

## Agile and decisive decision making

This was an entirely new approach to government procurement – we were inviting industry to come to us: opening up fresh sources of supply that we could rapidly vet as being technically, legally and commercially compliant in order to secure product in the rapidly-moving global market for PPE. Absolutely central to this new approach was our willingness to work with brand-new suppliers, because this was a brand-new marketplace for PPE.

The response from industry was phenomenal. Over 15,000 businesses came forward with over 24,000 offers within a 14-week period and we are hugely grateful for this support.

## Managing and processing offers

To secure product quickly and effectively, we focused efforts on prioritising and processing offers. At the peak, over 400 staff were assigned to work on processing the offers of PPE, which were divided into a number of discrete workstreams.

A 'UK Make' workstream, for example, handling offers from UK-related sources, sought to establish a resilient domestic manufacturing base for PPE that would provide security of supply for the future. Other offers were specifically processed through a 'China Buy' workstream whose caseworkers could harness the expertise of our embassy in Beijing to identify and secure priority opportunities within China (the market leader in supplying PPE).

A small proportion of offers – approximately 430 of the 24,000 – were processed through a 'high priority referral' route.

These were all ways of managing the incredible volume of offers, and the breadth of sources, to ensure we could find the product when we needed it most. As of June 2020, when the peak had passed, all these procurement routes were closed down.