

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:

Erin Sims
Associate Director
LCFS
07800 617 456
erin.sims@rsmuk.com

Kirsty Clarke
Senior Consultant
LCFS
020 3201 8054
kirsty.clarke@rsmuk.com

www.rsmuk.com

The UK group of companies and LLPs trading as RSM is a member of the RSM network. RSM is the trading name used by the members of the RSM network. Each member of the RSM network is an independent accounting and consulting firm each of which practises in its own right. The RSM network is not itself a separate legal entity of any description in any jurisdiction. The RSM network is administered by RSM International Limited, a company registered in England and Wales (company number 4040598) whose registered office is at 50 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6JJ. The brand and trademark RSM and other intellectual property rights used by members of the network are owned by RSM International Association, an association governed by article 60 et seq of the Civil Code of Switzerland whose seat is in Zug.

RSM Corporate Finance LLP, RSM Restructuring Advisory LLP, RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP, RSM Tax and Advisory Services LLP, RSM UK Audit LLP, RSM UK Consulting LLP, RSM Employer Services Limited, RSM Northern Ireland (UK) Limited and RSM UK Tax and Accounting Limited are not authorised under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 but we are able in certain circumstances to offer a limited range of investment services because we are members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. We can provide these investment services if they are an incidental part of the professional services we have been engaged to provide. RSM Legal LLP is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, reference number 626317, to undertake reserved and non-reserved legal activities. It is not authorised under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 but is able in certain circumstances to offer a limited range of investment services because it is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and may provide investment services if they are an incidental part of the professional services that it has been engaged to provide. Baker Tilly Creditor Services LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for credit-related regulated activities. RSM & Co (UK) Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to conduct a range of investment business activities. Before accepting an engagement, contact with the existing accountant will be made to request information on any matters of which, in the existing accountant's opinion, the firm needs to be aware before deciding whether to accept the engagement.