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Welsh Government

PRESS RELEASE

First Minister's call to action for business: Help us provide PPE to frontline NHS Staff

First Minister Mark Drakeford has issued a call to action for Welsh businesses to create a new Welsh supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) to support NHS and social care staff.

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Many Welsh companies and universities are directly engaged in addressing specific challenges relating to the coronavirus pandemic.

The First Minister is today calling for those willing and able to come forward to create a new made-in-Wales supply chain for PPE.

More than 5 million items of PPE, including eyewear, gloves, aprons and facemasks have been delivered to frontline health and care staff from pandemic stocks in recent weeks – over and above the normal supplies available to the NHS.

Deliveries have been made to GP surgeries, pharmacies and to local authorities to be sent to every care home in Wales.

Yesterday, new guidance was issued in the UK, which simplifies when health and social care staff should use PPE. The new guidance will increase demand for PPE across the UK.

First Minister Mark Drakeford said:

“ This is a time like no other – as a nation we must stand up and respond to the huge challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

“ I want to thank the many businesses and manufacturers in Wales who have already made offers of help to produce PPE and other equipment. We are responding as quickly as we can to the offers we already have, but we want and need more.

“ I am calling on companies to help our NHS and produce much-needed PPE products which will be vital for our frontline staff.

“ Welsh business has an important role to play in delivering the products needed. ”

The Royal Mint has adapted its operations to produce protective visors, which will supply the NHS in Wales as a priority, and others as manufacturing increases.

Merlin Circuit Technology in Hawarden, part of Merlin PCB Group, is helping the national effort by manufacturing ventilators and CPAP products at its base in North Wales.

Merlin Circuit Technology’s director Mike Potter said:

“ We’re pleased to be able to offer our technical and manufacturing experience to assist in the prototype and large-scale production of printed circuit boards in the effort to beat coronavirus.

“ This is only possible with the support of the entire supply chain, from which we have had a phenomenal response and with the continued efforts of those

and our staff we will do our utmost to continue to supply products in the fight against the virus.

“ We are very proud of everyone working at Merlin and the ongoing commitment to continue to attend work throughout this concerning time. They are working around the clock in order to produce the PCBs as quickly as possible to help in the supply of thousands of ventilators, CPAP and oxygen monitoring systems – which will literally save people’s lives. ”

Life Sciences Hub Wales is asking industry to support efforts to combat the virus by coming up with new solutions in areas such as infection control, sanitisers, medical devices as well as developing new approaches to address the challenges of social isolation and loneliness.

Economy, Transport and North Wales Minister Ken Skates said:

“ The response and offers of help from companies has been extremely positive and it’s vital that more businesses and individuals who are willing and able to help do so.

“ The First Minister’s call is one I want to see Welsh firms grasp and do all that they can to support our nation in a time of crisis.

“ More than ever we need innovative thinking to be at the very forefront in developing the products which can make such a huge difference.

“ Wales has an abundance of talent and people with fantastic skills and together with academia and the Welsh Government, we can all play our part in coming up with the very best solutions to beat this virus. ”

Businesses and individuals who want to help can [visit the Business Wales website for further information and advice](https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice)

(<https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice>). This includes a dedicated page for PPE.

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