

# **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Covid-19 – Scotland’s Action Plan**

**October 2020**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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## Foreword from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care



As we face the challenge of responding to Covid-19, protecting our health and social care workers and other frontline staff is a critical priority. Back in the spring, the pandemic created a huge challenge for countries across the world in ensuring appropriate provision and supply of PPE. From the outset of the pandemic, the Scottish Government has worked with our partners to ensure that at all times Scotland has had adequate stock of all forms of PPE supplies to meet the level of demand.

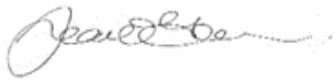
We acted quickly and decisively to expand and strengthen PPE supplies in a globally challenging market, working with NHS National Services Scotland's National Procurement (NSS National Procurement) and other partners to source PPE supplies. Brand new supply chains within Scotland have been created and there has been strong partnership working across the four UK nations. A number of Scottish firms offered their help and adapted production lines quickly towards the supply of PPE and materials used for PPE manufacture, and between March and August 2020 production was established in Scotland alongside wider UK manufacture. Over the winter period we expect that nearly half of all PPE supplied will be manufactured in Scotland. My sincere thanks are due to the businesses and workers who have made this adaptation possible.

NSS National Procurement has been at the forefront of building national stock resilience and has established Hubs that are supporting the whole social care sector with PPE where normal supply routes have had difficulties. They are also providing additional PPE support to unpaid carers and social care personal assistants. All hospitals have access to the PPE required, with much of it now made in Scotland. GPs, dentists, community pharmacists and optometrists are also being supplied with PPE. Scotland Excel and APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities & Colleges) continue to support significant sectors, such as schools and higher education. In addition, the Scottish Government has supported many more users of PPE, such as funeral directors and those working in the voluntary sector, by giving them access to a central supplier for the first time.

We have made significant improvements to the supply and distribution of PPE within Scotland. Winter is nearly here, bringing with it the potential for multiple challenges, particularly given the recent rise in Covid-19 cases, so our winter planning for PPE supply is well underway. Our modelling work is helping us to understand the impact of different scenarios on PPE demand in the coming months for health and social care, so that we can ensure that users can get adequate supplies, whatever the challenges we encounter. Across all sectors, we are stressing the need for adequate contingency planning and a similar level of preparedness, and we stand ready to support and help as we move into this winter period.

This Action Plan has been developed based on what we know now about Covid-19, and our expected need for PPE in the next few months and beyond. My sincerest hope is that the measures we are taking – in due course joined, I hope, by a vaccine – will mean that we will not have such significant requirements for PPE in the longer term. However, for as long as we need it, this Action Plan will be updated and refreshed where necessary.

Staff across health and social care continue to work extremely hard in difficult circumstances to keep us safe. It is therefore vital that action continues to be taken to keep them as safe as possible. The right PPE being available when staff need it is one way in which the Scottish Government is doing that and will remain a key priority in the coming months.



**Jeane Freeman**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care**  
**October 2020**

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## Executive Summary

1. The aim of Scotland's Covid-19 PPE – Personal Protective Equipment – Plan is to ensure that *the right PPE of the right quality gets to the people who need it at the right time*. The Plan's scope includes health and social care settings and other workplaces where Covid-19 could put people at risk and they therefore need to wear masks, gloves and/or gowns to combat it.

2. The Scottish Government is responsible for the coordination and assurance of PPE issues in Scotland and working with partners to implement this Action Plan.

3. National Procurement is a part of NHS National Services Scotland, a national health board (hereafter "NSS National Procurement"). The team at NSS National Procurement have a crucial buying and delivery function for hospitals, and have expanded their role to encompass PPE in primary and social care during the current Covid-19 pandemic. For other sectors, Centres of Procurement Expertise also play a major role.

4. Employers right across the public, private and voluntary sectors need to make sure their staff have the right PPE and to do that, they need to be aware of and properly implement relevant clinical and sector-specific guidance. Local Authorities, Integration Authorities, Unions and individuals also have key roles to play in ensuring the guidance is understood and issues are raised and dealt with appropriately.

5. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a dramatic increase in worldwide demand for PPE. To manage this in Scotland, the Scottish Government, along with a range of clinical/delivery partners including NHS Health Protection Scotland, NSS National Procurement, Scottish Enterprise and key stakeholders including union representatives have between us delivered:

- Clear clinical and workplace-specific guidance;
- Support for social and primary care, working with community partners such as Integration Authorities;
- A programme of work to support the manufacture PPE in Scotland;
- Actions to support all non-health and social care sectors in ensuring that the appropriate mechanisms were being put in place to deliver PPE;
- A back-up commercial arrangement for employers that provide essential services but could not otherwise get the PPE they needed;
- Better joint working in Scotland, including a senior-level Board to bring together the main parties; and
- Work on a four-nation basis across the UK.

6. The Action Plan describes what we are doing to plan for winter – a central priority for the Scottish Government. Scotland is again experiencing increases in Covid-19 cases, and we have had to take significant recent steps to try to break the chains of infection. The challenges we face with Covid-19 could be compounded by bad weather, a flu outbreak, or a no-deal (or low-deal) EU exit. That said, we now know more about the virus, and from a stock holding perspective, we are better supplied with PPE and have easier access to local manufacturers than we did earlier

this year. NSS National Procurement will soon have in its stock at least four months' supply, based on the current average usage, of all the key PPE commodities.

7. The Plan concludes by setting out our work to develop a sustainable supply chain over the medium to long term. The Plan sets out:

- Our modelling work, which allows us to understand how supply and demand is changing;
- Our work with the Scottish manufacturing sector, which is helping us work towards sustainable domestic manufacture;
- How Scottish public procurement policy is helping us ensure our supply is resilient and best value for the taxpayer; and
- How we are working to support innovation, considering the environmental impact of PPE and promoting reusability, and how the needs of users are at the forefront of our thinking.

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**October 2020**

## **Section One: Definitions and Scope**

### **Aims and Objectives**

1. This Action Plan sets out the Scottish Government's progress to date and planned next steps through the winter and beyond. It outlines how the Scottish Government is working with private, not-for-profit, voluntary and public sector organisations to ensure everyone can get the PPE they need and support Scotland's manufacturers to help us create long-term, resilient PPE supply.

### **Definition of PPE for the Purposes of this Action Plan**

2. This Action Plan is about PPE used in the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic. It focusses on specific products that are used to protect an individual or a person being cared for from being infected by Covid-19. PPE falls broadly into two categories: preventative (masks, aprons and gloves); and that for Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP) treatment (FFP3 masks, visors and gowns). PPE for the purposes of this plan therefore includes the following items:

- FFP3 respirator masks;
- FFP2 masks, where used;
- Type IIR surgical masks;
- Gloves;
- Eye protection;
- Plastic aprons;
- New PPE categories such as non-sterile 'Covid' gowns, which are referred to as AGP (Aerosol Generating Procedure) non-sterile gowns; and
- Hand sanitiser (not strictly speaking PPE, but an essential commodity to keep people safe)

3. It does not specifically cover other items of PPE that might be used routinely in other settings (e.g. by Police Scotland or the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for their business as usual activities), which should continue to be used as normal.

4. This Action Plan does not cover face coverings. There is separate Scottish Government advice on face coverings which addresses their use<sup>1</sup>.

### **Scope of Action Plan, and Roles and Responsibilities of Key Partners in Delivery**

#### **Scope**

5. While hospitals, primary care and social care settings are where a significant proportion of PPE is being used in the current Covid-19 pandemic, the scope of this plan is not limited to these sectors. Instead, it is important that we consider the need for PPE across all settings including in the public, private, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors, as well as for people who provide unpaid care.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings/>

6. In non-health or social care settings, PPE is only required where a need has been identified by a risk assessment under the relevant guidance<sup>2</sup>. Other mitigation measures such as handwashing, social distancing and cleaning will always be required.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **Role of Scottish Government**

7. The Scottish Government's direct responsibilities in connection to Covid-19 PPE include:

- Supporting Ministerial decision-making;
- Working with stakeholders;
- Setting policy direction;
- Seeking to support a joined-up and seamless approach across the multiple areas of interest;
- National procurement policy;
- Engagement with the other UK nations and beyond;
- Pandemic stockpiling (via partners); and
- Managing the current contract with a third-party supplier, which is making PPE available for purchase to those delivering essential services outside health and adult social care.

8. The Scottish Government does not itself directly buy PPE, unless required to do so for its own employees.

9. The Scottish Government is responsible for the national pandemic stockpile. This is delivered via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with NSS National Procurement to provide a stock holding service. Prior to Covid-19 the purchase was carried out by the UK Department for Health and Social Care with a Scottish allocation. The SLA with NSS National Procurement now includes the sourcing and purchase of PPE as well as its storage.

### **Role of NSS National Procurement**

10. The NHS in Scotland benefits from a single national procurement service, the National Procurement function within NHS National Services Scotland. NSS National Procurement works closely with Health Board procurement teams across Scotland to ensure we can achieve a 'Once for Scotland' approach and harness the power of a joint procurement approach. It also means suppliers have a main point of contact, and clear, specific requirements based on needs right across the system, which can help them understand and respond better to what the NHS needs.

11. NSS National Procurement's usual role is to provide a stock and supply service for NHS PPE supplies. During the Covid-19 response NSS National Procurement broadened its work to start to supply Primary Care services (GPs, Optometrists, Dentists and Community Pharmacists), who are more usually

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>



responsible for their own PPE purchasing. For social care support, whether provision is in the public, independent, voluntary or not-for-profit sectors, the supply of PPE remains primarily the responsibility of social care providers themselves. However, given the immense pressure on normal supply chains due to Covid-19, NSS National Procurement has been providing back-up and emergency PPE from the national stock when social care supply chains have been unable to supply, to ensure that staff, social care Personal Assistants and unpaid carers have what they need.

### **Role of Centres of Procurement Expertise**

12. Public Sector Centres of Procurement Expertise exist across a number of key parts of the public sector. These include NSS National Procurement but also Scotland Excel (for local Government), Advanced Procurement for Universities & Colleges (APUC) and SPPD (for Central Government Organisations). Each work with and collaborate with Scottish Government and each other, and carry out a leadership role within their sectors. They will have a key role in continuing to support their relevant sectors to have access to the PPE they need.

### **Role of Employers, Employees and Unions**

13. Employers are responsible for sourcing, providing and paying for PPE for their staff.

14. Across all workplaces, employers and managers need to ensure they understand and appropriately communicate relevant guidance; that risk assessments are undertaken where necessary; and that, if appropriate, staff are properly provided with the appropriate level of PPE for the job they undertake. Further advice for health, social care and other workplaces can be found on the Health Protection Scotland website<sup>3</sup> and sector-specific guidance for a range of workplaces can be found on the gov.scot website<sup>4</sup>.

15. Individuals, HR Departments and Unions have important roles to play in ensuring that they are aware of the guidance and in reporting any issues arising. There is a clear need to ensure that there are mechanisms in place at all levels to allow issues to be raised, and resolved; and for issues which may point to wider concerns to be made known to the Scottish Government and the PPE Strategy and Governance Board, which brings together PPE demand and supply expertise from within Scottish Government Directorates and the public sector.

16. Workers have a number of statutory safety rights in addition to the statutory minimum obligations. These include but are not limited to: access to specific PPE of appropriate quality where required, and the right of safety reps to inspect relevant workplaces to ensure that planned PPE distribution, where required, is effective. Employers may have specific Fair Work and safety obligations under contracts for commissioned services. The evidence we have heard from trade unions is that engagement and reporting over the course of the pandemic has worked well in some

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

settings but less well in some others. Our shared goal is for two parallel outcomes to be delivered in support of this Action Plan: firstly, effective workforce participation and (wherever relevant) trade union participation; and secondly good quality data on the use of PPE and any issues arising.

## **Role of Public Sector Bodies**

17. In the public sector as with the private and third/voluntary/not-for-profit sectors, individual public bodies are responsible for sourcing, providing and paying for PPE for their staff. In doing so they must comply with public sector procurement legislation. Examples of public bodies are Local Authorities, national bodies such as Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Executive Agencies such as Transport Scotland and Non Departmental Public Bodies such as the Scottish Environment Protection Agency or Highlands & Islands Enterprise.

18. Local government and arms-length public bodies determine their own PPE buying requirements and enquiries about PPE purchase and use within such bodies should be directed to the body in question. Public bodies are subject to audit and therefore accountable for the decisions they make, as well as for planning and preparing to mitigate and manage risks<sup>5</sup>. In some emergencies other functions of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 will apply however the additional work that has been done to ensure that there is already adequate stock supply should mean in most cases this is not required.

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<sup>5</sup> The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 seeks to minimise disruption in the event of an emergency and to ensure that the UK is better prepared to deal with a range of emergencies. Category 1 responders are defined as the police, ambulance, fire and rescue services, local authorities, NHS Health Boards, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The seven duties the Civil Contingencies Act places on Category 1 responders are:

1. Duty to assess risk
2. Duty to maintain emergency plans
3. Duty to maintain business continuity plans
4. Duty to promote business continuity
5. Duty to communicate with the public
6. Duty to share information
7. Duty to co-operate.

“Preparing Scotland” <https://www.readyscotland.org/media/1496/preparing-scotland-hub-updated-published-version-may-2019-new-h-s-diagram.pdf>

## Section Two: Developments Since Start of Covid-19 Outbreak

### The Challenge

1. At the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, there was sudden need for significantly more PPE in Scotland, particularly focused on NHS Scotland and social care settings. For example, in the week beginning 27 January 2020, weekly NSS National Procurement critical PPE shipments across Scotland totalled 5,649,635 items, however by week beginning 6 April this figure was 24,551,324<sup>6</sup>. Shipments have been sustained at this high rate, as can be seen in Annex A.
2. Scotland's challenge was mirrored globally, putting immense pressure on key supply chains, as almost all of our PPE was imported at that point.
3. This challenge required a multi-faceted response from the Scottish Government, NSS, Public Health Scotland, employers, Unions, and others. There were seven key elements to our joint pandemic response, and a summary of each is below.

#### 1) Development of Guidance on Appropriate Use of PPE

##### UK Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Remobilisation Guidance

4. Throughout the pandemic the four UK nations have worked in collaboration to publish IPC guidance, including the requirements of PPE across health and social care<sup>7</sup>. The guidance outlines key Covid-19 IPC measures such as the use of PPE, extended use of face masks and coverings, social distancing, and outbreak management, as well as new risk assessed care pathway scenarios to help guide the implementation of measures for safe and effective care and support.
5. Scotland's National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) has provided the evidence base for the UK IPC guidance which aligns with Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs) and Transmission Based Precautions (TBPs) with addition pandemic precautions. Recommendations for the appropriate level of PPE required for different settings have been integrated into the care pathways. The guidance continues to recommend the safest level of PPE to protect health and social care workers in line with contact and droplet precautions, or airborne precautions when an Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP) is being undertaken.

##### Guidance for non-health and social care settings

6. All workplaces should consider the guidance for non-health and social care settings<sup>8</sup>. It sets out the circumstances in which PPE may be required, based on a risk assessment.

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<sup>6</sup> Including shipments being made to social care and primary care settings, previously self-sufficient in PPE

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

## 2) Extended Role for NHS National Services Scotland

7. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, NHS Scotland had a robust PPE procurement system via NSS. There was a strong capability to supply standard PPE across territorial Health Boards and some special Health Boards. The Scottish Government managed a pandemic buffer stock that was held within NSS National procurement that contained a number of PPE items as well as medical products. During the Covid-19 response the scope of supply for NSS has broadened considerably, including work to support social care and primary care, as set out below.

### Social care settings

8. For social care support, whether provision is in the public, independent, voluntary or not-for-profit sectors, the supply of PPE is primarily the responsibility of social care providers themselves. However, given the immense pressure on normal supply chains due to Covid-19, the Scottish Government has been providing top-up and emergency PPE from the national stock (via NSS) free of charge to ensure that staff, social care Personal Assistants and unpaid carers have what they need.

9. This PPE is being distributed through two routes:

- Local PPE Hub(s) in every Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) area, supplied by NSS, where providers and carers can access PPE if they cannot get it through their normal supply routes; and
- A central PPE support centre (via NSS) dedicated to urgent clinical need, that can be accessed in emergency situations and when neither normal supply routes nor the Hubs are able to meet a provider's or carer's needs.

10. Feedback from Health and Social Care Partnerships, social care providers, and carers centres is that the PPE Hubs and the PPE support centre have provided stability and consistency for the social care sector's access to PPE for the COVID-19 response. These arrangements were originally in place until October 2020, but have been extended until March 2021 to ensure continued stability and access to PPE in the social care sector over the 2020-21 winter period. Work is also currently underway with partners to explore options around potential longer term support for the social care sector in this regard.

### Primary Care Settings

11. GPs, Community Pharmacists, dentists providing NHS General Dental Services and Community Optometrists have in the past been responsible for their own PPE supplies.

12. There has been a significant change in the level of PPE requirement for all those groups in the months since March, and to meet their needs, NSS National Procurement has been supplying PPE to these primary care independent contractors and continues to do so. We need to ensure that these vital community services are properly supplied for the winter, so the Scottish Government has agreed that PPE will continue to be provided free of charge to these primary care independent contractors to support NHS activity through to 31 March 2021. Options for

distribution routes are being discussed and trialled at present across all contractor groups.

### **3) Development of Scottish PPE Manufacturing**

13. In the spring, the Scottish Government and partners began rapid, ground-breaking joint work to build a Scottish PPE supply chain. As well as identifying offers of support that could supply high volumes of approved PPE and sanitiser products as quickly as possible, a multi-agency team (including colleagues from the NHS, Scottish Enterprise, SDI, and the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland, operated by University of Strathclyde) worked with businesses to increase Scottish capacity to make key products. Many Scottish businesses helped this national effort by diversifying to ensure a secure supply of NHS essentials. This work ultimately ensured we had adequate stocks of all PPE items going to all our front line services during the emergency period<sup>9</sup>.

14. This successful work over the past six months has illustrated how government can act as a catalyst for supply chain development in areas of strategic interest. That's why, in our *Programme for Government 2020-21*<sup>10</sup>, the Scottish Government committed to roll out Supply Chain Development Programmes across key sectors of the economy, where we see genuine sustainable economic potential. These will be targeted at existing and prospective suppliers based in Scotland, and enhance participant companies' fitness to compete for public contracts, help to secure best value for taxpayers and help Scottish suppliers to grow and compete globally.

### **4) Support and Engagement with Other Workplaces (public, private and voluntary sectors)**

15. In addition to NSS National Procurement there are a number of well-established supply chains managed through existing procurement frameworks servicing local government, central government, social care and higher and further education.

16. Across multiple places of work, detailed work has been done involving national and local Government, employers, unions and employees to develop sector-specific guidance on working in the context of Covid-19. More information on this is at Annex B.

### **5) Delivery of Third Party PPE Contract**

17. Organisations providing essential services to the public – including voluntary sector organisations, funeral directors and many others – that need to buy PPE, but are unable to source it, may be eligible to access help via our third party framework contract.

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<sup>9</sup> Note: procurement of PPE by public bodies has been through the existing frameworks awarded under a competitive process, in line with procurement legislation and policy. In addition, direct awards have taken place using procedures outlined in Regulation 33 within the Public Contract (Scotland) Regulation 2015.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotland-renewing-scotland-governments-programme-scotland-2020-2021/>

18. The Scottish Government has established this framework to provide PPE for purchase. Eligible organisations can purchase PPE from this supplier when they are unable to secure PPE supplies through existing channels or where they need to supplement existing supply chains to deliver essential public services.

19. This service broadly covers those organisations that cannot access the three established procurement routes for PPE for health and social care (NHS National Services Scotland); local government (Scotland Excel) and Higher and Further Education (Local Government and Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges). There are already over 600 organisations registered to use the framework, including central government organisations.

20. Further information on this for potential users of the contract is at Annex C.

## **6) Establishment of PPE Strategy and Governance Board and Other Groups**

21. The PPE Strategy and Governance Board was established in May 2020 and meets on a fortnightly basis. It brings together PPE demand and supply expertise from Scottish Government Directorates and public sector organisations. The Strategy and Governance Board manages a range of specific actions which sit under this Action Plan. Through this winter and beyond, it will consider any emerging issues and identify solutions, including if there should be any reports from sectors on difficulties in securing PPE.

22. This group connects to a range of other groups, such as the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) Strategic Group, to ensure that full consideration is given to operational, clinical and engagement issues; this reflects the complexity of this issue and the many sectors involved.

## **7) Work with the Rest of the UK**

23. We have worked with the UK Government and administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland to maximise efficiencies and collaborate where it makes sense to do so. This includes co-operation on the procurement and distribution of PPE across the UK as part of the Four Nation PPE Plan first launched on 10 April 2020. The Department of Health and Social Care's PPE strategy was published on 28 September and welcomed by the Scottish Government. The strategy emphasises that mutual aid and cooperation across and between all four nations has been a key part of ensuring PPE gets to where it is needed.

## Section Three: Readiness for Winter 2020-21 and Beyond

1. As we enter the winter period 2020-21, it is essential that we both reduce the risk of a major second wave of Covid-19 through the wider mitigation measures we are now taking across Scotland, and also plan appropriately for surges, which would include an increased need for PPE. Our winter planning also needs to address the possibility that a high level of Covid-19 cases could occur at the same time as a seasonal flu outbreak. The additional impact of a potentially no-deal or low-deal trade deal with the EU will also need to be considered.

2. Where we are now is very different to the position in the spring, when the pandemic first emerged. Across health and social care and beyond we now have in place:

- Detailed planning and modelling to ensure we get early warning of potential issues;
- Significantly increased stocks, particularly within NSS National Procurement;
- A number of proactive working groups covering health and social care who meet regularly to discuss any current issues, and work to find solutions to resolve these in a timely way;
- A high capacity of PPE production in Scotland to remove reliance on uncertain overseas capacity with long delivery times; and
- Joint working within Scotland through our new governance and joint working arrangements, and joint planning arrangements on a four-nations basis.

Planning for the future and getting early warning of potential issues

3. We are continuing to carry out detailed modelling work to understand the impact of different scenarios on PPE demand over the winter period. This will allow users of PPE in Scotland to receive adequate supplies whatever conditions we encounter over the winter period. We are keeping modelling under constant review as scenarios develop, and adapting our plans on the basis of the reasonable worst case scenario to ensure PPE will be available. Modelling covers a wide range of health and social care providers, from acute hospitals to community pharmacy to unpaid carers.

4. Supply is regularly measured against demand to understand how many weeks of stock are being held and should any issues be noted, action is taken to address them. This process is now automated and feeds directly from NSS National Procurement stock systems, to allow quick and up to date information on demand and supply to be available seven days a week.

5. Actual consumption of PPE for health and social care is monitored on a regular basis, and this will be further improved by the implementation of a new stock management system by National Procurement over the coming months. Whilst social care PPE is sourced partly through social care Hubs and partly through existing supply chains, modelling for social care has been undertaken to show full demand, to enable the proportion that NSS National Procurement is responsible for providing to be easily adjusted. NSS will continue to review stock levels and consumption as well as predicted demand. They are able to place additional orders

as required to meet forecast demand and ensuring effective distribution networks are in place.

6. Workshops to test and strengthen PPE availability in all parts of the supply chain are ongoing with NSS National Procurement, Scottish Government Health Resilience team and wider stakeholder groups. These exercises will help us work out any mitigating actions needed and how processes could be adapted to meet the changes in demand.

7. To ensure supply chain resilience, the Scottish Government is working with NSS National Procurement to understand distribution routes across health and social care. This work will help us spot and stop problems before they happen. Distribution routes have expanded and strengthened significantly since March 2020, with regular distribution of PPE to local hubs for social care and direct deliveries now being piloted for primary care. NSS have contingency plans in place as part of their business as usual continuity resilience, and this is being further tested to cover additional Covid-19 demand as well as winter pressures.

#### Building up stocks

8. NSS National Procurement is building strong stocks of PPE in light of these potential risks. By the end of October 2020, they are on course to have at least four months' supply for each of the key PPE commodities, based on the current average usage. Levels of stock are based on current modelling assumptions and consumption (which will continue to be stress tested and revised as indicated above). These will ensure a substantial buffer remains in place ahead of the end of the EU Exit transition end period. Substantial additional warehouse space is being secured to enable the effective storage and distribution of stocks.

9. To provide additional assurance, and in preparation for the end of the EU Exit transition period, NSS National Procurement are building a broader stock of critical well as engaging with key suppliers to encourage suppliers' own supply chain resilience measures.

#### Working groups

10. There have been a number of working groups set up to manage PPE, discuss opportunities and review current assumptions of demand modelling work for expected PPE usage. These groups include:

- Single Point of Contact Group with representation from health boards, NSS, SG and other external stakeholders
- Social Care PPE Steering Group
- Primary Care PPE working Group
- Clinical PPE Advisory Panel
- Collaborative Procurement Leads Working Group

11. These groups cover PPE for health and social care as well as wider essential public services. It allows issues or concerns to be fed back and action to be taken to resolve concerns before they lead to potential operational difficulties.



## Scottish Supply

12. Boosting Scottish manufacturing sector will be vital to ensure that an adequate and appropriate supply of domestically produced PPE is available and accessible. The work we have done and continue to do to provide this will allow us to make PPE available quickly if required. This gives us resilience and sustainability in case there is a rapid escalation in demand brought on by a resurgence of Covid-19 alongside seasonal influenza. Section four sets out in more detail our procurement and manufacturing approaches.

13. In addition to these measures, we continue to collaborate with other UK nations to better understand supply and demand and opportunities that are available to meet peaks in demand and become less reliant on supplies from abroad.

14. We will also consider the implications of EU Exit in the overall supply chain where goods are imported, or where elements of raw materials are imported for Scottish Manufacturers.

## **Section Four: Ensuring a Resilient Supply of PPE for the Long Term**

### **Introduction**

1. From a position when there was effectively zero Scottish PPE manufacturing before the pandemic and we were fully reliant on imports, we have built a resilient PPE manufacturing sector in Scotland over the last few months. This was made possible in large part by the use of emergency procurement powers, alongside with our manufacturing partners' very welcome willingness to repurpose their capacity.
2. As we transition from the current emergency, future requirements will be met through business as usual procurement under the general principles of transparency and equality which generally mean awarding contracts through competitive tendering processes.
3. Our shared goal now is to move towards a long-term sustainable approach, where business as usual procurement in the NHS and wider public sector delivers the best value for taxpayers' money. We are also moving towards a more robust supply chain which can withstand whatever challenges emerge and where every user can benefit from a stable Scottish PPE manufacturing sector with the economic, employment and sustainability benefits this entails.

### **Understanding how supply and demand is changing**

4. It is important to collate information on the emerging overall Scottish PPE demand picture in all sectors. Considerable work has been done to model demand across all sectors.

#### **Modelling for Health and Social Care**

5. Specialist analysts within the Scottish Government, NSS and partners have built a detailed model of demand for Health and Social Care, which is managed by NSS and kept under continual review as new information emerges.

#### **Understanding the position more broadly**

6. It is more challenging to model the multiple smaller supply chains in other sectors, although work has been done to understand this as best we can. The Scottish Government will continually assess the position across wider users and come to a view on the likely pressure points. More work is planned with stakeholders, including union representatives, to consider how we can best ensure that on-the-ground experience is understood and addressed at the most appropriate level.
7. As worldwide domestic manufacturing continues to change and develop in the light of the pandemic, we will need to continue to keep international conditions under review via market studies and consider where there are opportunities for Scottish manufacturers to flourish.

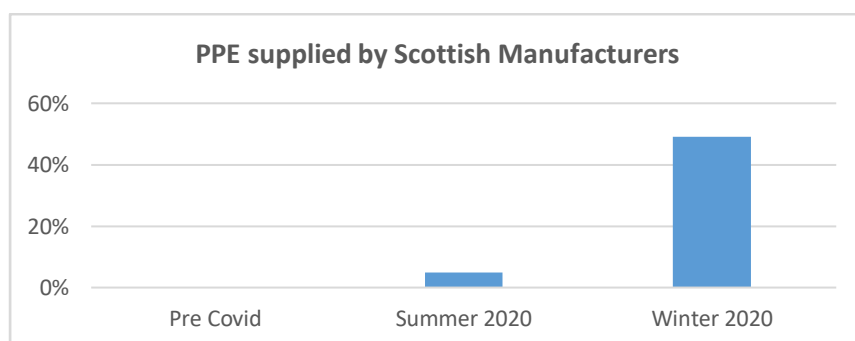
## Working towards sustainable domestic manufacture of PPE

8. As set out in Section two, a considerable amount was done early in the pandemic to identify and support Scottish businesses to move into the manufacture of PPE and other goods and services required by NHS Scotland and other sectors.

9. Whilst working towards a sustainable manufacturing sector, our parallel ambition is also to ensure PPE remains affordable and offers good value for money for purchasers while maintaining our high standards.

10. As Figure 1 below shows, pre Covid-19 all PPE sourced by NSS came from manufacturers outside Scotland. Between March 2020 and August 2020, this began to shift as production was established in Scotland and wider UK manufacturers and capacity was increased. Over the winter period between October 2020 and March 2021, the balance will shift again, with nearly half of all PPE being supplied from Scotland. When gloves are removed from this calculation, over 90% of PPE is manufactured within Scotland.

**Figure 1: overall levels of PPE supplied by Scottish Manufacturers**



11. Scotland's manufacturing capacity continues to move towards a sustainable self-sufficiency in many of the critical PPE areas generating employment and investment in our communities. This has also helped to build resilience for any potential future outbreak.

### Scottish Procurement Policy

12. The most important part of any public procurement process is a clearly defined requirement confirming not only the volumes but the standard of product with an appropriate evaluation methodology that ensures the product is fit for the customer. Procurers have access to the Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Tools and guidance on how to take account of relevant considerations in procurement exercises. State aid considerations also need to be taken into account<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Note: where public bodies pay less or more than the established market rate for goods or services, this can constitute illegal State aid. Where this applies, State aid compliant cover via the European Commission's guidelines should be established prior to any purchase.

13. The success of the domestic manufacture strategy and support for local suppliers was to a large extent predicated on procuring authorities' ability to utilise emergency procurement powers, and award contracts directly. We now need to consider the extent to which normal procurement processes can help achieve similar positive outcomes.

14. The Scottish Government has issued a Procurement Policy Note on supply chain resilience and diversity that advises public sector buyers of practical steps that should be taken to support supply chains and help reduce the risk of disruption to supplies caused by supply chain vulnerabilities and surges in demand<sup>12</sup>.

#### Fair work procurement guidance

15. The Scottish Government supports Fair Work and the Living Wage. We have published the following guidance covering fair work practices, including the Living Wage, in procurement:

- Statutory guidance on addressing fair work practices, including the Living Wage, in procurement<sup>13</sup>
- Best practice guidance on addressing fair work practices, including the Living Wage, in procurement<sup>14</sup>
- Fair work practices in procurement: toolkit<sup>15</sup>

#### User Needs, Equalities, and Environmental Considerations

16. As PPE becomes more widely used in society and by organisations, it is vital that we ensure our approach to PPE is in line with the Scottish Government's objectives on equalities and the environment. We will build on the work and expertise partners have built up prior to the pandemic to continue innovation on PPE items, with the aim to overcome the challenges the increased use of PPE pose.

#### Foregrounding User Views and Needs, and Equalities Considerations

17. We now know more about people's experiences using PPE in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic. Anecdotally, especially earlier in the pandemic, we did hear concerns that some PPE did not fit well or feel comfortable, and these concerns seemed to come particularly from women and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals.

18. This requires active consideration at both individual and system level: solutions need to be found for individuals, and we need to make sure there is a suitable range of PPE available for everyone.

19. If a specific piece of PPE is not appropriate for an individual then they will need an alternative: in many cases there will be a similar product available that will

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supply-chain-resilience-and-diversity-sppn-9-2020/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-selection-tenderers-award-contracts-addressing-fair-work-practices/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supply-chain-resilience-and-diversity-sppn-9-2020/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-work-practices-in-procurement-toolkit/>

be better for them, as PPE is available in different sizes and made by different manufacturers. Close liaison with local Health and Safety and infection control can work out other solutions that are possible, that will still maintain the required levels of staff safety.

20. At national level, where there are a range of sizing options available for items like gloves, then NSS National Procurement buys and makes available a wide range, making it easier to ensure that everyone can get items that fit.

21. Some items have been found to be widely useful across our diverse workforce, and we need to make sure there is a steady supply of those – that would include, for example, FFP3 masks that can demonstrate a high “fit rate”<sup>16</sup>. A contract has been agreed with a Scottish based company to support the supply of vital Type IIR masks, visors, and FFP3 masks for Scotland’s health and social care until summer 2021, through our national contract PPE supplier<sup>17</sup>. This partnership means we are getting FFP3 masks to a specification that aims to provide a high ‘fit rate’ for NHS Scotland. Our supplier is also providing teams of expert fit tester to help our hospitals introduce these new products quickly.

22. Work is also ongoing to continuously improve users’ comfort, and the supply chain has been reviewed by NSS National Procurement in detail to ensure resilience through multiple equipment, location and resilient sourcing options (mostly from within Scotland/UK).

23. The use of PPE will continue to be supported by up-to-date, evidence-based guidance which will reflect lessons learned, and the Scottish Government will ensure that all policies and procedures developed as a result of this Action Plan have been appropriately assessed for their equality impact.

24. The UK Government, in its September 2020 publication *PPE strategy: stabilise and build resilience*<sup>18</sup>, also acknowledges the challenges that have been expressed by some women and BAME individuals who rely on PPE. We note that the Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for England has launched a project to gather the robust evidence and the data needed to understand any problems and take action – this is welcome, and the Scottish Government will work with the UK Government wherever possible to share relevant data gathered and ensure lessons learnt are shared.

25. We are aware that the requirement to wear masks when delivering care puts some barriers in place for communication: this is especially challenging for people who rely on reading facial expressions, and people with hearing difficulties. In order to address these communication barriers, we are working with Scottish companies to support innovation on the development of transparent masks that offer the wearer the same protection as current fluid resistant surgical masks.

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<sup>16</sup> People who need to use FFP3 masks have to be fit tested for them, to ensure they are safe to use: the “fit rate” is the rate at which these tests are successful

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/scots-firm-to-supply-gbp-53m-nhs-order/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-strategy-stabilise-and-build-resilience>

## Disposal and reusability

26. Disposal of PPE is part of normal clinical waste procedures, and Public Health Scotland has issued guidance on disposal of items for those caring, for example, in home settings<sup>19</sup>.

27. It is important to explore the potential for using more environmentally sustainable and reusable PPE, such as re-usable visors, launderable gowns and re-using sanitiser bottles whilst being mindful that its primary purpose is to control infection. NSS National Procurement have already introduced AGP Gowns which can be laundered and these are now widely available throughout hospitals. Across all PPE commodities we are actively pursuing initiatives to introduce reusable items, subject to strict clinical assessment, to reduce the environmental impact of PPE products.

28. An Innovation & Reuse Working Group is currently being established to focus on pursuing opportunities for reuse and innovation, both as a demand reduction strategy and to reduce the environmental footprint of PPE use. This will be a collaborative group, which will include Scottish Enterprise, National Services Scotland, National Manufacturing Institute Scotland and the Scottish Government. There will be clinical input to ensure compliance with infection control measures as well as consultation with unions as appropriate.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

## **Conclusion**

1. In order to tackle the current Covid-19 crisis, and the unprecedented, multi-sectoral demand for PPE, we have had to take extraordinary steps. Working with Scottish manufacturers, the wider private sector, the public sector, the NHS and the voluntary sector, we have risen to meet this challenge.
2. The issues that now present themselves require us to ensure that we capitalise on these new ways of working together in Scotland to build a robust and resilient supply chain for the long term. They also involve making sure that we have learned from the initial pressure on PPE and that we're as ready as we can be to respond to any additional needs caused by winter, or EU exit, or any other new challenge.
3. The Scottish Government will now be driving forward the commitments in this action plan, across the multiple organisations involved in delivering them, to ensure that everyone who needs it gets the right PPE, of the right quality, at the right time.

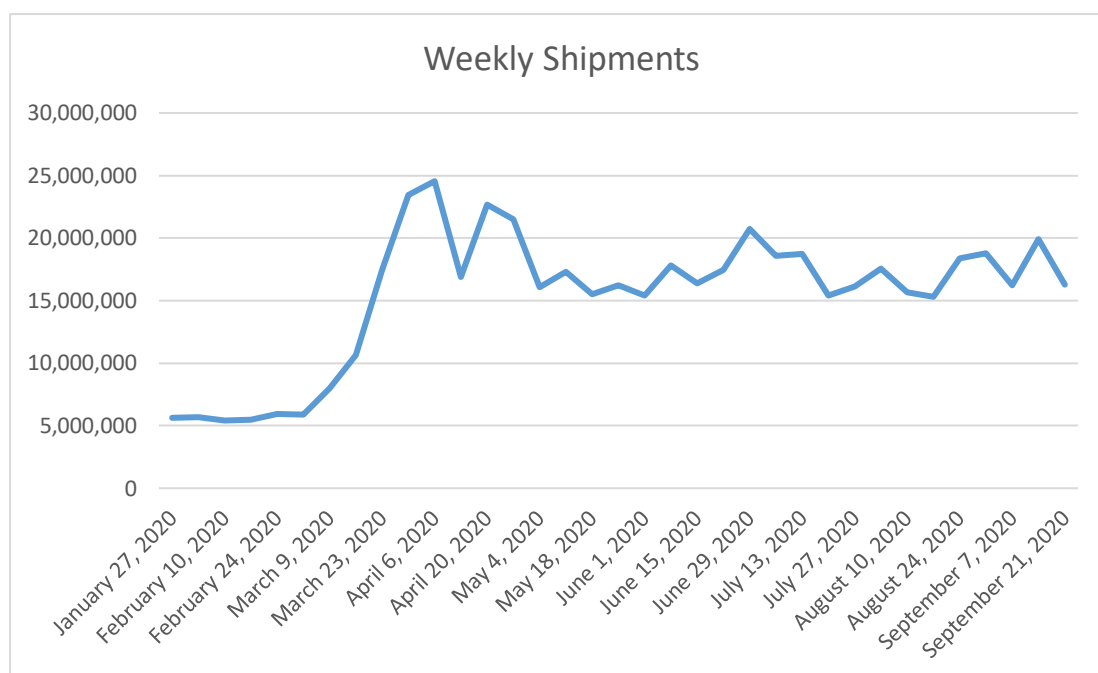
**Scottish Government**  
**October 2020**

## ANNEX A

### Summary of PPE Supplied to Health and Social Care Settings Since Pandemic Outbreak

**Figure 2. Overall PPE Weekly Shipments from NHS NSS.<sup>20</sup>**

The marked decrease in September is due to health boards having strong local stock holdings, and therefore less requirement for frequent shipments.



4. Table 1 below summarises the amount of PPE in total that this has required NHS NSS to supply to health and social care settings.

**Table 1. NHS Scotland and Social Care: Totals at 1 October<sup>21</sup>**

Number of PPE items delivered to hospitals since 1 March	328 million
Number delivered to Social Care Organisations since 1 March	147 million
Number delivered to community care since 1 March	49 million
Number of PPE items held at National Distribution Centre	172 million
PPE items on order to arrive within 12 weeks	479 million

<sup>20</sup> At 1 October

<sup>21</sup> Figures supplied by NHS NSS, and correct as of 1 October 2020



## ANNEX B

### Summary of PPE Developments Across Scotland's Workplaces During Covid-19 Pandemic

1. The **Police and Fire and Rescue Services, Scottish Prison Service and other Central Government bodies** all have well-established procurement arrangements. These bodies' Heads of Procurement work closely with Scottish Government procurement colleagues and there are governance arrangements and communication channels in place to support a co-ordinated effort and consultation. Contingency planning is underway and they are closely monitoring their usage and stock levels to ensure sufficient stock holdings of PPE. These organisations may, if they wish, access the third party framework.
2. The majority of **transport** operators have pre-existing supply routes to procure the required PPE for staff. At the outset of the Covid-19, pandemic meetings were held with unions to discuss a variety of issues including the provision of appropriate PPE for its members to enable them to carry out duties. The Transport Guidance for Operators which was subsequently published, and consulted on with unions and operators, sets out the requirement of operators to carry out risk assessments for staff with PPE being the last step in the hierarchy of risk and other control measures should be considered before the application of PPE.
3. **Schools and local authorities** already have set risk assessment processes for the use of PPE and sourcing mechanisms through Scotland Excel or at local level. Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational), where the need for PPE has been identified it should be readily available and provided and staff should be trained on its use. The use of PPE by staff within schools should be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids or lift children and young people. Maintaining supplies of PPE for Additional Support Needs settings is of particular importance. We will work with local authorities to ensure need continues to be met. Guidance is available<sup>22</sup> and further work is underway with stakeholders, including those representing teachers and support staff, to develop a further iteration, including further consideration of the needs of those working with children with Additional Support Needs.
4. Guidance for **universities, colleges, and student accommodation** providers emphasises the importance of undertaking robust and ongoing risk assessments with full input from trade unions and student associations and to keep all risk mitigation measures under regular review so that staff and students continue to feel, and be safe<sup>23</sup>. APUC have been in regular consultation with Scottish Universities and Colleges and the six Higher and Further Education purchasing consortia in England and Wales to maintain clear communication and continuity of supply of PPE through established collaborative Framework Agreement and local contracts, ensuring priority to Health and Social Care. APUC Ltd have taken the lead

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020-version-3/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-universities-colleges-and-student-accommodation-providers/pages/overview/>

on a collaborative Framework Agreement for PPE, Workwear and Sportswear on behalf of Scottish, English, Welsh and Northern Irish institutions that enables consideration of UK based manufacturing and wider cross sector collaboration. The Heads of Procurement within Universities and Colleges work closely with APUC Ltd and there are clear and established communication channels in place to support collaboration and consultation.

5. **Early learning and Childcare (ELC)** guidance states that no PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities. However guidance is provided where specific circumstances are identified during a local risk assessment requiring the use of PPE<sup>24</sup>. During the summer there were challenges in the sourcing of PPE equipment, particularly within private and third sector childcare providers. This has been addressed by making the third party PPE framework available to these partners.

6. Those working in the **funeral industry** have well established supply routes to procure PPE appropriate for their needs. However, during the first wave of the pandemic, the global shortage of PPE also impacted the funeral industry with many businesses facing challenges in sourcing PPE through their usual supply routes. To address this, members of the funeral industry were given access to the third party provider PPE framework. This proved an effective solution at the time, and access to the framework will continue to be available to the funeral industry over the coming months.

7. Sector specific Covid guidance on returning to work safely across **multiple other workplaces** is available on the Scottish Government website<sup>25</sup>. This guidance references the need for face coverings and other safe working practices within a wide range of other sectors, including but not restricted to:

- Tourism and hospitality, public spaces and sports and leisure
- Manufacturing
- Waste
- Call centres and customer contact centre environments
- The retail sector - including close contact services such as hairdressers, barbers and beauty salons
- The creative industries
- Advice to the agriculture and horticulture industry can be found on the SASA website<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/infection-prevention-and-control/-ppe>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.sasa.gov.uk/covid-19-guidance>

## ANNEX C

### Information on Support Available to Employers Requiring PPE (Non Health and Social Care Settings)

This information is intended for potential users of the third party PPE contract.

The Scottish Government has established a framework with a third party to provide PPE for purchase. Eligible organisations can purchase PPE from this supplier when they are unable to secure PPE supplies through existing channels or need to supplement existing supply chains to deliver essential public services.

This service broadly cover those organisations that cannot access the three established procurement routes for PPE for health and social care (NHS National Services Scotland); local government (Scotland Excel) and Higher and Further Education (Local Government and Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges). The full list of eligible organisations is below.

There are already over 600 organisations registered to use the framework, including central government organisations.

If you would like further background or further support please do contact the Lyreco team at [PPEDirectorate@gov.scot](mailto:PPEDirectorate@gov.scot).

- Charities entered on the Scottish Charity Register
- Voluntary organisations entered on the Membership Database of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Scottish Government bodies including Agencies, Scottish Non-Departmental Public Bodies, The Scotland Office and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body,
- Councils constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service,
- The Scottish Police Authority,
- Registered Social Landlords,
- Student Loans Company Limited,
- The Forestry Commission,
- The Commissioner of Northern Lighthouse operating as the Northern Lighthouse Board
- Equality and Human Rights Commission,
- Business Stream Ltd,
- The Business Gateway National Unit at the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities,
- Further or higher education institutions
- Any public body established by or under the Scotland Act 1998 or any Act of the Scottish Parliament, any association of or formed by one or more of the foregoing, bodies financed wholly or mainly by one or more of the foregoing, bodies subject to management supervision by one or more of the foregoing and bodies more than half of the board of directors or members of which, or,

in the case of a group of individuals, more than half of those individuals, being appointed by one or more of the foregoing.

- Private-sector organisations that have been authorised by the Scottish Government to access the Framework Agreement (by reason of their employing staff who provide essential public services where there is a risk to health).



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