

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOHS statement on respiratory protective equipment for the protection of NHS staff

The British Occupational Hygiene Society welcomes the announcement of further advice on Protective equipment by NHS for its workers. The science in this area is rapidly evolving as we get to understand COVID-19 better and the likely effectiveness of protection. In particular, we are aware of scientific evidence that indicates current guidance on respiratory protective equipment (RPE) requires urgent review to ensure the protection of NHS staff.

We seek to bring to the attention of those involved in framing new guidance the latest scientific insights which are currently being looked at by a variety of health & occupational hygiene organisations.

These organisations are currently working independently to produce summaries for any forthcoming guidance or future revisions. Work addresses matters such as RPE deployment; for example, the suitability of surgical masks, FFP3 disposable respirators or powered filtering hoods and masks for various tasks. BOHS endorses any move to prioritise the use of powered RPE as the most effective protection for health workers in critical risk areas. We are confident that the guidance will reflect the NHS's care in ensuring that current stock RPE effectively prevent reinfection by staff through exhalation as well as preventing infection of staff. BOHS endorses all efforts to ensure that staff are guided to the best RPE selection, fit, removal and maintenance.

BOHS is convening a standing expert group to monitor and review the scientific evidence and is working collaboratively with others to provide support to any public sector organisation involved in the protection of its workers who seek clarity on the science and application of RPE in the current COVID-19 crisis.

Kelvin Williams, President-elect of BOHS commented: "Amongst the many challenges for the NHS is keeping abreast of the rapidly changing science to keep its workers safe. BOHS welcomes the review of its guidance and is offering its expertise to ensure the NHS has timely access to the best international scientific information".

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ABOUT BOHS

The [British Occupational Hygiene Society](#) (BOHS) is a science-led, charitable body and the UK's leading authority that works to protect everyone's right to a healthy working environment. Founded in 1953, it's one of the largest occupational hygiene societies in Europe and the only professional society representing qualified occupational hygienists in the UK. BOHS provides internationally recognised qualifications, scientific conferences and membership services, and has over 1800 members across 57 countries and numerous fields of worker health.