

# Methodology

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 platforms. The survey was open from Thursday 7 May until Monday 11 May 2020.

The majority of questions were closed quantitative with one supplementary open-text question. In total, 5,023 people responded to the survey.

## Summary of key findings

### Overall findings

- The situation has improved across the board in terms of access to standard and high-risk items of PPE since the last survey in April.
- Overall, 28% were very confident that their employer is doing enough to adequately protect them from COVID-19 in their place of work, and a further 40% were moderately confident. This question was not asked in the previous survey.
- However, more standard and high-risk PPE items are being donated, home-made or self-bought, especially eye/face protection compared to our previous survey.
- Over a third (34%) said they felt pressure to care for a patient with possible or confirmed COVID-19 without adequate protection. This has improved since the last survey (50% said they had).
- Respondents generally had access to enough general infection control supplies, and this had improved since the last survey. However, 32% did not have enough hand cream. More than 1 in 5 were concerned about the supply of disinfectant wipes for their next shift (22%), and a similar number had the same concerns about alcohol-based hand rub (21%).
- Over half (58%) of respondents had raised concerns about PPE and over a quarter (27%) of these were not addressed at all. However, there had been improvements in the concerns that had been addressed fully compared to the previous survey (27% vs 21%).
- The percentage of respondents who did not have any concerns (18%) has doubled since the last survey.
- We asked an additional question about why people with concerns did not raise them. The most common reason was because they did not believe any action would be taken (68%). 29% were fearful of speaking out, nearly a quarter (24%) were worried it would negatively impact on their career or training progression and 1 in 5 said there was insufficient protection and support for reporting.