

Methodology

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) developed and distributed an online survey to all RCN members exploring respondent's experiences of personal and protective equipment (PPE) across all settings in health and social care. We are aiming to repeat the survey at regular intervals to assess the changing working environment for our members.

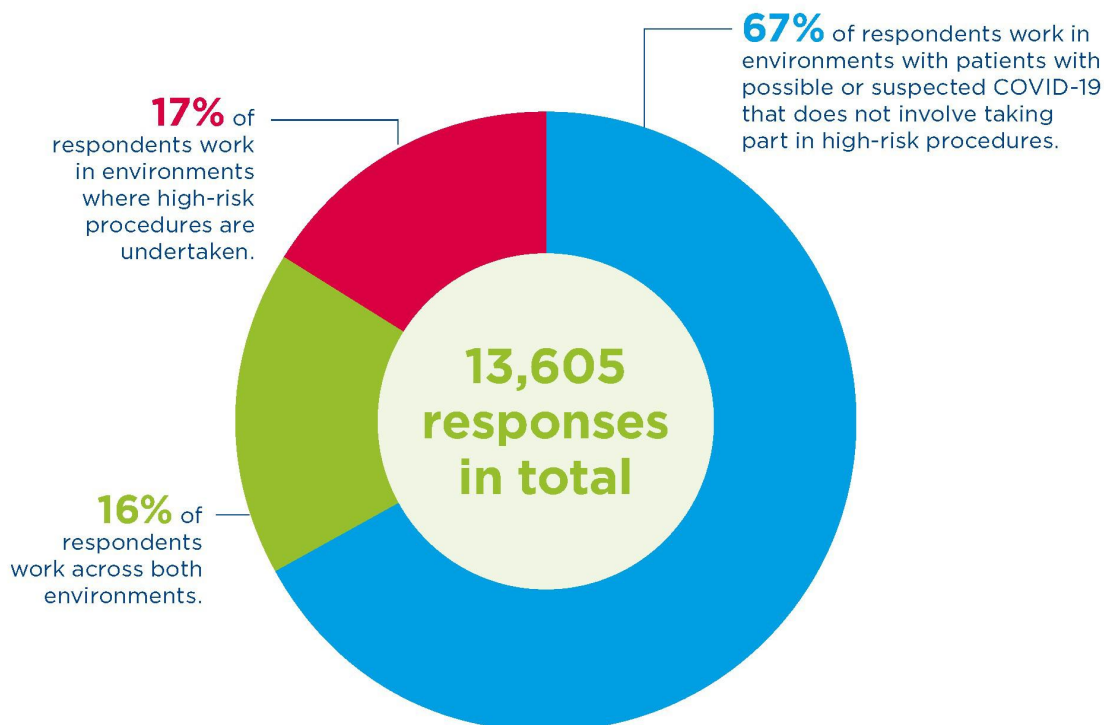
This survey was framed around the UK-wide published guidance on the recommended use of personal protective equipment¹. We explored how far respondents working in specific settings had access to personal protective equipment and infection control and associated training needed to do their job safely; 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.

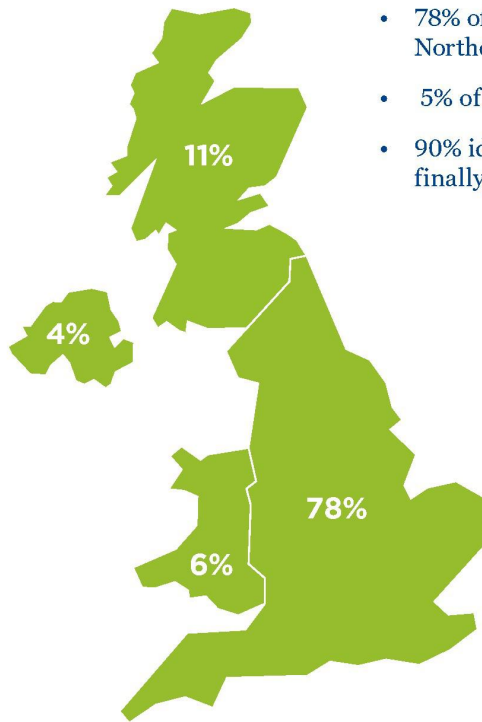
The link to this survey was emailed to all RCN members and publicised through our social media platforms. The survey was open over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend – from Friday 10 April until Monday 13 April 2020.

The majority of questions were closed quantitative with one supplementary open-text question.

In total, 13,605 people responded to the survey.

- 88% are registered nurses/midwives.
- 5% are nursing support workers.
- 1.3% nursing students.
- 0.8% nursing associates.
- 0.2% nursing degree apprentices.
- 4% of respondents selected 'Other', some of these were not nursing professionals (such as allied health practitioners, doctors, radiographers, etc).





- 78% of respondents work in England, 11% in Scotland, 4% in Northern Ireland and 6% in Wales.
- 5% of respondents identify as having a disability.
- 90% identify as female, 8% as male, 2% prefer not to say and, finally, 0.1% have selected 'other' as gender identity.

Ethnicity	%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1.9%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0.2%
Asian/Asian British: other	2.4%
Black/Black British: African	3.6%
Black/Black British: Caribbean	0.8%
Black/Black British: other	0.3%
Chinese	0.3%

Mixed: White and Asian	0.3%
Mixed: White and Black African	0.2%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0.3%
Mixed: other	0.5%
White: British	75.4%
White: Irish	3.3%
White: other	5.1%
Prefer not to say	3.3%
Other (please specify)	2.0%

Access to standard PPE

11,314 respondents told us they work in environments with patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19, that does not involve taking part in high-risk procedures. According to UK-wide guidance, working in such environments requires the following items of personal protective equipment:

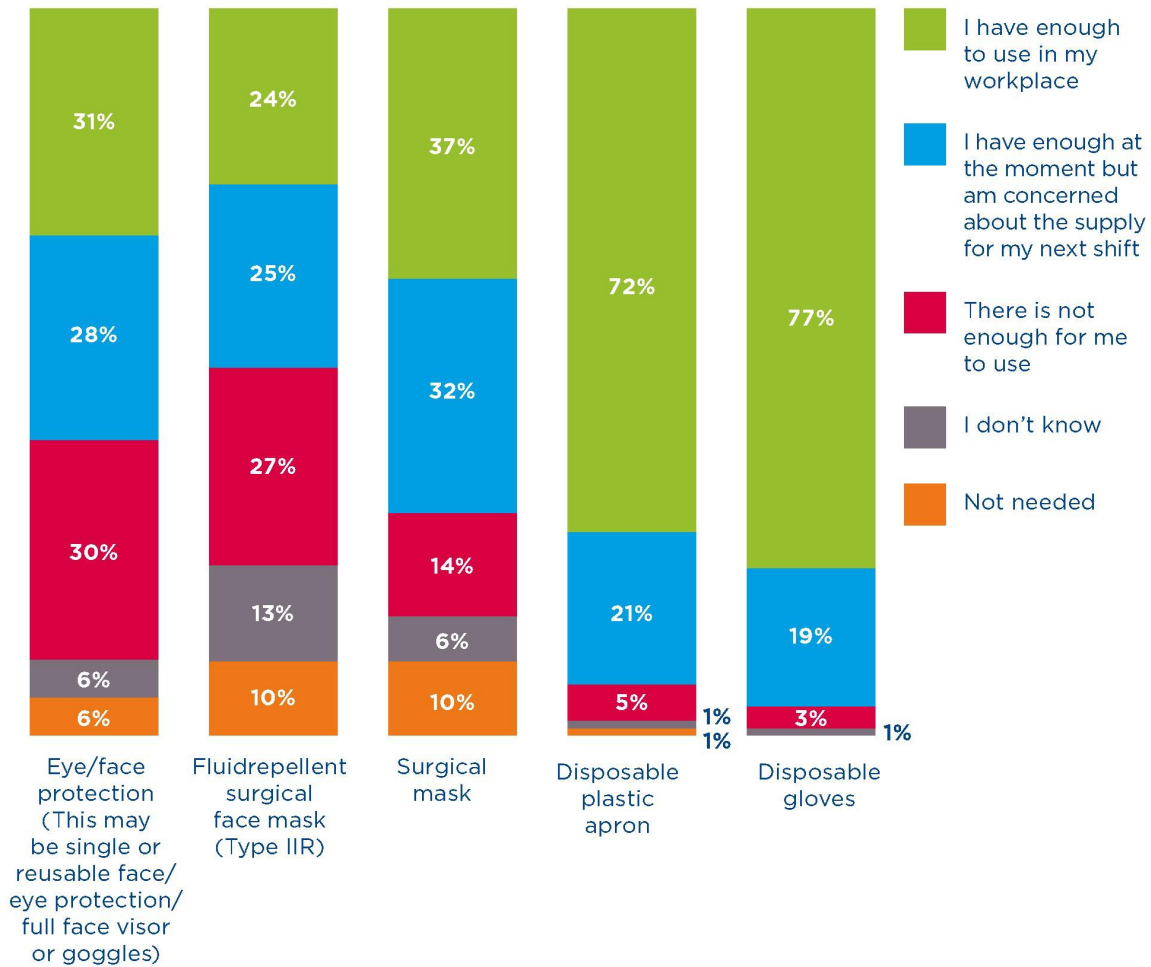
- Eye/face protection. (This may be single or reusable face/eye protection/full face visor or goggles.)
- Fluid-resistant surgical face mask (Type IIR).
- Disposable plastic apron.
- Disposable gloves.

The responses below are from those working in an environment with patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19 who do not take part in high-risk procedures; deliver or assist with aerosol-generating procedure (AGP); or work in a high-risk area even if not participating/supporting in AGPs, for example, intensive care units or the hot zone of an emergency department.

Access to enough supplies of PPE

- 30% of respondents said there is not enough eye/face protection for them to use for the duration of the shift. A further 28% said they have enough now but are concerned for the supply for their next shift.
- More than one in four respondents (27%) said there are not enough fluid-resistant surgical face masks for them to use for the duration of the shift. A quarter of respondents (25%) have enough now but are concerned for the supply for their next shift.
- 14% said they were lacking surgical masks. A third of respondents (32%) said they have enough surgical masks for them to use for the duration of the shift but are concerned for the supply for their next shift.
- Least shortage is with disposable aprons (5%) and gloves (3%).

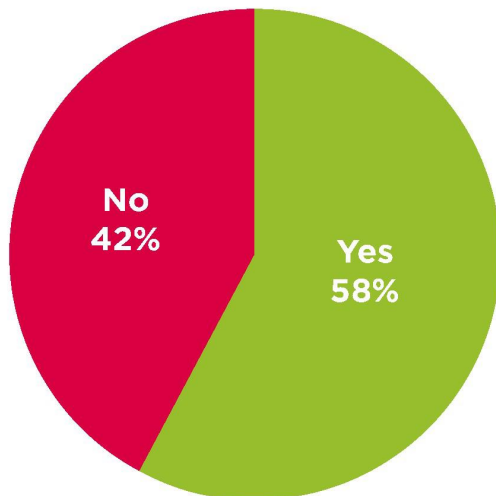
Diagram 1: Do you have enough of the following standard personal protective equipment (PPE) items for the duration of your shift?



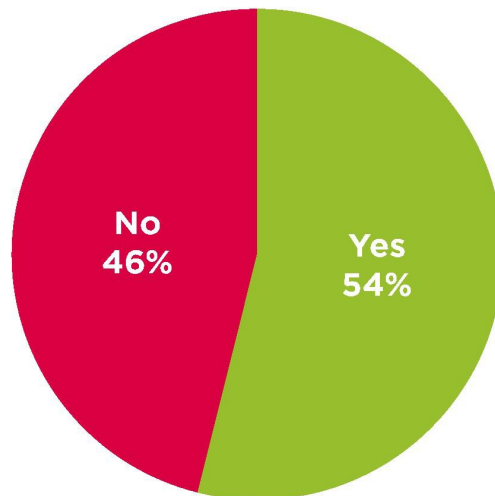
Training received/when

- While 58% of respondents reported having training, more than 40% have received no training on what PPE to wear and when to wear it.
- 46% of respondents have not received training on donning, doffing and disposing of standard PPE.
- Where training has been delivered, over 80% has been in the last month.

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



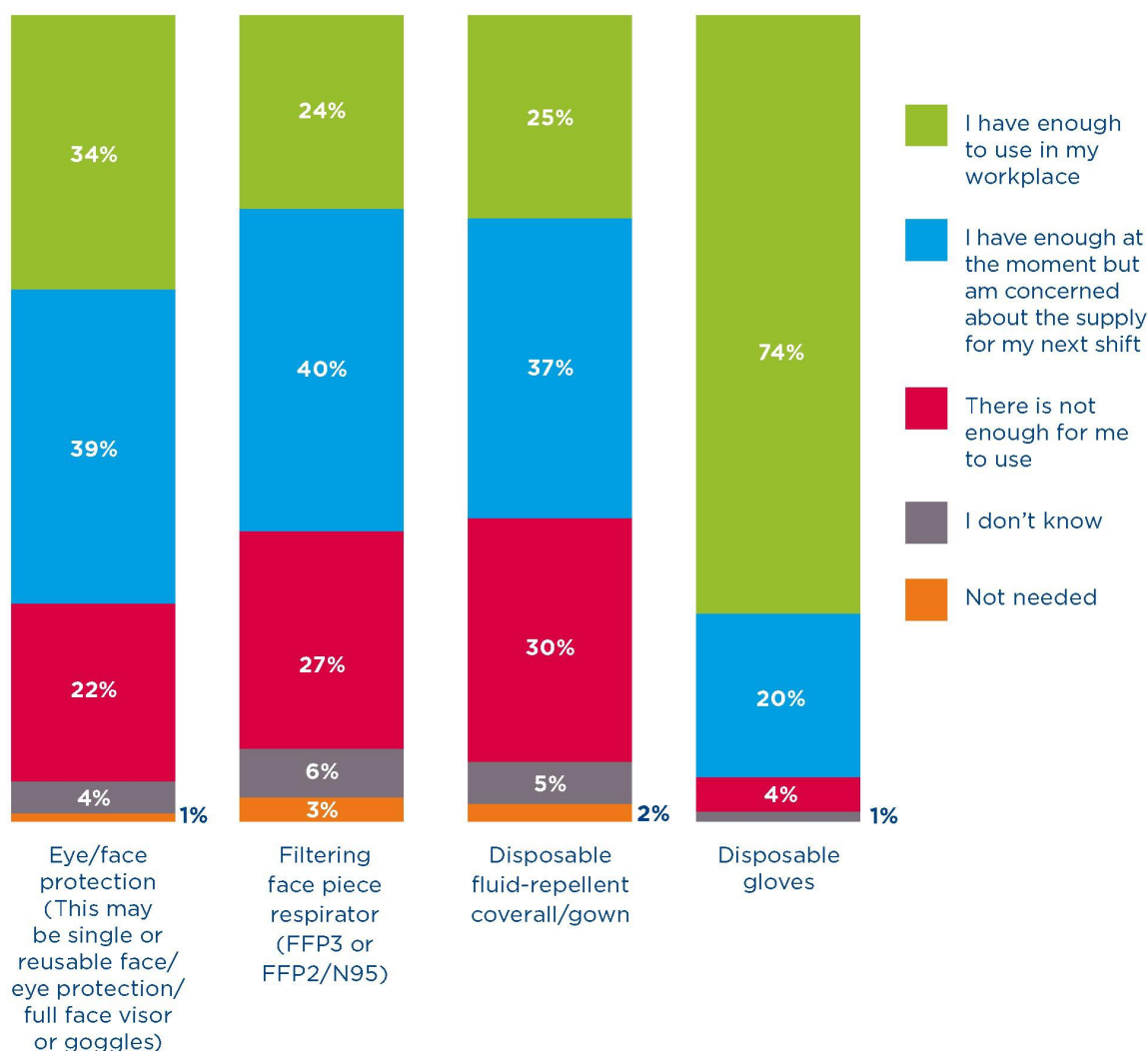
Have you received training on donning, doffing and disposing of standard PPE?



Pressure to reuse equipment

- During this COVID-19 pandemic, 39% of respondents have been asked to re-use single use equipment.

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?



Where do supplies of PPE, as recommended for supporting aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) or other high-risk procedures come from?

- While 68% of respondents reported supplies came from their employer, some supplies were donated (17%), self-bought (6%) or home-made (4%).
- 3% reported having bought their own filtering face piece respirator (for example FFP3 or FFP2/N95) and 5% were using donated ones.
- Employers supply at least 86% of the rest of the equipment with nowhere near the numbers of homemade or donated equipment.