

I hope this letter finds you well. As CEO of the National Deaf Children's Society, I wanted to get in touch with regard to plans to procure transparent facemasks for use across the NHS in Wales.

While I am aware that the legal requirement to wear facemasks in health settings is now coming to an end in Wales, I am also aware that guidance still strongly recommends their use within health settings. I anticipate that this will likely remain the case for a considerable time and that health settings across the country will continue to require facemask supplies.

You may be aware that for deaf patients and staff alike, opaque facemasks create a serious communication barrier. The increased use of facemasks, although necessary to reduce the spread of infection during the pandemic, has made lip-reading and understanding visual cues from facial expressions impossible. This has left deaf people (and I include myself here) struggling to communicate. The implications of misunderstanding medical information due to these new barriers could be very serious.

You will be aware that a UK wide working group was set up to work on the development of transparent masks, which the National Deaf Children's Society has been supporting. The group produced a new [technical specification](#), which gives testing, design and performance requirements for single-use transparent face masks which provide comparable protection to that of a Type IIR mask. Three products have now completed this process and are available for use in healthcare settings as an equivalent to the Type IIR mask.

I understand that plans are afoot to pilot one of these in parts of Wales, which is fantastic news. I would welcome your assurances that the Shared Services Partnership Wales will do all it can to support the swift introduction of this pilot. We are keen to ensure that quick progress is made to allow wide availability of any of the three compliant transparent masks across the country at the earliest possible opportunity.



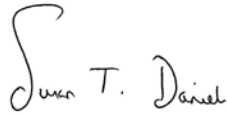
**We are the National Deaf Children's Society,  
the leading charity for deaf children.**

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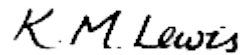
Patients have faced a long wait for this essential aid to their communication and now that these masks are available, it is imperative that they are quickly and widely available across all health boards.

I'm grateful to Kath Lewis, President of the British Academy of Audiology for her support and co-signing of this letter. We look forward to hearing from you and many thanks in anticipation of your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Susan T. Daniels in cursive script.

Susan Daniels  
Chief Executive  
National Deaf Children's Society

Handwritten signature of K. M. Lewis in cursive script.

Kath Lewis  
President  
British Academy of Audiology