

PPE Shelf Life

11th May 2020



SUNDERLAND CARE AND SUPPORT ‘PPE SHELF LIFE GUIDANCE’ was issued on 5th May 2020. This is a summary of the guidance and all SCAS staff should ensure they read the full guidance.

In the early stages of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Government provided stocks of masks to health and social care services, as part of a package of PPE to ensure early availability. These masks were later found to have an expiry date of 2016, which in some cases had been over-written by a new date of 2021.

On 20th March 2020 the Professor Keith Willett, NHS Strategic Incident Director, issued guidance on this matter which detailed the following:

Shelf life of PPE items

‘Some products may appear to have out-of-date ‘use by/expiration’ dates or have relabelled ‘use by/expiration’ dates. Please be assured products being issued have passed stringent tests that demonstrate they are safe. The PPE is exposed to extreme conditions for prolonged periods, to see how the product deteriorates. All that are not up to standard are destroyed and not distributed to trusts.

We have been working with independent test facilities and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who, after being provided with scientific evidence, were content with our assessment that these are safe to use by NHS staff.'

Within SCAS these masks were issued as part of the early provision of PPE which were delivered into services. There were very few of this type and we have not received any more, all masks in stock are now dated with future expiry dates. However, the guidance confirms that these masks were, and continue to be, safe to use.

The full publication can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/PPE-Letter-FINAL-20-March-2020-updated-on-22-March-2020.pdf#page=1>