

E: NHSdentistry@gov.scot

11 May 2023

Dear Colleagues,

WITHDRAWAL OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): EXTENDED USE OF FACE MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS GUIDANCE ACROSS HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE.

You should have by now, received a copy of a letter, dated 9 May 23, from the Chief Nursing Officer (CNOD) and Chief Medical Officer (CMO) – [https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL\(2023\)11.pdf](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2023)11.pdf)

This states, following a review, that the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care and the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport have agreed to **withdraw** the ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19): extended use of face masks and face coverings in hospitals, primary care and community healthcare settings’ guidance and the ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19): extended use of face coverings in social care settings including adult care homes’ guidance. This guidance will be withdrawn from 16 May 23.

For dentistry, we should return to using the [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual: Home \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#).

In summary;

- Fluid resistant Type IIR Masks can now be removed apart from when examining and treating patients as per Chapter 1- Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs) section 1.4 of the NIPCM guidelines . [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual: Chapter 1 - Standard Infection Control Precautions \(SICPs\) \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#). This is similar to the pre-pandemic position.
- Respiratory questions remain as per [Appendix 21 - COVID 19 pandemic measures for health and social care settings \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#). If a patient is suspected of or has an air borne virus then they should be encouraged to wear a mask. Transmission Based Precautions should be applied at this stage [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual: Chapter 2 - Transmission Based Precautions \(TBPs\) \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)
- AGP guidance, [Appendix 17 AGPs and Fallow Time \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#) remains, and an FFP3 mask should be worn with appropriate PPE should a patient have evidence of an infectious agent transmitted wholly or partly by the droplet or airborne route and they cannot be delayed.

If staff have concerns around the withdrawal of the extended guidance, then they should speak with their employer. Individual occupational health assessments and risk assessments should take place as appropriate.

Yours Sincerely,



Tom Ferris
Chief Dental Officer