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# Second Personal Protective Equipment Survey of UK Nursing Staff - Summary

Use and availability during the COVID-19 pandemic





The survey was open from Thursday 7 May through Monday 11 May 2020. The survey finished with 5,023 full responses.

The headline results are presented below, and where relevant, comparisons have been made with the previous survey (publication code 009 235) which was carried out 10-13 April. Due to the large difference in response rates, any use of comparisons should be used cautiously and with a clear caveat

# M

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) developed and distributed an online survey to all RCN members in April which explored respondent's experiences of personal and protective equipment (PPE) across all settings in health and social care. This is a repeat of the survey to assess the changing working environment for our members.

The surveys were framed around the UK-wide published guidance on the recommended use of personal protective equipment. We explored how far respondents working in specific settings had access to personal protective equipment and infection control and associated training needed to do their job safely; where PPE had been sourced; any issues experienced with the prescribed PPE; any pressure experienced to reuse single use PPE, or to treat patients without the correct PPE; and how far concerns had been raised or addressed.

The link to this survey was emailed to all RCN members and publicised through our social media

### Staff working in non-high risk environments/standard PPE

- Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents are concerned about the supply of face masks for their next shift, with a further 11% saying there are already not enough for them to use.
- 1 in 5 respondents are concerned about the supply of eye/face protection, with a further 12% concerned there are not currently enough for them to use.
- Just under 40% (39%) have been asked to reuse single-use standard PPE items. There has been no improvement since the last survey.
- A third of respondents have not received training on what standard PPE to wear and when they should wear it, and over a third (35%) have not received any training on the donning, doffing and disposing of standard PPE. However, access to both types of training have improved since the last survey.
- We introduced a new question asking people if they experienced any issues with their standard PPE. Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) told us it increases their body temperature and made them sweat; over half (54%) told us it irritates/hurts their skin, ears, eyes, nose, mouth; over a third (38%) told us it doesn't fit properly and over a quarter (29%) said it didn't consider their specific individual needs.

### Staff working in high risk environments/AGP PPE

- Almost 1 in 5 respondents (19%) told us there were not enough respirator masks for them to use, with a further 35% concerned about the supply for their next shift.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said there were not enough gowns for them to use, with a further 34% concerned about the supply for their next shift.
- 44% of respondents are still being asked to reuse single use equipment, although this has improved since the last survey (51%).
- Over 1 in 5 (23%) have not received training on what PPE to wear and when to wear it, and a quarter (26%) have not received training on donning, doffing and disposing of their PPE. However, access to both types of training have improved since the last survey.
- We introduced new questions asking respondents specifically about their filtering face piece respirators. 32% had not been adequately fit tested, and the most common reasons were due to there being too many different brands/types of mask to be able to fit test them all, or that their employer had not scheduled fit testing.
- We also asked people how likely they were to reuse PPE. 45% of respondents said they would reuse PPE if they had to. 11% said they would not reuse PPE if they had to. 10% said they would reuse PPE if they had to, but only if it was clean. 11% said they would reuse PPE if they had to, but only if it was clean and they had to. 15% said they would reuse PPE if they had to, but only if it was clean and they had to, but only if it was clean and they had to.

### Country breakdown

- England: 78%
- Northern Ireland: 5%
- Scotland: 11%
- Wales: 6%

### 79.9% employed by the NHS

Employment type:

- Permanent: 87%
- Bank: 6%
- Agency: 4%
- Temporary: 3%

### Setting

- Hospital: 61%
- The community: 23%
- Care home: 11%
- Non-hospital urgent and emergency care, e.g. call centre, walk-in centre, home visits, etc: 1%
- Prison/police custody: 1%
- Other (please specify): 3%

## Demographics

### Ethnicity

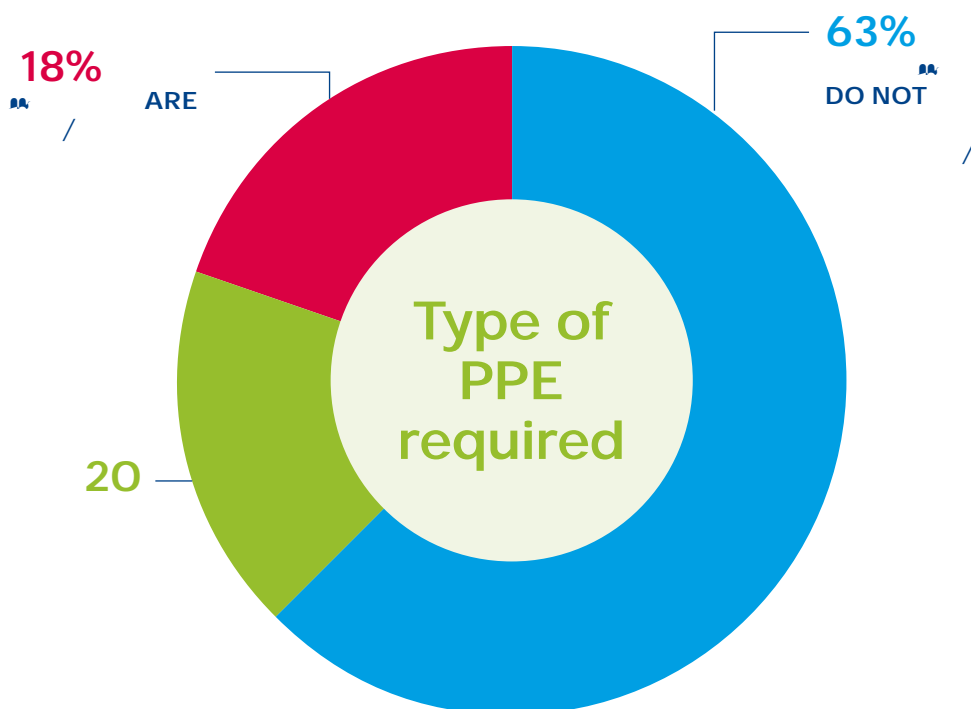
- 73% of respondents are of white British background (including English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish)
- 14% of respondents are of a BAME background
- 9% of respondents are of white Irish (3%) and white other (6%) backgrounds
- Finally, 4% of respondents answered 'other' and prefer not to say

### Disability

- 92% of respondents identify as not having a disability
- 6% of respondents identify as having a disability
- 2% preferred not to say

### Gender

- 90% identify as female
- 8% identify as male
- 0% identify as non-binary
- 2% preferred not to say
- 0% Other



# A

# PPE

Do you have enough of the following standard personal protective equipment (PPE) items for the duration of your shift?

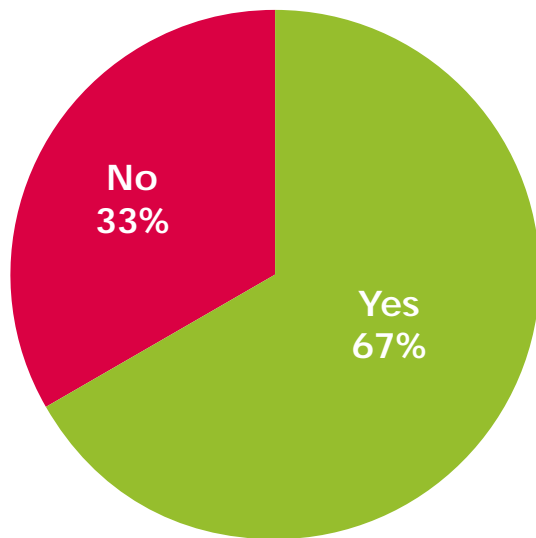
	I have enough to use in my workplace		I have enough at the moment but am concerned about the supply for my next shift		There is not enough for me to use		I don't know		Not needed	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Eye/face protection (This may be single or reusable face/eye protection/full face visor or goggles)	2,541	62%	820	20%	512	12%	141	3%	121	3%
Fluid-repellent surgical face mask (Type IIR)	2,291	55%	985	24%	471	11%	204	5%	184	4%
Disposable plastic apron	3,417	83%	552	13%	119	3%	36	1%	11	0%
Disposable gloves	3,540	86%	481	12%	82	2%	26	1%	6	0%

Are you experiencing any of the following issues with your PPE? *(New Question)*

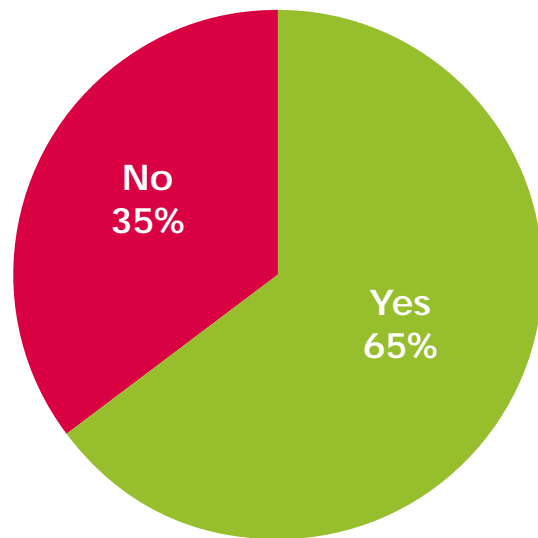
Increases my body temperature and makes me sweat	73%
Irritates or hurts my skin, ears, eyes, nose, mouth	54%
It does not fit (too short, too long, too loose, too tight)	38%
It does not consider my specific individual needs (e.g. having a disability, wearing glasses, having a beard, religious and cultural practices)	29%



Have you received training on what PPE to wear and when you should wear it?



Have you received training on donning, doffing and disposing of standard PPE?



### Pressure to reuse equipment

During this COVID-19 pandemic, 23% of respondents have been asked to re-use single use equipment.

### Where did your standard PPE come from?

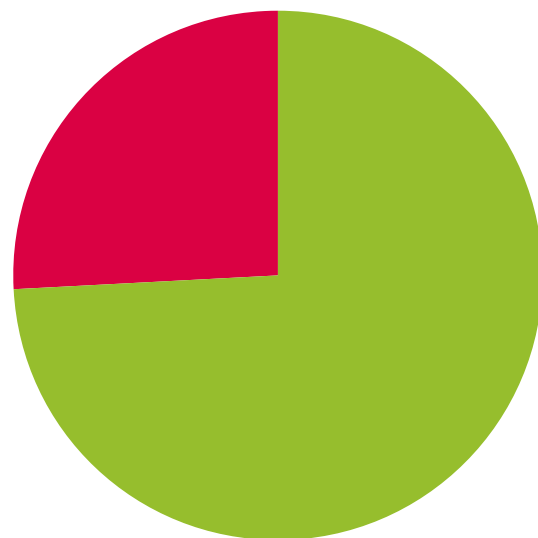
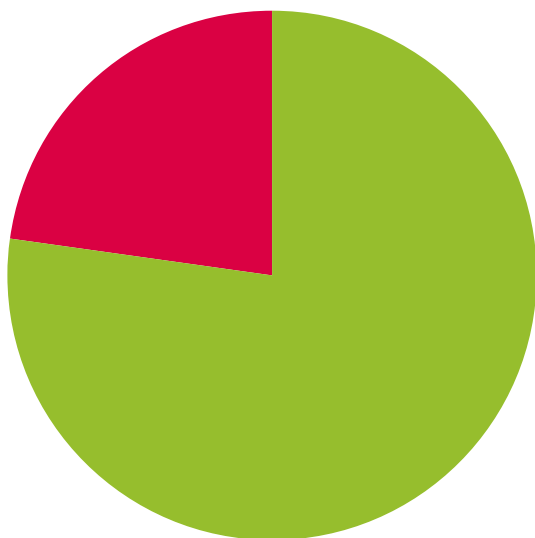
	Donated		Home-made		Provided by employer		Self-bought		I don't know	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Eye/face protection (This may be single or reusable face/eye protection/full face visor or goggles)	1,276	23%	306	6%	3,301	60%	332	6%	264	5%
Fluid-repellent surgical face mask (Type IIR)	304	7%	46	1%	3,662	81%	146	3%	372	8%
Disposable plastic apron	117	3%	12	0%	4,024	94%	26	1%	95	2%
Disposable gloves	122	3%	2	0%	4,045	94%	38	1%	83	2%



Do you have enough of the following personal protective equipment (PPE) items, as recommended for supporting aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs) or other high-risk procedures, for the duration of your shift?

	I have enough to use in my workplace		I have enough at the moment but am concerned about the supply for my next shift		There is not enough for me to use		I don't know		Not needed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Eye/face protection (This may be single or reusable face/eye protection/full face visor or goggles)	1128	60%	504	27%	197	11%	46	2%	7	0%
Filtering face piece respirator (FFP3 or FFP2/N95)	744	40%	654	35%	360	19%	77	4%	47	3%
Disposable fluid-repellent coverall/gown	698	37%	636	34%	433	23%	75	4%	40	2%
Disposable gloves	1541	82%	291	16%	37	2%	13	1%	0	0%

Have you received training on PPE (as recommended for supporting AGPs or other high-risk procedures) to wear  
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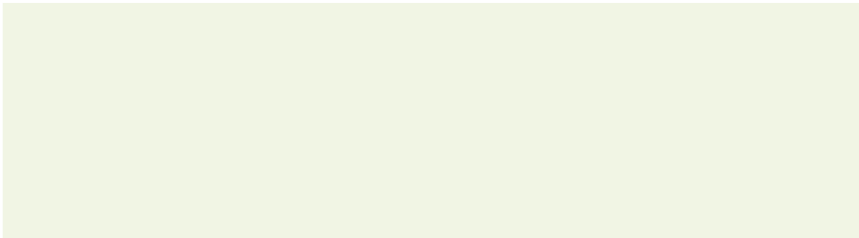
**Have you been adequately fit tested for the model(s) of filtering face piece respirator (FFP3 or FFP2/N95), you currently wear/have worn? (Reworded question to take into account having to be fit tested for different models)**

Yes	69%
No	32%

**Why has your mask not been fit tested? (New Question)**

Too many different brands/types of mask to fit test all	35%
I have not been scheduled to be fit tested by my employer	34%
I do not know why it hasn't happened	29%
My employer does not have sufficient fit testing equipment available	20%
There is no one trained to fit test	13%
I have been offered fit checking, but not fit testing	12%
I was not aware it had to be fit tested	7%

**How long can you wear your filtering face piece respirator (FFP3 or FFP2/N95) before it becomes uncomfortable? (New Question)**

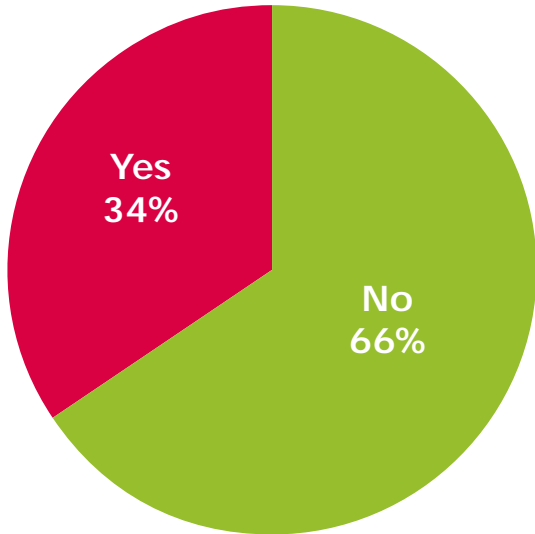


Where did protective equipment (PPE) items, as recommended for supporting aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) or other high-risk procedures, come from?

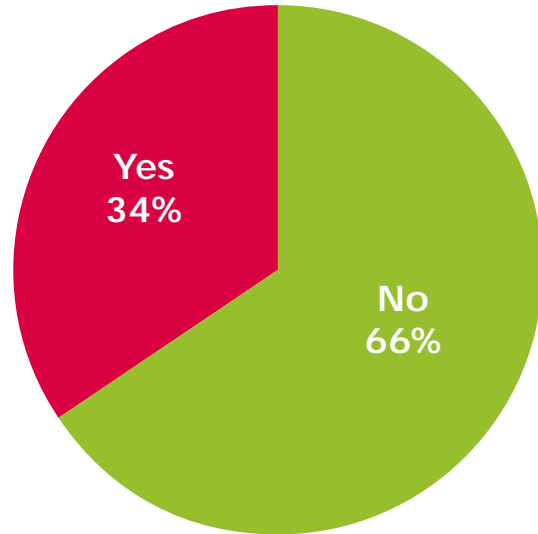
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Q

Have you felt pressured to care for a patient with possible or confirmed COVID-19 without adequate protection, as outlined in the current PPE guidance?



During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you been supplied with damaged/easily damaged PPE (e.g. items that have holes, are scratched, tear easily etc)? *(New Question)*



**Do you have access to the following general infection control supplies?**

**What method did you use to raise your concerns? Select all that apply**

AA AA	91%
AA AA	16%
AA AA ( AA , , AA )	15%
CN	5%
F AA/ AA AA	5%
CN D	2%

**If you had concerns, but did not raise them, why not? (New Question)**

D	68%
F	29%
AA AA /	24%
I	21%
I ' AA	8%
A ,	5%
I	2%

**Overall, how confident are you that your employer is doing enough to adequately protect you from coronavirus infection in your place of work? (New Question)**