

You have accepted additional cookies. You can [change your cookie settings](#) at any time.

Hide this message

[Home](#) > [Government](#) > [Government efficiency, transparency and accountability](#)

Government response

## PPE procurement in the early pandemic

Information about the government's procurement exercise to secure critical personal protective equipment (PPE) during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From: [Department of Health and Social Care](#)

Published 17 November 2021

Last updated 11 February 2022 — [See all updates](#)



Related content



Today, the government is publishing further information about its exceptional procurement exercise to secure critical personal protective equipment (PPE) during the early months of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We have already published details of all government PPE contracts in line with our transparency obligations. Today's publication goes above and beyond those obligations as a measure of our commitment to openness about procurement processes during the pandemic.

## **Market overview in March 2020**

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 saw the total disruption of global PPE markets. Demand for PPE skyrocketed, leading to huge price inflation and limited supplies. Normal market dynamics ceased to exist, and with them our NHS procurement procedures. It was essential that government adapted its approach to sourcing PPE for health and social care frontline workers, moving extremely quickly where necessary and taking carefully considered risks with new suppliers where appropriate, in order to secure vital supplies in the teeth of stiff competition all around the world.

To save lives, we focused our efforts, resources and attention on sourcing PPE. We continue to stand by the efforts we made at the height of the early pandemic to prioritise and protect our staff in the frontline.

[Mid-sized businesses](#)

[Check when large businesses pay their suppliers](#)

[Small and Medium Business Hub](#)

[Companies House purchase ledger spend 2022](#)

[Director Conduct Reporting Service](#)

## **Adapting to market volatility**

Within the first few months of 2020, COVID-19's dramatic impact on public bodies, and their ability to secure necessary levels of PPE, was becoming clear. Global demand was outstripping supply, while at the same time brand new manufacturers and suppliers were rushing to fill the gaps in the volatile PPE market.

The government took decisive action. In order to secure the PPE needed by the NHS, in the quantities and to the timescales required, we adopted an entirely new 'open-source' approach to procurement.

## **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.

## **The High Priority Lane**

There has been significant interest in the High Priority Lane. We take our responsibilities around due diligence extremely seriously and, as the National Audit Office has found, ministers were not involved in procurement decisions.

The High Priority mailbox was set up at a time when, with the country and citizens in need of urgent help, many suppliers and individuals were rightly passing on offers of support direct to their local MPs, healthcare professionals and civil servants – because they were keen that the government procurement effort knew what was available. The mailbox allowed MPs, ministers and senior officials to direct those offers to a dedicated location.

All offers that came to the mailbox were triaged by an official from the high priority appraisals team to be processed and responded to.

The criteria used to assess offers were the same as those used to assess any other offer from across the PPE procurement programme. The suppliers had to undergo the same checks and clearances as all others awarded a contract.

End to end, the process of assessing an offer and awarding a contract was led by officials on the basis of published specifications and commercial expertise. Being referred to the High Priority Lane was emphatically not a guarantee of a contract; indeed, nearly 90% of offers referred through this route were unsuccessful. Those to whom contracts were awarded helped enormously, securing more than 5 billion items of life-saving PPE for the frontline.

The suppliers, and indeed those who referred them, were not notified that their offer was processed through the mailbox. This was not a separate channel for suppliers to provide offers to government; rather, it was an internal process set up for handling such offers.

As the information set out shows, the range of suppliers successfully processed through the high priority route was wide. They came from within government and outside, via politicians and civil servants, from healthcare professionals and commercial experts. The list also reflects the number of different types of 'referral', ranging from offers that were simply forwarded by staff working in ministerial private offices and personal referrals from MPs, to suppliers passed on by healthcare professionals and offers referred by the NHS's existing supply chain – SCCL.

Due to incomplete record keeping, in a small number of cases we have not been able to identify the individual or team who directed the offer to this route.

We publish this account today as an insight into how the government mobilised the resources of our Parliamentarians, our businesses, the Civil Service and the whole country to meet the challenges of a national emergency. We are proud of the efforts to secure PPE supplies for our frontline workers at a time of incredible need. Above all, we are hugely grateful to all those who responded to the calls to help us protect those who care for the most vulnerable in our society. Our PPE stocks are now resilient. We have a strong UK manufacturing base, and a contingency stockpile should there be further spikes in demand.

## Routes used to identify suppliers

The following lists indicate the range of routes used to identify suppliers.

### High Priority Lane

The 'source of referral' is the individual or team that identified the organisation and the 'actual referrer' is the individual or team who directed the offer to the high priority route.

Supplier	Source of referral	Actual referrer
<b>Aiya Technology</b>	GCF COVID-19 Enquiries mailbox, Cabinet Office	DHSC PPE Buy Cell
<b>Aventis Solutions Ltd</b>	NHS E&I	Office of Dr Emily Lawson, DHSC
<b>Ayanda Capital Ltd</b>	NHS Shared Business Services	Darren Blackburn, Cabinet Office
<b>Blueleaf Ltd</b>	Keith Lincoln NHS E&I	GCF COVID-19 Enquiries mailbox, Cabinet Office
<b>Brandology Ltd</b>	Dr Julian Lewis MP	Office of Penny Mordaunt MP
<b>Cargo Services Far East Ltd</b>	Andrew Percy MP	Matt Hancock MP
<b>CCS McLays Ltd</b>	Steve Brine MP	DHSC Special Adviser

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Source of referral</b>	<b>Actual referrer</b>
<b>Community Pharma Co Ltd</b>	Office of Esther McVey MP	Office of Esther McVey MP
<b>Crisp Websites Ltd trading as Pestfix</b>	Office of Steve Oldfield, DHSC	Nick Dawson, NHS E&I
<b>Euthenia Investments Ltd</b>	Office of Lord Agnew	Office of Lord Agnew
<b>Excalibur Healthcare</b>	Matt Hancock MP	Jonathan Marron, DHSC
<b>Eyespace Eyewear</b>	Grant Shapps MP	Not available
<b>GBUK Ltd</b>	Preeya Bailie, NHS E&I	Not available
<b>Global United Trading</b>	Dominic Cummings	Steve Oldfield, DHSC
<b>Headwind Industrial (China) Ltd</b>	Ljupsco Mihailovszki, DIT Budapest	Ljupsco Mihailovszki, DIT Budapest
<b>Hotel Logistics Ltd</b>	SCCL	Not available
<b>Ideal Medical Solutions Ltd</b>	SCCL	Not available
<b>Invisio Ltd</b>	SCCL	PPE Buy Team
<b>JD.COM</b>	Matt Hancock MP	Jonathan Marron, DHSC
<b>KPM Marine Ltd</b>	Office of Dr Emily Lawson,	Office of Dr Emily

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Source of referral</b>	<b>Actual referrer</b>
	DHSC	Lawson, DHSC
<b>Liaoning Zhongquiao Overseas Exchange Co Ltd</b>	Office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
<b>Mazima Markets Ltd</b>	Lord Leigh	Lord Feldman
<b>Mayfair Global</b>	Michael Urwick, Hinduja Foundation	Direct approach
<b>MDS Healthcare Ltd</b>	Referred because the supplier managed a PPE donation made by a third party	Not available
<b>Medicom Healthcare Holding</b>	David Reed, FCDO	GCF COVID-19 Enquiries mailbox, Cabinet Office
<b>Meller Design Ltd</b>	Office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Office of the Government Chief Commercial Officer
<b>MGP Advisory Ltd</b>	GCF Commercial Policy Team	GCF COVID-19 Enquiries mailbox, Cabinet Office
<b>Monarch Acoustics Ltd</b>	Matt Hancock MP	Matt Hancock MP
<b>New Asia Logistic Service PTE Ltd</b>	Dr Andrew Swift	Office of the National Medical Director

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Source of referral</b>	<b>Actual referrer</b>
<b>Nine United Ltd</b>	Matt Hancock MP	Jonathan Marron, DHSC
<b>NKD International Ltd</b>	Dame Donna Kinnair, RCN	Jonathan Marron, DHSC
<b>P14 Medical Ltd trading as Platform 14</b>	Dr Ian Campbell, Innovate UK	Richard James, Cabinet Office
<b>P1F Ltd</b>	Chris Dunn, FCO	Chris Dunn, FCO
<b>Pakan Medical</b>	Christine Emmett, Former HS2 NED	Janette Gibbs, Cabinet Office
<b>PPE Medpro Ltd</b>	Baroness Mone	Office of Lord Agnew
<b>Regal Polythene Ltd trading as Regal Disposables</b>	Chris Hall, Cabinet Office	Chris Hall, Cabinet Office
<b>Rehear Labs Ltd</b>	SCCL	Not available
<b>Sanaclis</b>	SCCL	Andy Wood, Cabinet Office
<b>SG Recruitment UK Ltd</b>	Lord Chadlington	Lord Feldman
<b>Skinnydip Ltd</b>	Lord Leigh	Lord Feldman
<b>Summit Medical Ltd</b>	SCCL	Direct approach

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Source of referral</b>	<b>Actual referrer</b>
<b>Technicare Ltd trading as Blyth Group Ltd*</b>	Office of Gavin Williamson MP	Cabinet Office Correspondence Team
<b>The Paper Drinking Straw Ltd</b>	Stuart Marks	Chris Hall, Cabinet Office
<b>Tower Supplies</b>	Pia Larsen, NHS	Richard James, Cabinet Office
<b>Uniserve Ltd</b>	Lord Agnew	Jonathan Arrowsmith, Cabinet Office
<b>Unispace</b>	GCF COVID-19 Enquiries mailbox, Cabinet Office	GCF COVID-19 Enquiries mailbox, Cabinet Office
<b>Universal Solutions Trading Ltd</b>	HMT Special Advisor	DHSC Special Advisor
<b>Urathon Europe Ltd</b>	Jane Harrison, SCCL	DHSC PPE Buying Cell
<b>Visage Ltd</b>	COVID-19 Single Point of Contact mailbox, DHSC	COVID-19 Single Point of Contact mailbox, DHSC
<b>Worldlink Resource</b>	Lord Agnew	Office of Lord Agnew
<b>Wuhan Xiaoyaoyao Pharmaceutical</b>	Office of Lord Deighton	Office of Lord Deighton

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Source of referral</b>	<b>Actual referrer</b>
-----------------	---------------------------	------------------------

---

\* This listing was added after the original publication. Following a review of our records, we discovered this offer was in fact processed through the High Priority route.

**UK Make**

- Alpha Solway (Globus) Ltd
- Berry Global Plastics Inc
- Blue Tree Group
- Burberry
- Don & Low Ltd
- Drager: UK
- DTR Medical Ltd
- Duraweld Ltd
- Elite Plastics Ltd
- Eumar Technology Ltd
- Honeywell: UK
- I Love Cosmetics (Expac) Ltd
- Kingsbury Press
- Lenzing Hygeine UK Joint Venture Ltd
- Lincoln Polythene Ltd
- LJA Miers and Co Ltd
- McDonald and Taylor Healthcare Ltd
- Medicom HealthPro Ltd
- MediCare UK
- Numatic International Ltd
- PFF Packaging Group Ltd

- Photocentric Ltd
- Potter and Moore Innovations Ltd
- Private White VC
- Ramfoam Ltd
- Redwood TTM
- SIVA Group
- Staeger Clear Packaging
- Survitec Group
- The Royal Mint

#### **China Buy**

- Beijing Union Glory Investment Co. Ltd
- Beijing Yuanlong Yato
- China Meheco Co Ltd
- China National Instruments Import & Export Group Corporation
- China National Pharmaceutical Foreign Trade Corporation
- China Sinopharm International Corporation
- Jason Offshore Equipment
- Qingzhou Yaowang Pharmaceutical
- Shanghai Sunwin Industry Group Co. Ltd
- Shenzhen DJ Medical Equipment Co. Ltd
- Sino Greatwall Healthcare Co. Ltd
- Weifang Yuanhua Plastic Products Co. Ltd
- Winner Medical Co. Ltd
- Xinxing Pipes International Development Co. Ltd
- Yancheng New Cloud Medical Equipment Co. Ltd
- Zheng Ben Yuan Pharmaceutical (Hainan) Ltd
- Zhongcheng Huadao Group Co Ltd

## **New Buy**

These are companies who did not sit on existing frameworks to supply PPE and the Department of Health and Social Care contracted with them in order to ensure the necessary supply of PPE. UK Make, China Buy and the High Priority Lane are all subsets of, and are included in, this.

- Able Services Supplies Ltd
- AEFO Technical Services Ltd
- Aiya Technology Hk Limited
- Arco
- Ascot Signs Ltd
- Ashfield Health
- Asia Pacific Distributors PTY
- Aventis Solutions Ltd
- Ayanda Capital Limited
- Beijing Union Glory Investment Co., Ltd
- Beijing Yuanlong Yato
- BELLAGIO GLOBAL
- Biosana Health
- BIOSPECTRUM LTD
- Blueleaf Care
- Bluetree Design & Print Ltd
- Blyth Group
- BOLLE BRANDS UK
- Brandology
- British Packaging
- BRYSON PRODUCTS LTD
- Bunzl

- Burberry
- Cambodian Textiles Worldwide Phnom Penh Works Co., Ltd
- Cannagrow biosciences Ltd
- CARDIATIS / Worldlink Resources
- Cargo Services Far East
- CCS McClays
- Central National Gottesman
- CH AND L LTD
- Chart One Automotive Ltd
- Chemical Intelligence
- CHINA MEHECO CO.,LTD
- China National Instruments Import & Export Group Corporation
- China National Pharmaceutical Foreign Trade Corporation
- China Sinopharm International Corporation
- CLANDEBOYE AGENCIES LTD
- Clearmask
- Community Pharma Company Ltd
- Cooneen (MOD)
- Crown Salvage Limited
- Deflecto-Europe (Yearntree)
- Direct Corporate Clothing PLC
- Doja Limited
- Don and Low LTD
- Double Dragon International Ltd
- Draeger Safety UK Ltd
- DTC Consulting Ltd
- DTR Medical
- Dunlop BTL LTD
- Duraweld

- Dylan Imports Ltd
- Elite Creations
- ELITE Plastics
- EUMAR TECHNOLOGY LTD
- EURO PACKAGING UK LTD
- Euthenia Investments Ltd
- Excalibur Healthcare Services
- Eyespace Eyewear Limited
- Fannin
- Fillcare Fareva
- FirstAid4sport
- Fluid Branding Ltd
- Fonebox Assets Ltd
- Forever Young International Ltd
- Forward Industrial Products Ltd
- Fourds Ltd Trading As Bloc Blinds
- GBUK LTD
- GEMINI SURGICAL UK LTD
- GL Oil and Gas Services
- Global Manufacturing Asia Limited
- Global Unite Trading & Sourcing
- GLSI
- Guangdong Kingfa Science & Technology
- Headwind China Ltd
- HLP KLEARFOLD
- Honeywell
- Hotel Logistics Ltd
- Ideal Medical Solutions

- Imperial Polythene
- Initia Ventures Ltd
- Invios
- Invisio Pharmaceuticals
- Jason Offshore Equipment
- Jingdong e-commerce
- Kau Media Group
- KINGSBURY PRESS
- KPM Marine
- L J A MIERS AND COMPANY LTD
- Leagues Commercial Co Ltd
- LIAONING ZHONGQIAO OVERSEAS EXCHANGE CO., LTD.
- Linc Medical Systems Ltd
- Lincoln Polythene Ltd
- Love Cosmetics Ltd
- LUXE LIFESTYLE LTD
- Macdonald & Taylor Healthcare
- Maxima Markets Limited
- Mayfair Global (UK) Ltd
- MDS Healthcare
- MEDCO SOLUTIONS LTD
- Medicine Box Ltd
- Medicom
- MELLER DESIGNS LTD
- MGP ADVISORY LTD
- MI HUB TA ALEXANDRA
- MIHUB T/A ALEXANDRA
- MIP UK LIMITED
- Monarch Acoustics Limited

- MYSHIPPER LTD
- Network Medical Products
- New Asia Logistic Services Pte Ltd
- Nine United
- NKD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
- Numatic International Limited
- Ocean Footprint
- Omni-ID Ltd
- Opalion
- P14 MEDICAL LTD
- P1F Limited
- Pakan Medical
- Pestfix
- PFF PACKAGING GROUP LTD
- Pharmaceuticals Direct Ltd
- Photocentric
- Planet Aid
- POLYSTAR PLASTICS LTD
- Potter & Moore Innovations
- PPE Medpro Limited
- Prime Group
- PRIVATE WHITE VC LTD
- Protechnique / Huons Medicare
- Protecting Heroes Community Interest Co (Si Freedman)
- Purple surgical
- Qingzhou Yaowang Pharmaceutical
- RAMFOAM
- Rawbridge Ltd

- RBW Consultancy Ltd / Weihai Dishang Medical Technology CO Ltd
- Red E Med
- REDWOOD TTM LTD
- Regal Polythene
- Rehear Lab
- Robert Housely Limited
- Saiger Llc
- Sanaclis
- Schaefer-Global
- SEAGO YACHTING LTD
- SG Recruitment
- SGH Global
- Shanghai Sunwin Industry Group Co., Ltd
- Shenzhen DJ Medical Equipment Co., Ltd
- Sino Greatwall Healthcare Co., Ltd
- SIVA Group
- Skinny Dip
- SMC Premier Cleaning Ltd
- Southgate
- Sovereign
- Springfield Supplies
- STAEGER CLEAR PACKAGING LTD
- Summit Medical Ltd
- Super 7 Wholesale
- SURVITEC GROUP LTD TA RFD BEAUFORT
- Sustainable Criminal Justice Solutions Community Interest Company
- Swish Dental Limited T/A Biosana Health
- TAEG Energy
- Tara Mobile Uk & Huav Technologies Co Ltd, China TIK Films China

- Technicare Ltd, trading as Blyth Group Ltd
- The Paper Drinking Straw Co Ltd.
- THE ROYAL MINT LTD
- Thermoplastics Ltd
- Toffeln
- Top Gear Consumables
- Tower Supplies
- Trade Markets Direct
- TRANSCONTINENTAL MARKETING LTD
- UK GLOBAL HEALTHCARE LTD TA INDO UK INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH
- UK-China Trading
- Uniserve
- Unispace Global Ltd
- Universal Solutions Trading Limited
- URATHON EUROPE LTD
- Vanguard Air Services Ltd
- Veritas medical solutions
- Visage Group
- Vital Innovations
- Vitalcare UK
- Weifang Yuanhua Plastic Products Co., Ltd
- Weihai Textile Group Import Export Co Ltd (Dishang)
- Winner Medical Co., Ltd.
- Worldlink Resources Limited
- Wuhan Xiaoyaoyao Pharmaceutical Technology Co., Ltd
- Xinxing Pipes International Development Co., Ltd
- Yancheng New Cloud Medical Equipment Co., Ltd.
- YEARNTREE LTD TA DEFLECTO

- Zenith Guild Enterprise Ltd
- Zheng Ben Yuan Pharmaceutical (Hainan) Ltd.
- Zhongcheng Huadao Group Co Ltd
- Zhonghong Pulin Medical Products Co., Ltd.

Share this page



Facebook



Twitter

---

Published 17 November 2021

Last updated 11 February 2022 + [show all updates](#)

---

### Explore the topic

[Government efficiency, transparency and accountability](#)

[Healthcare workers, carers and care settings during coronavirus](#)

Is this page useful?

Yes

No

Report a problem with this page

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support](#)

## Brexit

[Check what you need to do](#)

## Services and information

---

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

## Departments and policy

---

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Services](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[News and communications](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency and freedom of information releases](#)

---

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#) [Terms and conditions](#)  
[Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#) [Government Digital Service](#)

**OGI** All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright