



Nicola Surgeon
First Minister

scottish.ministers@gov.scot

RCN Scotland
42 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh
EH9 2HH

Theresa Fyffe
Director

Telephone: 0131 662 6131
Fax: 0131 662 1032
Email: Theresa.fyffe@rcn.org.uk
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Dear First Minister

I am writing to you to express the serious concerns of our members – and the wider health and care workforce – regarding the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and Covid-19 testing for staff. As the largest nursing union and professional body in the world, the Royal College of Nursing has also written to the Prime Minister to raise these concerns.

Our members have been unstinting in their dedication and professionalism to protecting the health and wellbeing of Scotland – they must be supported by the government and health sector in return.

Over the weekend, we have received increasing reports of a lack of PPE available to frontline staff -- not just in hospitals, but in GP surgeries, care homes and community nurses visiting people in their homes. Our members tell us that they simply cannot obtain enough equipment, from face masks to hand sanitiser.

While we welcome the announcement of further stocks being distributed to health and care settings, we will be closely monitoring the situation to make sure these stocks are reaching the right places.

We are also receiving reports from members regarding the confusion over the guidance on what PPE to use and in what circumstances. We are aware that the UK NHS Pandemic Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidance does not completely align with that of the World Health Organisation (WHO), specifically guidance on the use of eye protection and gowns. Nursing staff across the country are working around the clock to deal with this crisis and deserve absolute clarity on

Royal College of Nursing
Of the United Kingdom
42 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh EH9 2HH
www.rcn.org.uk
+44 (0) 131 662 6124
RCN Direct 0345 772 6100

Patron
Her Majesty the Queen

President
Anne Marie Rafferty CBE, FRCN

Chief Executive & General Secretary
Dame Donna Kinnair

Director, RCN Scotland
Theresa Fyffe



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how the government and their workplace are protecting them from the virus given discrepancies between the UK and WHO infection prevention guidance. Finally, priority Covid-19 testing for health and social care workers is an absolute must. Our members need this in order to do their job while keeping themselves, and their patients, safe.

Nursing staff across the country are rising to manage this unprecedented situation. Our members are coming out of retirement, students interrupting their studies, and nursing staff are deploying from non-clinical settings, all to support the front-line in the battle against Covid-19.

We ask you to personally intervene and act to ensure enough supply of PPE and testing for Covid-19 is available for all nursing staff and our colleagues across Scotland's health and care system.

Yours sincerely



Theresa Fyffe
Director
RCN Scotland

Cc Fiona McQueen, CNO
Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Secretary for Health & Sport

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