

# Companies desperate to provide PPE to the NHS

Masks, hand sanitisers, meals, tech... the list of needs is endless but vital to help key workers take care of the most vulnerable and those handling the virus. To continue to heal the patients, the NHS staff require PPE and are in constant need of more, so companies around the country are taking action to provide them with protective equipment.

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However, the government over-looked these actions and Make It British founder Kate Hills said it was ignoring less well-known textile specialists in favour of household names that play well with the public.

*“They’re just picking out brand names. The people who can make this PPE are not well-known names, they are contract manufacturers behind the scenes. They’ve filled in the government’s request forms and heard nothing back.” – Kate Hills, Founder of Make It British*

PPE suppliers have written an open letter to the government desperate to know if ministers want their support or not during the coronavirus pandemic as they have the means to get millions of pieces of PPE into the health service. But they expressed their frustration at the lack of response as hospitals across the UK struggle to ensure their staff have access to adequate PPE. This situation reflects a failure from the government in recognising the scale of PPE that would have been required across the nation during the pandemic, too busy catching up with other countries to secure its share of supplies.

Fortunately, some smaller companies were approached by the NHS Foundation Trust directly and were happy to help, one such company is Melody Gowns, which has recently expanded into sportswear. The company reopened its UK plant after being approached by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and has leased an additional unit to employ extra staff in order to complete 20,000 gowns.

*“We were delighted to be approached by the trust for assistance and were more than happy to help. Although pulling together all of the resources in such a short period of time was always going to be a logistical challenge, the whole team have done a tremendous job in making it happen. Melody Gowns have always had an embedded emergency contingency plan in place, including a comprehensive business continuity plan to ensure they are able to provide an uninterrupted service should they be hit by any major disruption. By implementing this they were able to respond very quickly to the emergency request, and go from complete shutdown to over 75 per cent production capacity within less than 48 hours. Whilst we are*

*not one of the largest manufacturers in the country, the business model which that the company have operated for several years now gives us the flexibility to respond very quickly to unexpected and urgent client requests. This has proven to be invaluable during these unprecedented times.” – Wayne Hall, Managing director at Melody Gowns*

Another ready-to-help organisation, Helpful Engineering UK – a new volunteer group – created a fundraising campaign to design, produce and distribute visors to frontline NHS staff. The initiative, set up 5 weeks ago, has already produced and delivered 20,000 visors to frontline workers.

*“We all feel indebted to London’s frontline workers so wanted to find a practical way we could help them. Helpful Engineering UK is empowering the community to get involved and help.” – Katie Meech, Helpful Engineering UK*

The Metropolitan Police have also contributed to the Helpful Engineering UK’s initiative by assembling and delivering visors to frontline workers across South West London.

*“As a Safer Neighbourhoods Police Officer, it’s amazing to see so many people from different backgrounds working together to support our*

*communities. Everyone involved just wants to say a massive thank you to frontline workers.” – PC  
Rupert Higham, Hammersmith and Fulham  
Metropolitan Police*

PPE will also be widely needed once the lockdown starts to be relaxed, for which Boris Johnson will pronounce next steps this coming Sunday. Step by step, offices, businesses and high-street shops are planned to reopen but this will imply strict rules to avoid a second peak.

*The time to move onto the second phase will be once we have met the 5 tests.*

*Here's a reminder from Prime Minister  
@BorisJohnson on what they are and why they  
matter ↓ [pic.twitter.com/ZyHAfXjm1y](https://pic.twitter.com/ZyHAfXjm1y)*

*— UK Prime Minister (@10DowningStreet) May 4,  
2020*

Take the hairdressers in Germany, for instance, that can now reopen. The usual waiting area, magazines, and dry cuts won't be authorised for a while and both the customer and hairdresser will have to wear face masks. The social distancing between customers will still be in force and ideally, they shall not receive a blow-dry, and hairdressers will have to wear masks until the customer's hair is washed. Finally, there won't be any talking face to face, and the communication about cut or colour must be done via the mirror and kept to a minimum.

According to a recent government document, once reopened, businesses and retailers will have to adopt the exact same rules as essential shops during the lockdown, and shoppers will be encouraged to shop on their own.

Companies reopening their offices will have to limit hot-desking and introduce protective screens once the UK lockdown eases and people return to workplaces. Staff canteens will remain closed while ministers push employers to encourage remote work and avoid shift times. Similarly to the essential shops open right now, companies will have to use floor tape to set the spacing between workers.

Plus, they'll have to provide more parking spaces to avoid car sharing, which could have an impact on the quality of air that had plummeted due to restricting self-isolation. But the population may not like the idea of hopping on public transport again and could still preferably work from home during a part of this Summer. In other words, let's not expect business as usual for a while.

*Read also*

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Forget fashion, PPE is all that matters right now!