

Manufacture and Production of PPE

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14409-4

Petition Number: P-05-1043

Petition title: To have the manufacture and production of sufficient PPE for Wales located in Wales Post Covid-19.

Text of petition: This current Corona Crisis has highlighted insufficient access to necessary PPE for all those who require it, in whichever health or social care setting they find themselves. As a nation we need to become self sufficient and not having to rely upon companies overseas etc. This would also necessitate an appraisal of storage, replenishment and distribution of said items and provide employment to many.

Mother to an ICU nurse, I live in daily fear for her safety. I will not be the only parent.



1. Background

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is designed to help protect an individual against health or safety risks at work and prevent the spread of infection. In health and social care settings, PPE includes a wide range of items, including protection for eyes and face, gloves, aprons and gowns, and respiratory protective equipment, such as masks or face shields. Different types of PPE are used according to the level of risk, the setting or the procedure being carried out.

In Wales, the distribution of PPE is co-ordinated by the [NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership](#), (NWSSP) working with the Joint Equipment Stores that service local authorities.

In mid-March 2020, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee agreed to undertake an [inquiry](#) into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales. In July 2020, the Committee published its first [report](#) which focused on a number of key areas, one of which being PPE.

Section 3 of the report discusses PPE and provides information on the supply and availability of PPE during the first wave of the pandemic and also the procurement and manufacturing of PPE.

During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was widely reported concern in the UK and worldwide regarding securing adequate and continuous supplies of PPE.

In May 2020 the Welsh Government stated in [guidance](#) on its website that it was working closely with businesses and industry to get supplies of critical equipment including cleaning products and PPE to front line workers facing shortages during the Covid-19 outbreak. Those who were existing suppliers of PPE or critical equipment or were able to provide any additional support on either manufacturing, repurposing products or innovation, were asked to [contact the Life Sciences Hub](#).

2. Welsh Government action

In correspondence to the Committee dated 4 November 2020, the Minister for Health and Social Services states that in order to maintain a secure position over the winter period, NWSSP has developed a strategic plan for PPE procurement to March 2021.

The vast majority of PPE issued to the health and care sectors in Wales has been directly sourced by NWSSP, through both national and international procurement routes. The winter procurement plan assumes self-sufficiency in sourcing PPE for Wales, rather than depending on UK-Government supply, however, the Minister notes that the Welsh Government continues to work with the other UK nations, identifying opportunities to combine procurement efforts to bring in vital new stocks and to secure better-value PPE purchases. A UK-wide PPE procurement protocol has been developed to support this.

The Minister highlights that domestic PPE production is an important lever for the foundation economy in Wales and the Welsh Government is working with its partners in industry to supplement the production of PPE supplies through innovation and new manufacturing routes. The Minister goes on to say that the very positive response to the First Minister's call on Welsh industry to help produce extra supplies of PPE for the NHS and social care at the onset of the pandemic resulted in face masks, face coverings, visors, scrubs aprons and hand sanitiser being produced locally.

Welsh businesses are seen by the Minister to have an important role to play in strengthening the Welsh Government's resilience to further peaks of Covid-19 and any implications of a no-deal Brexit. The Welsh Government's aim is to increase the amount of PPE manufactured in Wales and its PPE procurement plan blends local manufacture with international supply.

A number of Welsh manufacturers are already producing face masks which meet the safety requirements for medical-grade PPE, with others producing both disposable and reusable face-coverings for use by the wider public. This is in addition to local production channels for aprons, scrubs and gowns which have been developed since the start of the pandemic with support from both Industry Wales and the Welsh Government.

The Minister notes that [Industry.Wales](#) and its partners will be integral to informing the Welsh Government's future engagement with businesses regarding future PPE requirements as well as exploring the potential to on-shore more of the other procurement requirements in Wales.

3. Welsh Parliament action

As mentioned above, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee published a [report](#) in July 2020 on the findings of its inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales.

Recommendation 1 in the report relates to securing, stockpiling and distributing PPE, and recommendation 2 states:

Recommendation 2. The Welsh Government must review its own systems to ensure the mechanisms are in place to enable manufacturers in Wales to respond quickly in supplying appropriate PPE in the event of any future outbreaks. This must include having procurement arrangements that are able to respond in a timely manner.

The response from the Welsh Government to this recommendation provides similar information to that provided in the Minister's correspondence to the Committee on 4 November 2020 and mentioned above.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.