staff and is not national PHE guidance” **to** “The use of surgical face masks in GP practices is in accordance with national NHS guidance on the wearing of face masks in healthcare settings.”

Please replace face covering in this FAQ with surgical face mask - **“What happens if a patient/visitor does not have a ‘face covering’ when they come to a GP surgery?”**

Please replace the answer, “If a patient or visitor does not have a face covering, a mask will be provided on arrival,” with the following:

Patients or visitors should arrive wearing a face covering (unless they are exempt) but will be provided with a surgical face mask upon arrival at the surgery/practice.

In the paragraph beginning “The need for patients and visitors to wear a face covering…” please change face covering to surgical face mask (and similarly for the line below).

Please replace the answer, “For those patients who are currently shielding, and who have been provided with a surgical face mask for their appointments, these should be worn. Where not already provided, patients should wear a face covering,” with the following:

For those patients who are currently shielding, and who have been provided with a surgical face mask for their appointments, these should be worn. Where not already provided, patients will be provided with a surgical face mask upon arrival.

Please remove the next two questions and answers ‘What about cloth/homemade/donated face masks’ and ‘Does my face covering for religious beliefs/cultural practice qualify’.

**Staff**

**Why is a recommendation now being made for all general practice staff to wear a face mask?**

Please remove the third paragraph of this answer, “The use of face coverings in GP practices….”

**Where do I need to wear a face mask?**

Please replace the answer “Masks must be worn by general practice staff in settings which are not risk assessed as COVID secure or where you cannot be socially distanced,” with the following:

Masks must always be worn by general practice staff in all settings, including those assessed as Covid secure, when not wearing PPE. This applies to all staff, both clinical and non-clinical. The only exception is someone who works in an office on their own. They must don a surgical face mask when leaving their office. All other safety measures, such as social distancing and hand hygiene, should continue to apply.

**What if a patient/visitor is unable to wear a face covering?**

For some, wearing of a face covering may be difficult, and therefore all other measures must also be considered and introduced e.g. social/physical distancing, timed appointments; being seen immediately and not kept in waiting rooms.

**For the above question and answer please change face covering to surgical face mask.**